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HANS H. BAERWALD

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For DI-AN-JA-DA

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Preface and acknowledgments

This brief study of Japan's parliament has been under preparation for ten years. Initially, I had hoped to write a book that would be in accord with my ethnic heritage – long, infinitely detailed, and so heavy a tome that only the most dedicated masochist would read it. Instead, this slim volume emphasizes what I believe are the Diet's most important features. It is my hope that this will lead to further studies because the literature on the Diet remains sparse.

Hence, my basic purpose has been to write an introduction and to answer certain questions: (1) What are the Diet's origins and how does this heritage affect its place in Japanese politics? (2) What are the features of Japan's political parties that affect the manner of their operations in the Diet? (3) How is the Diet organized internally and how do its rules of procedure affect its capacity to fulfill its constitutional mandate: to be Japan's supreme legislative organ? (4) Why is the Diet the scene of turmoil periodically? (5) What general conclusions, tentative though they might be, can be made about the Diet as a parliamentary institution?

The questions are seemingly easy, but the attempt to find answers has taken far longer than might have been expected. One of the reasons is that I have relied very heavily on personal interviews and observation. My decision to utilize this research technique was based in part on the paucity of literature on the Diet as well as my finding the process of being an observer to be enjoyable. It was, however, time-consuming. None of it would have been possible without the marvelous goodwill and cooperation of many individuals.

Many academic foundations and universities have assisted me. My initial efforts in 1963 were made possible by a grant from the joint committee of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. This was supplemented by a generous stipend from the Rockefeller Foundation (1965–7). Two terms as director of the University of California's Tokyo Study Center under the auspices of the University's Education Abroad Program allowed my family and me to spend a total of three years at the International

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Christian University in Tokyo. Several travel grants from UCLA's Committee on Research and the Committee on International and Comparative Studies permitted some brief trips to Japan to study current political developments. To all of these institutions and their officials I express my gratitude for their financial support, without which nothing would have been possible.

I am also grateful to the administration, faculty and students at International Christian University (ICU). They welcomed my family, the University of California students and me with kindness and consideration even though their academy was in the midst of serious crises to which our presence – especially in 1969–70 – added its own turmoil. That experience taught me much; far more than I was able to contribute to ICU's academic program. I am particularly grateful for the understanding of my friends regarding my predicament in the autumn of 1969. Not only mercury poisoning is the cause of 'itai-itai byō', broadly defined.

All of these trips to and periods of residence in Japan assisted me in learning about, and observing the Diet over time. They also made me cautious. It is not without reason that the oft-repeated story is told: spend a few weeks in Japan and you can write a book; spend a year and you still might be able to write a respectable article; spend any more time than that and you would be best advised to write nothing because there is no excuse any more for being so abysmally ignorant. Of course, having been born in Japan, having spent the better part of my youth there and having been there for two and a half years during the Occupation made it all the more painful.

These periods of residence in Japan were helpful, but they would have meant little without the generous assistance of many Japanese individuals who did their best to teach me about their contemporary politics. It is impossible for me to mention all of them and for this I apologize and most sincerely ask for their understanding. I am also concerned that some of what they taught me might be held against them. Nonetheless, my debt to them is so great that it would be totally impolite not to acknowledge their immense contribution.

In the summer of 1963, it was my extremely good fortune to arrive with an introduction to Mr Sasakawa Takeo who was then covering the Foreign Ministry for the *Sankei Shimbun* (newspaper). He undertook the task of introducing me to his many news media colleagues, including the then director of his paper's political section, Mr Yoshimura Toru, and his successors Mr Kitahata Michio and Mr Yamane Takuo as well as all the other *Sankei* political reporters. Together they introduced

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me to the intricate network of communications inside the world of Japanese politics and the news media – a fascinating subject in its own right.

It was Mr Sasakawa who was willing to risk introducing this *gaijin* (foreigner) to the *yo-mawari* (night-rounds), a hallowed Japanese news gathering effort, that enabled me to meet Mr Ohira Masayoshi (Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Cabinets of Ikeda Hayato and Tanaka Kakuei) and Mr Fukuda Takeo (Minister of State in many Cabinets), both of whom have taught me so much over the intervening years. It was also Mr Sasakawa who introduced me to Mr Obata Shin'ichi (of the *Sankei Shimbun*) who in turn arranged for me to be an observer at a seminar of the faction led by the late Mr Kawashima Shōjirō, former Vice-President of the LDP.

Others in the *Sankei Shimbun's* political section were extremely helpful in making it possible to receive permission to be an observer at Socialist Party Conventions, Democratic-Socialist Party Conventions and, much later, Komeitō Conventions. All of the *Sankei* reporters were willing to allow me to spend time with them in their various offices and clubs and let me sit with them while election returns were coming in or while important events were transpiring elsewhere – a television broadcast after midnight of the Nixon-Satō meeting in Washington announcing the reversion of Okinawa to Japan being among the most memorable. To all of them, my heartfelt thanks.

I am also deeply indebted to many staff members of the Diet Secretariat, especially Mr Okubo Kimio of the External Affairs Section in the House of Representatives. He and his colleagues were extremely gracious in making arrangements for me to be granted countless interviews with Members of the Diet and to observe committee meetings and plenary sessions. They were never irritated by many requests for favors even though I must have taken up an inordinate amount of their time. The same is true of the House of Representatives Secretariat's Committee Section, especially its then Deputy-chief Mr Ogyū Kei'ichi and his associates Mr Hirano Sadao and Mr Horiguchi Ichirō. They prepared special reports for me on the operations of the Diet's committee system that were invaluable.

Many Members of the Diet and their assistants have extended courtesies over the years. Minister of International Trade and Industry, Nakasone Yasuhiro, and his staff, Mr Utsunomiya Tokuma and his staff assistants, Mr Kawakami Tamio, Mr Iwano Miyoji of Deputy Prime Minister Miki Takeo's office, all of the staff members of Mr Ōhira's office and of the Kōchi-kai, the official name of the Ōhira

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faction, were particularly generous with their time and assistance.

Mr Watanabe Tsuneo of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (newspaper) influenced me profoundly by his insight into the intricacies of factional politics, about which he is the acknowledged expert. To him and our mutual friends in the *kenkyu-kai* (study group), my heartfelt thanks for many a stimulating evening.

Japanese colleagues in the field of Political Science have also been most helpful. Professor Ishida Takeshi of Tokyo University encouraged me when others were doubtful about my project. Professor Watanabe Yasuo, Chairman of ICU's Graduate School of Public Administration, always had time for discussion and his sage counsel kept me from making too many errors. Professor Hashimoto Akira of Meiji University painstakingly reviewed my earlier essay on the Diet's committee system and his assistance on matters of interpretation and factual accuracy were invaluable. Professor Tomita Nobuo of Meiji University graciously helped me with all kinds of valuable material on elections as did Mr Nishihira Shigeki, whose statistical compilation of Japanese election is a gold mine of information. Professor Uchida Mitsuru of Waseda University joined me for several crucial interviews and was always friendly and helpful. Professor Uchiyama Shōzo of Hosei University always had a fresh perspective. Mr Sodei Rinjirō, a former student, was always willing to share views and search for material.

I also owe a profound debt of gratitude to two good friends who are American foreign correspondents in Japan. Mr Sam Jameson of the *Los Angeles Times* is a generous host, a true student of Japanese politics, and a kind critic. Mr Richard Halloran of the *New York Times* is an old friend, profoundly knowledgeable, and a superb editor. I owe both of them more than I can ever repay.

Throughout it all my family has been unbelievably patient. Diane and the children traveled with me to Japan and put up with the irregular schedule that is demanded of anyone who wants to learn about Japanese politics. Diane contributed immensely to the final product by translating what I had written into readable English. It is to her and the children that this book is dedicated.

Two final words. Japanese names are rendered in the vernacular style – family name first. Only I am to be held responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation.

Los Angeles
May 1973

HHB