internationalization. However, I found two men, both of the postwar generation, who became truly committed to the role of iemoto master only after traveling abroad. Earlier, one of them had doubts about his acceptance of the iemoto position—he was not even born into it but adopted from a branch house—in terms of whether it was worthy of his entire life, and he left Japan in search of a resolution to his inner conflict. During eight months of travel in Europe and exposure to different countries, he became convinced of the unique value of Japanese traditional culture and especially of his ieryū art. He returned a true believer.

The other young man was long unsure of what he wanted for his life except that he wanted to “absorb anything new.” Eager to learn something different, he accepted an invitation from an American friend, traveled to California to live with the friend when campus unrest was at its peak, and made friends with Berkeley students. His travels extended to South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, while he supported himself with a variety of odd jobs. India particularly intrigued him with its life-style enduring for millennia and “liberated” him to accept the fact that he himself, despite all the new learning experiences, could not change basically but had to return to where he had come from. Back in Japan, when his mother fell ill, he was ready to take over the role of the iemoto master of tea as “deputy iemoto.” His mother, originating from a sekke, had established the iemoto in 1970 by revitalizing the privately carried ieryū of her natal house. Her son was able to retrieve what he had learned in this art from his mother in his childhood. The informant does not like to dramatize his foreign experience as a turning point of his career but admitted that his American friend-host was surprised at his transformation. The friend also astonished the informant by his total conversion from a long-haired rebel against his own upper-class family into a respectable, well-groomed lawyer. The two saw themselves in one another.

These instances suggest that internationalization does not necessarily subvert atavism but rather can reactivate it. More generally, in a post-industrial society like Japan where people are subject and sensitized to the new information constantly produced and instantaneously circulated on a massive scale, it is all the more likely that a nostalgia for order and stability attributed to the centuries of ancestors is kindled. It does not matter that resurrection is an invention, and in fact no “tradition” may be “revivable” without an inventive alteration, to reiterate the introduction of this paper. What matters is the participant’s faith in the fidelity of preserving and reproducing his ancestors and their symbols.

LEONARD J. SCHOPPA

Zoku Power and LDP Power: A Case Study of the Zoku Role in Education Policy

The phrase tōkō kantei (party predominant—bureaucracy subordinate) has been used and discussed so widely in recent analyses of Japanese politics that it has become a cliche. Journalists and scholars alike have written extensively about the growing power of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over what they describe as a traditionally more powerful bureaucracy. They have remarked on the growing number of cases in which LDP politicians have “intervened” in the policymaking process, and they have noted how the new generation of LDP Diet members, with long years of service in party and cabinet positions, has acquired enough expertise and influence to match and even dominate its peers in the bureaucracy. In particular, all of these studies have put a great deal of stress on the role of the LDP’s zoku—its cliques of Diet members with special influence in specific policy areas—in this process of party ascendency.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at Harvard’s Japan Forum and at a meeting of the New England Japan Seminar and benefited from discussions following both of those presentations. In addition, I gratefully acknowledge comments on earlier versions of this paper from Arthur Stockwin, Roger Goodman, Susan Pharr, and three anonymous reviewers for the Journal of Japanese Studies.

In this context, a case such as the government's recent education reform initiative raises some interesting questions. In 1984, then Prime Minister Nakasone called for the establishment of a cabinet-level advisory council on education as the first step toward a far-reaching reform of the nation's education system. Criticizing the standardization of the system run by the Ministry of Education, he called for a less regulated education system which would foster in students a greater degree of creativity and internationalism. His "Seven Point Plan" for reform, outlined during the general election earlier that year, also called for strengthened moral education, stricter teacher training, and changes in the high school and university entrance examination systems.  

Almost immediately, however, the prime minister ran into opposition from members of his own party's education zoku. First, the Dietmen sought to prevent Nakasone from setting up a high-profile deliberative council. Later, they worked actively behind the scenes to prevent the council from making recommendations they opposed. In the final analysis, Nakasone was unable to win approval for many of the education reform proposals he favored largely due to his inability to win the support of this group of Dietmen from his own party.

The questions raised by this case—and other similar cases in which LDP leaders have been unable to overcome or resolve sectional disputes within their own party—concern the relationship between zoku power and LDP power. In what ways has the rise in zoku influence in the policy process contributed to a rise in LDP influence? In what ways may zoku influence actually serve as a check on party power? These questions are brought into sharp relief when one contrasts the recent record on education reform in Japan with the record in the United Kingdom. There, in a similar parliamentary system, Prime Minister Thatcher was able to win approval of significant educational reforms without running into opposition from a clan of educationists in her own party. In Britain, "party dominance" means that the party leadership is able to implement the policies it seeks. Can a system like Japan's in which the greatest policymaking power within the party rests with its sectional zoku be called "party dominant"?

This paper seeks insights into the relationship between zoku power and LDP power by building on recent studies of the growing LDP role in the policy process and looking closely at the part zoku Dietmen have played in a single policy area: education. The first section begins by identifying in greater detail exactly what is meant by the term zoku, proceeding then to examine the policy role ascribed to these zoku in various recent studies. The second section traces the growing role played by one zoku in particular, the education zoku (bunkyō zoku). Finally, the third section returns to the questions outlined above, building on both the recent literature and the education case study to suggest a reevaluation of the way the zoku role in the policymaking process has been portrayed.

The Zoku: An Unofficial Clique of Diet Members

The LDP's zoku have received much attention in the past several years. In Japan, five major studies have been published since 1983. In the United States, a number of scholars, including Ellis Krauss, Yung H. Park, and Lee Farnsworth, have given the phenomenon their attention while the most recent textbooks on Japanese politics have included short sections dealing with the growing role of zoku Diet members. While all of these studies have not agreed in their evaluation of the role played by these groups of Dietmen, they have agreed at least on a definition. According to Gerald Curtis, a zoku is composed of "Diet members who have a considerable amount of expertise and practical experience about a particular area of government policy and enough seniority in the party to have influence on a continuing basis with the ministry responsible for that policy area."  

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zoku is not an official group with an official membership. Rather, “membership” is something a Diet member earns when it is recognized that he has acquired significant influence in a specific policy area through service in numerous party and cabinet positions related to that area.

Today, most newly elected Diet members begin their careers by choosing one or two policy areas in which they plan to concentrate their efforts and joining the relevant policy division (bukai) of the LDP’s Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC, Seimu Chōsakai). Most popular, of course, are those divisions that promise votes and political fund-raising connections—such areas as construction, agriculture, and commerce. Some Diet members, however, choose areas such as education or health and welfare which may not promise as much in terms of money or votes but which hold some personal interest for that Diet member.

A Diet member does not come to be seen as a zoku member, however, merely by joining a PARC division. He must first work hard in PARC activities, attending study sessions and discussions of the budget for his ministry, and he must then serve the party in a series of positions related to his area. An important early post is that of parliamentary vice-minister (seimu jikan) in “his” ministry. Other career steps include those of vice-chairman and then chairman of the relevant PARC division, director (ritsu) and then chairman of the relevant Diet committee, and finally, cabinet minister. Few Diet members manage to work their way up the LDP career ladder while serving exclusively in positions related to their area of expertise. Fractional considerations often put them in positions in new and different policy spheres. A strong zoku Diet member, however, has usually held four or five of the above posts.

Just as a zoku has no official membership, it also has no official role. Instead, zoku Diet members, individually and in groups, influence the policy process through various formal and informal channels. Through the PARC divisions, for example, zoku Diet members have a great deal of influence over which ministry funding requests will be supported by the LDP. They may use this power to push their favorite programs or they may use it as leverage to encourage ministry officials to make certain administrative decisions. Similarly, Diet members belonging to a given zoku usually control the party’s policy deliberation process for their sphere. Zoku elders are as a rule put in charge of the PARC commissions and they are almost always the moving force behind PARC special committees set up to devise party policy in priority areas.

Another formal channel of zoku influence is the cabinet. While the LDP leadership distributes cabinet portfolios according to a complex formula involving seniority and factional affiliation (as well as area of expertise), ministries end up under zoku ministers with surprising regularity. In Nakasone’s fourth cabinet, for example, the Ministries of Transportation, Education, Health and Welfare, and Agriculture were all controlled by zoku veterans influential, respectively, in those areas. When such zoku elders end up in charge of “their” ministries, they are able to use their expertise to take full advantage of the official powers of cabinet ministers—powers to shape ministry personnel decisions; form, and appoint members to, deliberative councils; and sign off on the ministry’s official administrative decisions. As Yung H. Park demonstrates in his study of cabinet ministers, those with experience and expertise often exercise significant power over their ministries.

In evaluating the power of zoku Diet members, most recent studies—like Park’s—have focused on the influence of zoku leaders over the bureaucrats of their policy sphere. These studies have emphasized the ability of zoku Dietmen to use their PARC and cabinet positions to influence ministry decisions and, in many cases, dominate the policymaking processes within their respective spheres. Most of the studies have also recognized, however, that zoku play an important role in the broader policy process as well. They interact with other zoku and other ministries in disputes over cross-jurisdictional issues, and they react to the efforts of (non-zoku) party leaders to bring their influence to bear on their issue area. In such cases, Satō Seizaburō and Matsuzaki Tetsuhisa argue, the increasing influence of zoku Diet members has actually contributed to a decline in the LDP’s overall control of the policymaking process.

What Satō, Matsuzaki, and others argue is that while a zoku’s powers allow it substantial influence in its issue area, the same powers allow it to help its ministry resist policy initiatives from outside its sphere—even when those policies are supported by the leadership of its own party. Inoguchi Takashi and Iwai Tomaaki, based on their analysis of ten case studies of recent zoku involvement in various disputes, conclude that many zoku

8. Inoguchi and Iwai, “Zoku gin” no kenkyū, p. 133.
9. Park, Bureaucrats and Ministers, pp. 34-38, and Curtis, The Japanese Way of Politics, pp. 89-90, provide good summaries of an LDP member’s career path; see Inoguchi and Iwai, “Zoku gin” no kenkyū, pp. 103-25, for a discussion—with some interesting examples—of the relationship between career path and zoku membership.

10. Mitsuzaka Hiroshi (Transportation), Hatada Tatsuru (Agriculture), and Imai Isao (Health and Welfare) were all former heads of their respective PARC divisions—one objective measure of zoku status; Kaifu Toshiki (Education) was a former minister of the same ministry and former head of the PARC Education System Commission—making him a zoku elder also.


act as “guard dogs” (banken) for their ministries. When outside initiatives (e.g., Administrative Reform Council budget-cutting initiatives) threaten the interests of their ministries, such zoku use their influence in their sphere to prevent party leaders from implementing proposed changes. Inoguchi and Iwai argue that zoku, when they act in this way, are not really contributing to the overall influence of the LDP. They are merely acting as “cheerleaders” in representing the interests of their ministries—doing for the ministries what they used to do for themselves in the days when bureaucrats had more autonomous power.

For Inoguchi and Iwai, the case for the argument that there has been at least some movement toward “party dominance” rests on the occasional successes of zoku that act not as “guard dogs” but as “hunting dogs” (ryōken). These are the zoku able to use their power to shape policy in their area—even when the bureaucrats in their ministry would rather do otherwise. They are also the ones that sometimes seek to assert their influence in other issue areas. The authors assert that the number of such cases in which zoku try to assert their own power is increasing. For example, they point to the success of the agriculture zoku in blocking a government effort to cut the producer’s price of rice in 1986, despite Ministry of Agriculture support for such a cut. Similarly, in the area of tax reform, they point to the success of the posts and telecommunications zoku in moving on its own to prevent the implementation of a “green card” program aimed at eliminating a loophole that allowed Japanese savers to open multiple tax-free postal savings accounts to elude taxes on interest. Thus Inoguchi and Iwai, while dismissing much of “guard dog” zoku activity as mere cheerleading, nevertheless see in the growth of “hunting dog” zoku activity the potential for further movement toward “party dominance.”

Recent studies of zoku thus demonstrate that these groups of Dietmen play a multifaceted role. Through their influence in the budget and LDP policy-deliberations process, through their cabinet positions, and through their “hunting dog” initiatives, zoku contribute to the increasing influence of the LDP in the policymaking process. On the other hand, as “guard dogs” of sectional interests and “cheerleaders” for their own ministries, they weaken the ability of the party to coordinate competing interests within the conservative camp. While in the former capacity they contribute to “party dominance,” in the latter they detract from it.

The education zoku has been selected as the subject for the case study that follows because it provides interesting and instructive examples of both facets of the zoku role in the Japanese policymaking process. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the education zoku emerged as a distinct group and began to assert its influence over the Ministry of Education and the nation’s education policies. As such, it is not unlike many other zoku that emerged and began to strengthen LDP influence over policymaking in a wide range of issue areas at about the same time. Likewise, the way in which the education zoku resisted Prime Minister Nakasone’s reform initiative in the 1980s is typical of the way many other zoku have resisted reform efforts of party leaders since the late 1970s.

If the education zoku is in these crucial respects typical of the LDP’s other zoku, it should nevertheless be noted that the party’s educationists are probably a more independent-minded and policy-oriented group than LDP Diet members in general. As is discussed in more detail below, many education Diet members are second-generation politicians with enough self-confidence and electoral security to concentrate more on policy matters than on servicing their electoral districts. In addition, as one Dietman who has worked with education zoku members remarked, the bunkyō zoku is also probably more “cluquish” (haitateki) than most LDP policy cliques. Almost all of the senior zoku members attended Waseda University, and they have a tendency to regard the zoku as their own “special village,” as this non-educationist put it.

While these characteristics perhaps make the education zoku a more colorful group than most, they do not make it unique. Other zoku have their share of self-confident and policy-oriented politicians, some even as “cluquish” as the LDP’s educationists. For the purposes of this study, however, the important point is that these attributes do not alter the fact that the education zoku functions much as the party’s other policy cliques do. As this case study reveals, the ambitions of the education zoku Dietmen merely

13. Inoguchi and Iwai, “Zoku giri’ no kenkyū,” pp. 258–60. The cases which, according to the authors, fit into this type of pattern include: the transportation zoku’s ability to turn on its head an Administrative Reform Council (Rincho) recommendation calling for relaxed regulation of automobile inspections; the education zoku’s success in resisting the Rincho proposal calling for an end to the system of providing free textbooks to elementary and lower secondary school children; the ability of the posts and telecommunications zoku to maintain some regulatory influence in the telecommunications industry in the face of NTT privatization and international pressure to liberalize government regulations in the area; and two other disputes involving the social welfare and defense zoku, respectively. See Inoguchi and Iwai, pp. 215–34.

17. Ibid., pp. 237–42.
18. Interview with Aichi Kazuo, July 30, 1987. Though chairman of the Diet Education Committee at the time, Aichi was definitely not an education zoku member. Like many chairmen of Diet committees, he had ended up in charge of a Diet committee despite a lack of any experience serving on the party’s relevant PARC committees. Aichi therefore was an outsider as far as the education zoku was concerned.
lead them to accentuate the way they carry out their dual role in the policy process. They are eager to contribute to party power in their policy sphere, but they are also eager to limit outside interference. The following section illustrates how the education zoku plays these two roles, thus providing an empirical basis for an evaluation of the overall relationship between zoku power and LDP power.

The Birth of the Education Zoku

The LDP has been involved in the making of education policy, of course, since its formation in 1955. It was only in the late 1960s, however, that one could begin to see the development of an “education zoku”—a group of Diet members with an interest in a range of education issues and with long-term experience on PARC education committees. Given that other zoku developed according to a similar pattern, the story of the “birth” of the education zoku illustrates the wider changes that have taken place in the LDP’s policymaking role.

In the first years of LDP rule, the party’s “education policy” was largely subsumed in its broader campaign to weaken the unions, including the Japan Teachers’ Union (JTU, Nikkyōso). Still new to power and intent on solidifying its political base, the LDP delegated most of its policymaking power to the bureaucracy and devoted its energy to the more political task of dealing with the opposition parties in the Diet. As a result of this division of power, the party’s policy-related positions (such as those in PARC) were considered to be less prestigious than its political posts.19 In the area of education, the most influential party figures were not those who worked on the PARC education committees but rather the senior “political” Diet members who specialized in fighting the Socialists and the unions (and therefore the JTU). Such men as Ōdachi Shigeo and Araki Masuo, both active in pushing the party’s anti-JTU education policies during their tenures as education ministers, had never been part of the PARC education apparatus and were known more for their tough positions in favor of law and order than for their views on education.

As a result of the LDP’s decision to emphasize politics over policy in the area of education, there were few LDP “educationists” in that early period. Among the few were Sakata Michita and Kennoki Toshihiro. Sakata, elected to the Lower House in the first postwar election at the age of 29, slowly gained experience in the education sphere through his work on PARC education bodies. He was chairman of the PARC Education System Commission for two extended periods between 1961 and 1968. Kennoki, a former Ministry of Education (MOE, Mombushō) official, had entered the Upper House in 1953 and had since been seeking to get the party to take a greater interest in reforming the education system. He recalled in an interview, however, that there were few Diet members interested in education in those days. The issue was seen as a jinx, he explained, with many young Diet members discouraged from becoming involved by the belief that “those who get involved with education lose elections.” At the peak of the LDP’s offensive against the JTU in the late 1950s, Kennoki had to make “home visits” just to fill the LDP’s share of seats on the Diet Education Committee. “I told them that all they had to do was come to the meetings and sit quietly,” he recalled.20

The ideological nature of the LDP’s early involvement in education meant that it played an influential but narrow part in the policymaking process. The party’s primary avenue of influence was its group of law-and-order ministers (such men as Ōdachi and Araki). These men intervened in MOE personnel affairs and used various other tactics to convince the ministry to become as avidly anti-JTU as the party itself. They then went on to encourage the ministry’s various anti-union policy proposals, concentrating their efforts on pushing those laws through the Diet. The party remained relatively uninvolved, however, in the MOE’s non-union-related education policies. Lacking a core of dedicated educationists, the LDP did not have the expertise to get involved in most areas of education policy. It also did not seek out connections with any interest groups involved in the education area, leaving the interest mediation function as well to the Ministry of Education. Until the late 1960s, the party played what journalist Yamazaki Masato describes as a “handmaiden” role.21 Apart from its primary concern of assuring that the ministry maintained its anti-union posture, it was satisfied to do the minimum of work regarding its budgetary and legislative needs. Kennoki agreed: “Before the zoku,” he admitted, “most education policy was made by the MOE.”22

In the late 1960s, at the height of the student movement, the LDP’s educationists finally took charge of the party’s education policy. The old law-and-order group (led by Araki as head of the party’s Student Problem Discussion Group and Moriyama Kinji of its Education Normalization Committee) was using the occasion of the university demonstrations to seek a tough new law to provide the government with greatly increased power over the universities. The problems would be resolved, they argued, if university officials would simply take a harder line in dealing with the student leaders of the demonstrations.

22. Kennoki interview. Numerous MOE officials and LDP politicians confirmed this statement in interviews.
Educationists such as Sakata insisted, however, that the problems in the universities were not merely an issue of law and order; the disturbances reflected real deficiencies in the institutions of higher education. Using his position as chairman of the PARC Education System Commission, Sakata took the initiative in September 1968 by convening a special investigation. Over a period of two months, the commission met regularly to hear testimony from university officials, professors, students, and others about the problem. It was the first time the LDP had conducted serious research into an education issue and foreshadowed the coming, more activist pattern of LDP involvement in education policymaking. Following a vigorous internal debate, the commission published a set of proposals calling for changes in the structure of university administration, the diversification of higher education, aid to private universities, and limited consultations between students and university officials. The proposals, while still considered “reactionary” by the student protesters and their supporters on the progressive end of the Japanese political spectrum, nevertheless marked a significant change from previous party statements on education because they sought to address the educational problems at the root of the university disturbances rather than relying on discipline and control as advocated by the law-and-order “hawks.”

Soon after the publication of these recommendations, Prime Minister Satō named Sakata as his new minister of education, signaling the ascendency of the educationists and the success of their campaign to have the university disturbances treated as an education problem. Sakata worked quickly to stem the demand for government intervention in the universities by pushing through the Special Measures Law Relating to the Management of Universities, a law that accomplished its mission merely by threatening such intervention. He then set out to follow the advice of his own council by addressing the root causes of the disturbances. The first step was to be the establishment of a government program for providing private universities with greatly expanded financial assistance.

Sakata was not alone in this campaign. He was joined by a whole new group of young Diet members who had been attracted to the education sphere as the university protests pushed the education issue to the top of the political agenda. Nishioka Takeo, one of the new group, explained that he joined “because the Diet Education Committee was becoming important.” He did not accept the old argument that “education loses elections” but felt instead that it would serve as an effective platform on which to build his Diet career. Several other up-and-coming young Diet members agreed. Among the others attracted to the party’s various education organs in this


period were Kūno Yohei, Fujinomi Takao, Hashimoto Ryūtarō, Matsunaga Hikaru, Mori Yoshihito, and Tanikawa Katsu—-all destined to become cabinet ministers. All were from the “Showa generation” (born between 1928 and 1937) and therefore had undergone some or all of their schooling in the postwar years. Nishioka, Kūno, Mori, and Hashimoto were barely in elementary school when the war ended. They were the first Diet members produced by the postwar “6-3-3” system (strictly standardized six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, and three years of high school).

The decision of all of these young Diet members to join the party’s education organs at this time was not entirely coincidental. The LDP’s leadership—particularly senior educationists such as Sakata and Hasegawa Taka-she—realized that the party needed young Diet members who had grown up with the postwar education system in order to deal with the system’s problems. The party leadership was seeking to put greater emphasis on the policy side of politics in all spheres, and education seemed particularly in need of young talent. The young Diet members were therefore talked into joining Sakata’s education workshops. The university disturbances gave the young men a great deal of experience very quickly.

The Maturing of the Zoku

The zoku thus emerged as a new participant in the education policymaking process in the late 1960s and early 1970s, just as the Ministry of Education’s Central Council on Education (CCE, Chūkyōshin) was completing a comprehensive review of the postwar education system. At that time, however, the zoku was still in its infancy. Although Sakata was minister of education for virtually the entire period of the council’s deliberations, and although Nishioka was MOE parliamentary vice-minister in the CCE’s final year, their input into the content of the council’s educational reform proposals seems to have been limited. They helped give the report its general shape and tone, but the details were worked out entirely between the council’s members and the MOE. Nishioka himself admits that he had only limited influence at the time. Suzuki Shigenobu, a CCE specialist member at the time, was more blunt:

Nishioka was part of a “reformist faction” then, but he had absolutely no input. There was really no input from any politicians. Morito [the chair-

25. Inoguchi and Iwai, “Zoku gijin no kenkyū,” p. 113, report that Nishioka in particular was recruited by a Waseda University elder (probably Hasegawa). Nishioka claims that he in turn helped recruit others to join, including several more Waseda University colleagues. Interview with Nishioka, July 23, 1987. The Waseda connection is an on-going characteristic of the education zoku and seems to have made it a particularly tightly knit group.
man] just would not allow it. He had a real samurai-type character, and he just would not listen even if the LDP voiced its opinion. For example, Morito was never even called before the Diet (or the LDP) to testify on the progress of the CCE’s deliberations. I really respected this.27

Up through 1971 at least, therefore, the MOE remained the dominant force in shaping education reform policies.

The CCE report, however, was only the first step in the reform initiative of the early 1970s. In the implementation stage (which lasted well into the late 1970s), the zoku played a much more significant role. By this time, the young Diet members had gained more experience in the area of education. Nishioaka—who had served as a director of the Diet Education Committee in 1967, vice-chairman of the PARC Education Division starting in 1968, and MOE parliamentary vice-minister from 1970–71—was named chairman of the PARC Education Division in 1971 and went on to serve for four and a half years. Tanikawa, Fujimin, and Mori served in similar numbers of posts. (See Table 1.) Such career paths gave these Diet members a base of knowledge and experience from which they could exert stronger influence on the education policymaking process. Okuda Shinjō, an MOE official who saw the zoku come of age, remarked on the transformation:

In the 1950s and 60s, MOE officials played the leadership role. But during this time, LDP Diet members were getting elected at a younger and younger age. Many were second-generation politicians. In the late 1960s, these Diet members got together and set up study sessions to learn about education policy. When these were first established, I was called on to lecture at these meetings—as an MOE elder to the younger Diet members. Today, those same Diet members are able to come up with their own ideas and formulate their own policies. They tell the MOE what to do.28

The long years of working on LDP education organs gave the zoku members the ability to play an active role.

Before examining the nature of the zoku’s expanded influence, the character of this “group” needs further elaboration. As revealed in Table 1, the zoku Diet members followed one of two career paths. A few, such as Kaifu, Okuno, and Sunada, did not participate in PARC education committees before taking over the cabinet education portfolio, but became active later. Most, however, earned their zoku status by committing themselves early in their careers to the education sphere. In the table, a clear “education zoku career path” is visible. Aside from the three Diet members named above, almost all of the other zoku members earned their zoku status by tracing the following route: serving first as director of the Diet

Table 1
The Careers of Education Zoku Diet Members* (numbers indicate the order in which positions assumed)

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<th>Name of Dietman</th>
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<th>PVM</th>
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<th>C-ESC</th>
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KEY: D-DEC = Director, Diet Education Committee
V-ED = Vice-chairman, PARC Education Division
PVM = Parliamentary Vice-minister, Ministry of Education
C-DEC = Chairman, Diet Education Committee
C-ED = Chairman, PARC Education Division
M-MOE = Minister, Ministry of Education
C-ESC = Chairman, PARC Education System Commission

* There is no such thing as an official “membership” of a zoku. Nevertheless, most actors involved in education recognize the existence of such a group and have an idea of who is “in” and who is not. This membership list was compiled by Inouichi Takashi and Iwai Tomoaki, “Zoku giin” no kenkyū (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1987). It was largely confirmed in my interviews. The list includes only those Dietmen active after the 1986 election.


Education Committee and/or as vice-chairman of the PARC Education Division; then serving as the parliamentary vice-minister for the Ministry of Education; then serving as Chairman of the PARC Education Division; and finally, in some cases, serving as minister of education.

Given the hesitance noted above of Diet members even to serve on the Diet Education Committee in the 1950s, one must wonder what made these members commit their careers so totally to the education issue in the 1970s. Clearly, the education sphere did not promise either the votes or the political funds that could be garnered through commitment to other zoku such as those in the areas of commerce, agriculture, and construction. While some observers have suggested that the education sphere is not without its constituency,¹⁰ for most of these Diet members, the traditional “votes and money” motivation was not primary. Rather, a survey of the career backgrounds of these Diet members and interviews conducted with a cross section of the membership show that they generally seem to have had a policy motivation for their commitment to the education area.

Many of the education zoku Diet members became active in the sphere in order to further their nationalist ideological agenda. The policy motivation of these Diet members (e.g., Mitsuzuka, Ishibashi, Mori, and Aoki) can be seen as an outgrowth of their concern that the postwar education system—reformed by the Americans and influenced by the left-wing teachers’ union—has not adequately fostered national pride. These have been the members most active in the campaign to encourage the revision of textbooks to portray Japanese history in a more positive light.¹¹ These are also the members who have participated in other LDP groups associated with the party’s right wing.¹²

It would be a serious misinterpretation to characterize the entire education zoku as right-wing, however. Among its members are many who joined because of their belief that education represents an investment in Japan’s future. They sought government aid for private universities and later private high schools. They won increased government support for private and public kindergartens. They sought funds to allow schools to reduce the size of their classes, and they argued for funds to aid prefectures in constructing additional public high schools. While less vocal than the zoku nationalists, these Diet members may also be seen as policy motivated. They committed themselves to the education sphere because they had their own ideas about how Japanese education could be strengthened.³²

The education zoku also includes a disproportionate number of Diet members who are able to play a more assertive role in the policy process due to the security of their electoral districts. Seven of the 19 education Diet members listed by Inoguchi and Iwai are second- (in one case third-) generation Diet members.³³ These members generally inherit the support structures of their fathers or fathers-in-law and thus tend to have more electoral security. The LDP’s education zoku members are thus not only more interested in policy considerations than most Diet members, they are also in a better position to put aside concerns about their districts and devote more energy to the policy process. As one senior Ministry of Education official wrote:

This trend is particularly strong in the case of the PARC education division. These politicians—strong in their electoral districts and not concerned about “money” and “votes”—are less interested in earning points with interest groups than they are in getting their favored educational policies adopted. Thus, they form policy groups based on their burning convictions and, instead of intervening with the bureaucracy on behalf of specific interest groups, push the bureaucracy to adopt the basic policies of the party itself.³⁴

More accurately, the MOE official should have said “the basic policies of the education zoku itself.” In some cases, the zoku policy and the party policy are the same, but in others (as the discussion of the Nakasone initiative below reveals) the zoku pursues a policy opposed to that of the party leadership. Regardless, the comment testifies to the fact that the zoku that emerged as a strong force in the education policy process in the 1970s was composed of policy-motivated and electorally strong Dietmen.

³² It should be noted that these two policy motivations are not mutually exclusive. Some Diet members favor the expansion of education programs and a more nationalist curriculum.

³³ While 7 of 19 (37 per cent) education Diet members are second-generation politicians, 14 of 54 (25 per cent) construction and agriculture zoku Diet members fall in the same category. Based on information reported in Inoguchi and Iwai, “Zoku giin” no kenkyû, pp. 296–301.

³⁴ Saïtô Taijun, Bunkó gyousei ni miru—seisaku keisei katei no kenkyû (Tokyo: Gyousei, 1984), p. 84.
The Influence of the Mature Zoku

Significantly, the growth in the power of the education zoku was not accompanied by any change in the formal structure of the party policymaking apparatus. The Policy Affairs Research Council, with its divisions and commissions, retained its 1955 structure. The difference was that the new group of Diet members sought to use this apparatus.

The PARC Education Division, which had previously limited its role to that of reviewing proposals initiated by the ministry, began to take the initiative itself. Under Nishioka, the division set up “project teams” to develop party positions on key problems. Among those set up in the period after Nishioka took over in 1971 were teams for “teacher policy,” “higher education,” “private education,” “educational content,” “school lunches,” and “culture.” These small groups—each composed of a few division members—investigated problems and developed their own policy proposals. The Education Division under Nishioka was the first bukai to employ project teams, although this innovation was subsequently adopted by most other PARC divisions. The education zoku in particular made intensive use of its project teams and subcommittees (shōin kai) in the 1970s and early 1980s, producing a steady stream of reports which gave the zoku the policymaking initiative for virtually the whole period.

An example of the zoku taking the policy initiative was its role in pushing a large teachers’ salary increase in the early 1970s. As noted above, zoku members such as Nishioka did not have a great deal of input into the 1971 comprehensive education reform report of the MOE’s Central Council on Education. One item that did reflect zoku input, however, was the CCE recommendation that teachers’ salaries be increased by 50 per cent. Not surprisingly, when the CCE’s proposals became bogged down in the face of broad opposition, it was this proposal the zoku was most interested in extracting from the mire.

Following the publication of the CCE report in June 1971, the MOE faced an onslaught of criticism concerning the council’s proposals, including the CCE’s proposals for the reform of the salary structure and a salary increase. Hesitant to act in the face of this criticism, the ministry delayed for over a year after the publication of the original recommendation before referring the salary issues to yet another council in August 1972. The zoku was much quicker off the mark. In the spring of 1972, during a heated leadership struggle within the LDP, the zoku nevertheless was able to bring together concerned members on both sides to endorse a bold plan for im-

35. Yamazaki, Jiminitori to kyōiku seisaku, pp. 115–16.

plementing the CCE’s recommendations concerning teachers. Its report, released on July 1, was published in time to influence the budget deliberations for fiscal year 1973.

Although the MOE had only just put its own research council to work, it was soon swept along at the LDP pace. A senior ministry official, meeting with Prime Minister Tanaka soon after he assumed office, was surprised when the new leader greeted his plea for a large allocation of funds for a teachers’ salary rise with a simple reply: “Do it.” Prodded along as well by further zoku pressure, the ministry worked furiously to prepare its request for funds, presenting the demand in September as a late addition to its original set of requests. When the Ministry of Finance (MOF) turned down the MOE request later in the budget process, the zoku worked behind the scenes to have it restored. Although the final budget provided the MOE with less than it had originally requested, it nevertheless included the funds necessary to cover a ten per cent salary rise for all teachers of grades one through nine with an MOE-MOF memo committing the government to further increases in the future.

The zoku’s more assertive role in the above case was the first in a succession of education issue-related campaigns during this period which earned the group the sobriquet “Kantō gun”—after the Japanese army that swept into China in the 1930s. The zoku subsequently forced Tanaka to go along with its plan to deal with the salary issue through legislation and won passage of the law in 1974. Later, when a certain MOE official tried to negotiate with the teachers’ union as a way of smoothing the implementation of a particularly controversial part of the 1974 legislation, zoku leaders intervened in the usually sacrosanct personnel affairs of the ministry and brought about the removal of the offending official. The zoku Diet members employed a similarly aggressive style in their effort to increase government support for private universities, kindergartens, and finally, private elementary and secondary schools.

In many of these policy initiatives, the zoku relied heavily on its role in the budgetary process in order to get its favored policies implemented. As noted above, the growth in the zoku’s role was not caused by a change in

the official structure of the budget process. As before, the budget for the MOE and other spending ministries was determined through what was essentially a three-step process: Step One (August), the spending ministries issued their budget "demands"; Step Two (December), the MOF, following consultations with the spending ministries, issued its version of the budget, usually granting only a few of the ministries' demands for new spending; Step Three (late December-January), the LDP issued its final government budget proposal which used the MOF draft as a base but added a few new programs it considered to be special priorities. This proposal was almost always approved with few changes by the Diet because the LDP consistently had a majority and had usually negotiated away significant opposition objections.

While this system remained a constant during the period of the zoku’s emergence, the group’s part in the process changed. In the pre-zoku period, the party’s PARC Education Division concentrated its budgetary efforts almost entirely on the final December-January step, taking up a few of the MOE’s demands in the PARC debate following the issuance of the MOF draft and seeking to have them “revived” and included in the government’s final budget proposal. As the zoku matured, however, it became more and more involved in earlier stages of the budget process. It would meet with MOE officials in July and August, before the ministry issued its demands, to pass on its own ideas as to which new programs should be funded. At the peak of this crucial budget season, the PARC Education Division would hold forums at which interest groups would voice support for MOE and zoku priorities. While the ministry would be involved in marshaling the traditional educational interest groups in the public sector, the LDP would at this time also bring in the groups with which it had more direct ties, such as those representing private universities, schools, and kindergartens. Between September and December the zoku would then work behind the scenes, using influence with MOF officials to have them include its priorities in the MOF draft budget. And in January, it would work actively to have the LDP give its support to MOE demands (particularly those it had supported all along).

This activist budgetary role was clearly visible in the case of the teachers’ salary rise proposal discussed above. It was even more marked in the zoku’s campaign to increase government support for private education. Aid to private universities, in particular, had been an early zoku priority, with the PARC education committees having set up a subcommittee to deal with the issue as early as 1968. Despite the MOE’s initial desire to delay imple-

menting any new aid program for private higher education until the CCE completed its review in 1971, the zoku convinced the ministry to support its accelerated schedule. Quickly winning the support of the opposition parties and the MOE, the Diet members were able to have an initial allocation of funds inserted in the 1970 budget. Later, in 1975, the zoku took full advantage of its budgetary powers in order to increase significantly government aid to private education. Breaking all the established norms of lawmaking, the zoku inserted greatly increased allocations for private universities and a first-ever allocation for private schools in the 1975 budget and only afterward introduced the authorization legislation. The legislation was introduced as a private member’s bill less than ten days before the end of the legislative session but was rushed through the entire process in that short time. Clearly, the LDP’s education zoku had emerged as the dominant force in the policy process.

The Zoku and the Rest of the Party: The Nakasone Initiative

The above story of the birth and rise of the education zoku and its influence on education policy in the 1970s illustrates clearly what was identified above as the zoku “contribution” to LDP power. The 1970s saw the zoku behave on several occasions as a “hunting dog,” taking the initiative in its push for a teachers’ salary hike and aid to private education when the MOE was hesitant to act. The period saw the zoku take full advantage of its powers in the budget and policy deliberations processes within the education sphere. Finally, the 1970s also saw the zoku build connections with its own interest groups, forging ties with private education where the MOE had traditionally only been interested in the public sector.

To end the story here, however, would be to misrepresent the overall zoku role. As noted in the first section above, while zoku contribute to party influence in their respective spheres, they also “detract” from the


42. See Yamazaki, Jinyūto to kyōiku seisaku, pp. 136–38, for an account of the passage of this legislation—the Promotional Aid to Private Education Law (Shigaku shinkō jōseki hō). It must be noted here that the structure of the budget process has changed in the period since these examples. Since the slowdown in Japan’s growth rate and the resulting emergence of tighter budgets, the LDP has put greater emphasis on a “July Step” (preceding the process outlined above) in which the LDP, consulting with the MOE, sets a preliminary budget ceiling. As a result, the budget process has been moved up, with important decisions made in July and with most of the budget decided by the time the spending ministries make their demands in August. The zoku continues to play an important role in this changed environment, negotiating with the party leadership in order to try to have education given special priority under the July budget ceilings and working closely with the MOE to have its priorities reflected in the MOE budget demands. See Schoppa, Education Reform in Japan, pp. 87–88.
ability of the LDP leadership to coordinate competing interests within the party. Even in the 1970s, there were cases in which sectional rivalries prevented the party from implementing policy change.\(^{43}\) The role of the zoku in relation to the rest of the party can best be illustrated, however, through a close examination of the part this group played in responding to Prime Minister Nakasone’s recent education reform initiative.

It must be remembered, first, that Nakasone was not an education zoku member. He was a prime minister who sought to assert his own personal leadership in the area of education for a combination of reasons: 1) in order to respond to popular concern over “examination hell” and rising school violence and thereby improve his own popularity; 2) in order to respond to demands from segments of the business/economic community that the education system be made more flexible and creativity-oriented; and 3) in order to pursue his own personal agenda (supported by more nationalist members of the LDP) of incorporating a stronger moral and nationalist education content into the postwar educational system.

All three motives were evident in Nakasone’s “Seven Point Proposal for Education Reform,” issued during the December 1983 general election campaign. He proposed that the examination system be improved, that the “6-3-3” postwar education system be reformed, and that more emphasis be put on moral education. He also expressed his desire to push his reform initiative in the hands of a supra-cabinet education reform council modeled on the powerful Provisional Commission for Administrative Reform (Rinchō). Rather than having the MOE conduct another review of the education system through its Central Council on Education, he wanted a more independent review by a group less tied to the educational establishment.\(^{44}\)

This proposal that the reform initiative be led by the prime minister’s own council was a clear affront to the Ministry of Education and the LDP’s

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43. For example, the party was unable to resolve the dispute between the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Education (supported by their respective zoku) over how best to proceed toward a goal of rationalizing the nation’s system of preschool education, a goal addressed by the MOE’s Central Council on Education in 1971. The MOE and the education zoku wanted to mandate establishment of public kindergartens (yōchien) in shortage areas and wanted as well to mandate attendance in kindergarten by all five-year-olds. The Ministry of Health and Welfare and its zoku saw such proposals as a threat to the nursery schools (haikuen) under their jurisdiction and thus opposed both of those steps. Unable to resolve this dispute, the party has let stand the bifurcated system under which the two ministries continue to support two quite different systems of care and education for children of the same age group. For a description of the preschool system, see Sarane Spence Boocock, “Controlled Diversity: An Overview of the Japanese Preschool System,” Journal of Japanese Studies, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter 1989), pp. 41–65.

44. He first expressed support for a supra-cabinet education council in 1981; see Nihon kyōiku shimbun, April 16, 1984. He developed the argument more fully in the book he prepared for the 1983 election, Atarashii hoshū no ronri (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1983).

own education zoku—the implication being that those who had been in charge of the system were incapable of reforming it. Consequently, the prime minister’s final decision to establish such a council—announced in mid-January after the election—sparked a turf battle between Nakasone and the combined forces of the MOE and zoku. The territorial conflict was aggravated by the fact that many members of the education zoku were leading Diet members of factions opposed to Nakasone’s leadership of the party. Their natural opposition to prime ministerial intervention in their sphere was thus compounded by their desire to prevent Nakasone from “taking away their issue” and using it to extend his tenure.\(^{45}\)

The subgovernment’s opposition was also aggravated, however, by underlying differences of opinion about education reform issues. First, none of the education actors was confident that Nakasone was willing to devote financial resources to education reform. Remembering the prime minister’s close association with the budget-cutting Rinchō, some even feared that he might seek reforms that would result in further budget reductions. Both the MOE and the zoku were also concerned about Nakasone’s tendency to embrace radical reform ideas. Some of the prime minister’s advisors were known to be advocates of the total “liberalization” (jūyaku) of the education system—a set of ideas that included proposals to drastically reduce government (i.e., MOE and zoku) control over the system. Many in the education establishment were also worried about Nakasone’s commitment to reform of the “6-3-3” system and his support for major changes in the university entrance examination system. The stage was thus set for a deep conflict between the prime minister and the education zoku leaders of his own party.

In the event, Nakasone was temporarily able to patch over the rift caused by the turf battle. He was able to win the support of education zoku leaders, however, only by making a deal: in discussions with zoku veterans Kaifu Toshiki, Mitsuzuka Hiroshi, and Sakata Michita, he agreed to use the reports of the MOE’s Central Council on Education as a starting point for his reform initiative. He also agreed to include wording in the bill establishing his new council to provide: 1) for MOE input in the selection of the council’s membership; and 2) for the secretariat of the council to be headed by the administrative vice-minister of the MOE. Still, while these

45. The zoku included a large number of Nakasone faction members who were not so opposed to the initiative of their faction leader, but it also included a large number of leading politicians from the Fukuda/ Abe and Kōmoto factions who, at the time, were trying to assure that Nakasone’s tenure as party leader would be a short one. The Fukuda faction leaders included Mori Yoshirō, the Minister of Education at the time, Mitsuzuka Hiroshi, Ishibashi Kazuya, and Ōtsuka Yuji. Kaifu Toshiki, a former Minister of Education, was a leader of the Kōmoto faction.
compromises helped Nakasone win approval of his new Ad Hoc Council on Education (AHCE, Rinkyōshin), they ultimately guaranteed that the divisions between the prime minister on the one hand and the MOE and the education zoku on the other would be duplicated in the makeup and deliberations of the new council.

When the membership of the AHCE was announced in August 1984, it was clear that the council would be divided. The list included several Nakasone advisors known for their support for “liberalization” and for their fiscal conservatism. It also included several figures close to the MOE and the zoku, known for their support for a variety of ministry-favored projects (all requiring an increase in the ministry budget) and for their opposition to “liberalization.” Even before the council began its deliberations, therefore, Nakasone and the zoku had made its task of devising a concrete education reform plan virtually impossible. There were only a few areas in which the council’s two opposing camps were likely to find common ground.

As if this were not enough, both the prime minister and the zoku continued to seek to manipulate the council after it began its deliberations. Zoku elders in particular intervened repeatedly to prevent the council from making recommendations they opposed. In the first year, concerned that several council members were trying to make “liberalization” the group’s guiding philosophy, the Dietmen let the council leadership know that they could not tolerate such a move; they communicated these sentiments first in a private meeting at a Tokyo hotel and then at an official meeting of the PARC education committees.46 After the council decided to postpone consideration of “liberalization,” zoku elders continued to use similar channels to communicate their opposition to specific proposals they opposed. In such a way, they (together with the MOE and their allies on the council) forced the council to water down its proposals on the relaxation of school zoning regulations, the deregulation of upper secondary school textbooks, examination reform, and other issues.47

If the zoku and MOE were in this way successful in blocking the “liberalization” advocates on the council, the prime minister’s men were equally successful in blocking reforms that called for major increases in the MOE budget. Nakasone’s men did not object to having these programs included in the list of council goals. The council’s final report thus included a long list of proposals for expensive programs: rapid expansion and improvement of graduate schools; promotion of basic research in universities; incorporation of new information technology into schools and new “intelligent buildings”; reduction in the size of school classes; and various internationalization programs. In a crucial paragraph addressing the issue of funding, however, Sejima Ryüzō and others close to the prime minister refused to support a passage calling for full funding of the council’s recommendations. Instead, the paragraph called on the government to “endeavor to its utmost to achieve the smooth implementation of this council’s recommendations while giving heed to the relationship between this goal and that of budgetary restraint [gyōzaisei kaikaku].”48 The final qualifying clause left the impression of only lukewarm support for the council’s list of expensive programs. Partly as a result, the government decided not to fund the Ad Hoc Council’s education reforms with an exceptional increase in the MOE budget, thereby forcing the MOE to eliminate many of its new programs from its budget requests.49

The mutual blocking process described above did not prevent the Ad Hoc Council from making a few proposals that have been implemented. Those proposals that did survive the three years of contentious debate, however, all had the support of both the prime minister and the education zoku: a one-year training period for new teachers, a set of policies designed to internationalize the education system, and regulations stipulating that the “national flag” and “national anthem” be displayed and performed at school ceremonies.50

It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the value or significance of these reforms. Rather, the point that should be clear from the above description of the process leading to this result is that the rise in zoku power should not be interpreted automatically as a rise in LDP power. In the case of Nakasone’s education reform council, the zoku worked as a “guard dog” for the MOE and for its own sectional interests, limiting the ability of the LDP’s leader to assert his leadership in the education sphere and implement far-reaching reforms. Likewise, Nakasone’s fiscal conservatives limited the ability of his party’s zoku to develop and implement many of their reform proposals. The result was a set of reform policies that represented the least common denominator.

The Overall Relationship between Zoku Power and LDP Power

This case study of the emergence of the education zoku and of its role in the education sphere over the past 20 years, complementing recent studies that have described the rise in zoku power, provides concrete examples

46. Asahi shimbun, January 31 and April 25, 1985 (both evening editions); and Nihon kyōiku shimbun, July 15, 1985.
47. See Schoppa, Education Reform in Japan, pp. 349–63, for details.
48. Rinkyōshin, Kyōiku kaikaku ni kansuru daiyōzō tōshin (saigo tōshin), Aug. 7, 1987, pp. 41–42; See Nihon kyōiku shimbun, April 6 and May 18, 1987, for background on the debate over this phrase.
49. Yomiuri shimbun, August 31, 1986, provides an account of the failed effort of zoku leaders to convince Nakasone to exempt education from the FY 1987 budget ceiling. The government’s 1988 budget provided for only a 0.06 per cent increase in the education budget.
50. See Schoppa, Education Reform in Japan, Chapter 8.
of the multifaceted role zoku have come to play in Japanese politics over the long period of LDP rule. It illustrates their role as “hunting dogs,” using their influence over the budget and in LDP policy deliberations as well as their ties to interest groups to provide the party with greater control over policy in their spheres. It also provides an example of how zoku use these same powers to block the efforts of LDP leaders to assert policy leadership in a way that threatens their sectional interests. How are we to reconcile these two sides of the zoku role, and what can we then conclude about the overall relationship between zoku power and LDP power?

The most important point to emphasize is that these “two sides” of the zoku role are two sides of the same coin; they cannot be separated. Diet members become zoku leaders and gain influence in their sphere through long years of service in that sphere, working closely with elder zoku leaders and with officials in “their” ministry. While this learning and connection-building process provides zoku Dietmen with influence in their sphere (providing them with the means to contribute to LDP influence in the policy process), it also guarantees that they will come to share the sectional interests of their sphere as they help shape its policies (providing them with an incentive to block LDP policies that threaten those sectional interests). This process assures that even when zoku take on the character of “hunting dogs” and take the initiative in their sphere away from their ministry, they will act in accordance with their sectional interests.

In the cases Inoguchi and Iwai cited as “hunting dog” zoku behavior, for example, it is important to recognize that the zoku acted—if not at the prompting of their ministries—at least in accordance with their sectional interests. In the case of the agriculture zoku’s success in stopping the rice price cut, the Dietmen were merely out-representing a sectional interest usually well represented by the Ministry of Agriculture. Likewise, when the postal and telecommunications zoku took it upon itself to block the implementation of the Ministry of Finance’s “green card” scheme designed to improve the MOF’s ability to collect taxes on postal savings accounts, the zoku was also acting in accordance with its own and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications’ long-held sectional interest in preserving the postal savings system. The specific examples of “hunting dog” behavior identified in the case study of the education zoku can also be seen as being consistent with the sphere’s sectional interests. Both the teachers’ salary hike and the program to aid private education, while not initially embraced by the Ministry of Education, nevertheless served to extend the ministry’s influence over teachers, private schools, and private universities.

Significantly, this tendency of zoku Dietmen to come to share the sectional interests of their sphere does not result merely from their participation in the formal policy process for their sphere. It is not simply a matter of the ministries’ views “rubbing off” on them during their years of working together. Zoku Diet members also come to adopt sectional views because of their ties to the interest groups of that sphere. As noted above, many Diet members choose to become involved in zoku activities primarily as a means of securing votes and campaign funds from interest groups. This naturally makes them at least as eager to serve the sectional interests of these groups as are their ministries. In fact, given that the ministries rely on their interest groups only for support in the policy process (and not for votes and campaign funds), the zoku Dietmen actually have a greater incentive to appease the groups than do bureaucrats. This consideration no doubt explains why the agriculture zoku out-represent the Ministry of Agriculture and the posts and telecommunications zoku out-represented its ministry in the two Inoguchi and Iwai cases discussed above.

But zoku do not merely “out-represent” interests already represented by their ministries. They also bring new interest groups into the LDP camp and seek to represent them as well. In the case of the education zoku, the Dietmen brought groups representing private universities, schools, and kindergartens into the fold, seeking to address their demands along with the demands of the public education groups long represented by the MOE. This pattern is certainly not unique to education. Across all sectors, the long period of one-party rule by the LDP has caused diverse new groups to seek to be represented within the conservative camp.51 Zoku Dietmen, eager for new sources of votes and funds, have provided the means for them to be represented. Multiplied across sectors, with each zoku inviting new groups to squeeze in beneath the LDP umbrella, this tendency can be seen to have greatly increased the sectional pressures on the LDP leadership.

All of this boils down to the fact that zoku, however powerful and however independent of their ministries, are essentially sectional. They contribute to the influence of the LDP in the policy process within their sector, but—whether they are “guard dog” zoku or “hunting dog” zoku—serve sectional interests and therefore reduce the ability of LDP leaders to mediate between competing priorities and establish a central direction for the nation’s policy. Even when zoku Dietmen intervene at their own initiative or in a way that represents an interest group heretofore unrepresented by their ministry, they do so in a way that pulls the LDP in a greater variety of different directions. In effect, the more zoku “contribute” to the power of

the party in their respective spheres, the more they "detract" from the ability of LDP leaders to coordinate the policy process according to a broader vision of the nation's interests.

Based on this statement, it is tempting to conclude that the net contribution of zoku power to LDP power is zero. Contributions equal detractions. Such a conclusion would not reflect, however, the significant fact that zoku contribute a certain kind of power (influence in their sections) and detract another kind (the ability of the LDP to coordinate interests). That bias in the way zoku contribute to the LDP's influence has important implications. I would argue that, when viewed from the perspective of the broader policymaking system in Japan, the zoku's contributions are ultimately less important than the ways they detract from the leadership potential of the LDP.

This argument is based, first, on the fact that the zoku, in exercising growing influence within their sectors, do little more than reinforce the sectional character of policymaking in Japan. The key word in that sentence is "reinforce." The zoku did not create sectional politics. Policymaking in Japan has long been organized around the lines dividing the various government ministries. Ministries have worked closely with interest groups in their area and have governed with relative autonomy within their own established spheres, while at the same time competing with one another for resources and control over disputed jurisdictions. Zoku politicians in the last two decades or so have merely come to play a larger role relative to the bureaucrats in a policymaking configuration that remains essentially unchanged. Zoku Dietmen now have some of their own direct contacts with groups interested in their issue areas. They have also come to share with their ministries the jobs of formulating policies for their spheres and competing for funds and control over disputed jurisdictions. They work with bureaucrats in the bureaucrats' system. They have not provided new channels for the LDP to put into effect policies reflecting broader, national interests that do not fit well into the bureaucratic world.

If the zoku contribution to LDP power is seen in this way to be essentially limited, the zoku detraction remains significant. It is true, of course, that—even before the zoku—the LDP had to deal with a segmented bureaucracy which made it difficult for the party to mediate and implement policies according to a broad view of the national interest. To that extent, one might be tempted to argue that here too the rise of zoku power has not really changed the way policy is made. I would argue, however, that there is an important difference between then and now. Before the zoku, the party may have had less policy expertise, but it was more likely to be able to come to a consensus on broad national policy goals. Individual Diet members and groups of members were less tied to sectional interests, and the party leadership was thus better able to articulate a broad vision of party goals which helped it set the direction of policymaking for the nation.

Today, with the zoku, the party has more policy expertise and is more involved in the details of formulating budgets and legislation, but this advantage has been gained at the cost of the party's ability to come to a consensus on broad goals. With the bulk of the party membership associated with one sectional interest or another, there are few LDP leaders who even attempt to speak in terms of a national interest. Nakasone tried to articulate a vision of a smaller government, a more liberal economy, and a more assertive foreign policy, but he ran into opposition from within his own party on virtually every point. Unable even to arrive at a consensus on many policy issues, the party today cannot even attempt to convince a sectional bureaucracy to go along with its view of the national interest.

Finally, my argument that the zoku detraction from LDP power is more significant than the zoku contribution is based on the observation that the rise in zoku influence has made it particularly difficult for the party to achieve substantial policy change. Not only do zoku politicians come to adopt the sectional interests of their sphere, they also tend to become attached to the established (status quo) policies of their sphere. The same factors that have helped zoku Dietmen play a larger role in their spheres—their many years of working in the area, their relations with interest groups in their sphere—also lead them to adopt the established policy line of their sphere. They may help shape this policy line, as the education zoku did when it initiated aid to private education, but over time they will come to have a proprietary interest in maintaining established policies. To the extent they are interested in change, most zoku Dietmen will be interested in incremental change in a direction largely consistent with the policy line they and their ministry have helped to shape over the many years of LDP rule. The two Inoguchi and Iwai cases discussed above (the agriculture zoku's effort to maintain high producer rice prices and the posts zoku's effort to maintain the tax loophole) are both examples of cases in which zoku have successfully resisted policy change.

Clearly, the case of Nakasone's education reform initiative is another example of this pattern. The prime minister sought to assert his leadership over education reform, arguing that the Ministry of Education was too tied to the status quo system and insisting that radical reforms were needed to bring the system into line with the demands of the twenty-first century. He wanted to consider education reforms from a broader perspective than would be possible with an initiative under the control of the educational establishment. Still, in the end the prime minister was unable to overcome the opposition of the education zoku and was therefore unable to achieve many of his objectives.
Nakasone was perceived to be a strong prime minister. He sought to overcome sectional interests in many different areas through the use of cabinet-level and personal advisory councils, by strengthening the prime minister’s office, and by making good use of the media and his popularity with the public. He did succeed in overcoming sectional resistance to change in some cases, but was unsuccessful in many others—including education. The LDP’s subsequent prime ministers, all less inclined toward taking a lead, have not had any greater luck in overcoming zoku inertia. The growth in the influence of zoku Dietmen therefore has proven to be a very mixed blessing for the LDP as a whole. The party has gained in its ability to implement policies along established lines within established policy spheres, but it has suffered in its ability to achieve policy change that requires leadership from a broader, national perspective.

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The Desperate Need for New Values in Japanese Corporate Behavior

The current pattern of Japanese business activity—governed by excessive corporate competition and economically rational decisions based on micro factors—threatens to rob Japanese society and corporations of their stability and progress. What can Japan do to pull itself out of this rut and chart a new course?

Recently, distortions have spread throughout the domestic and international economies, and tension is rising in relations between the United States and Japan. The United States is increasingly dissatisfied with the “structural impediments” in the Japanese economy which it blames for its large trade deficit with Japan, while in Japan resentment over U.S. demands signals the danger of a backlash. Although the sharp rise of land prices in and around Tokyo has subsided somewhat, the price of land in many other parts of the nation is now increasing. But land prices that have risen two or more times cast a dark shadow over the lifestyles and future hopes of the people. Companies too face their share of serious difficulties, particularly the current labor shortage, and the unusually fervent competition for new college graduates seen last summer is about to start again.

Are these symptoms unrelated, did they appear magically, out of thin air, or is there a context in which we can see the cause of their emergence? One phenomenon is common to each of these problems: the escalation of uncontrolled, profit-driven competition between companies. In this essay I explore the causes of this phenomenon and what companies must do to promote more stable economic growth and to maintain harmony in both the domestic economy and international economic relations.

This is a translation of “Imakoso kigyō kōdō ni aratana kachi kijin o” from Choi kōron, May 1990.