

SOME FEATURES OF POLITICAL REFORM OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF JAPAN IN THE RECENT DECADE

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In this paper, I sketch the unfolding of political reform from the Recruit stock-for-favors scandal in the summer of 1988, in which virtually every Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader had played a part, political reform was for several years the most important issue on the agenda in Japanese politics and finally culminated in the reform of the Lower House electoral system in 1994.

Three groups active in this process, all advocating political reform, deserve particular attention: the group of young LDP Diet members who eventually formed the New Sakigake Party -the Harbingers; the LDP's Ozawa Ichiro and his followers, who also broke away from the LDP at around the same time as the Sakigake Party and the Japan New Party.

Although these three groups had different aims and beliefs that could have prevented them from introducing such reforms, they put aside these differences to cooperate and to push Japanese politics toward political reform.