

Okada Returns to Leadership of Japan Opposition Democrats



Katsuya Okada, newly elected leader of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), center, raises his arms with two other candidates, Goshi Hosono, left, and Akira Nagatsuma, during the party's leadership election in Tokyo on Jan. 18, 2015. Photographer: Toshifumi Kitamura/AFP/Getty Images

- 1) (Bloomberg) -- Former Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada was named leader of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, as it struggles to rebuild support following two straight general election losses.
 - 2) Okada, 61, beat Goshi Hosono, a former nuclear policy minister, by 133 points to 120 in a run-off vote at a special party conference in Tokyo on Sunday. Akira Nagatsuma, a former health minister, lost in the first-round of voting.
 - 3) Chosen the DPJ's leader for a second time, Okada's task is to reunite a party hobbled by factionalism, shifting policies and funding shortages, and claw back ground lost to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party. While Okada agrees with much of Abe's economic agenda, he's likely to attack the prime minister over policies that he sees as widening the gap between rich and poor.
 - 4) "Rebuilding the Democratic Party won't be easy," Okada said before today's vote. "What do we need to regain the trust of the Japanese people? We need to change."
 - 5) Okada stepped down from an earlier term as DPJ leader after a 2005 election defeat. He was deputy prime minister in 2012 when the party lost power to the LDP after voters tired of leadership changes and policy reversals on security and tax during its three years in power.
 - 6) "Abe has got the opponent he least wanted," Minoru Morita, an independent political analyst, said by phone after the vote. "Okada has had the upper hand in their debates. There will be some tough battles in parliament."
- Reducing Disparities
- 7) The DPJ, which is backed by Japan's labor union federation, must encourage a diverse range of people, including women, those in the regions and non-governmental organizations, to work together, Okada said. While Abe's economic policies are not wrong, the party must come up with its own proposals, he said.
 - 8) "Japan has become a country with an extremely large gap between rich and poor," said Okada, the son of a supermarket magnate. "Don't you think the DPJ should build a society with less disparity, one that can be a model for the world?"
 - 9) Abe's victory in December's election left the DPJ with only 72 seats in parliament's more powerful lower house, compared with 290 for the ruling LDP. Former DPJ leader Banri Kaieda lost his seat, sparking today's party ballot.
 - 10) The lack of a viable opposition was the main reason Abe's coalition won a second two-thirds majority, according to three in four voters surveyed by the Asahi newspaper in a Dec. 15-16 poll. Only 11 percent said the ruling party won because people wanted to give Abe a new mandate for his policies, the paper said.

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struggle:奮闘する run-off:決戦投票 hobble:妨げる factionalism:派閥主義、派閥争い claw back:(苦勞して)取り戻す lose ground:後退する reversal:逆戻り opponent:敵 upper hand:優勢 diverse:多様な come up with:考え出す magnate:有力者 spark:引き金となる ballot:投票 viable:有力な mandate:為政權、選挙民の意志

☆Ice breaker for active discussion☆

1. Please explain the Japanese political system briefly. What is a ruling / opposition party?
2. What do you know about the new leader of DPJ Mr. Katsuya Okada?
3. What were the changes that you have noticed when DPJ was in power for 3 years?
4. What is the significance of opposition parties?
5. What do you think is the most important quality of a leader of a political party?
6. Among all the politicians from past to present, which one do you look up the most?
7. Make sentences using the following words: struggle, run-off, factionalism, opponent, upper hand, magnate, viable and mandate.

2009年夏から3年余り続いた民主党政権下では、首相が毎年のように変わった。沖縄の普天間基地移設問題については「最低でも県外」という選挙公約から大幅な政策転換を余儀なくされ、消費増税をめぐる党の分裂に至るなど、失政や党内対立が目立った。2012年12月の衆議院選挙では、選挙前の230議席を大きく割り込む57議席しか獲得できず、歴史的な惨敗を喫した。2014年12月の衆議院選挙では、自民・公明の連立与党が、憲法改正の発議に必要な全体の3分の2(317議席)を上回る326議席を獲得し大勝。民主党は73議席に増やしたが回復には程遠い結果となった。新岡田代表は、各政策で安倍政権との対立軸を示しつつ、党の結束を保ち再生に挑むという難しい舵取りを迫られる。