

The DPJ Manifesto 2013

Helping to Protect Lives and Livelihoods

The Democratic Party of Japan has taken its first step towards renewal by visiting and talking to local people.

Seniors on pensions who are suffering from high prices.

Mothers and fathers doing their best to bring up children without any increase in income.

Small business owners troubled by soaring raw material costs.

Young people working to revitalize their disaster-stricken hometowns.

We have listened to quiet and heartfelt voices that have failed to reach the ears of politicians.

We will return to our roots, and stand with ordinary citizens and workers.

What we are aiming for is a "symbiotic society" suitable for the Japan of this day and age. A strong and accepting society built on mutual coexistence in which each individual has a place and a role to play.

We will create jobs, increase incomes and stabilise livelihoods.

We will strengthen and enrich the middle class, who are the backbone of our society, and revive the Japanese economy.

We will create mutually-supportive and reliable medical care, pensions and long-term care.

We will create a dynamic Japan where the lives of individuals are valued above all else.

We will expand investment in children, child-rearing, education and people.

We will clear the path to Japan's future by emphasizing the active role of women and putting "children first".

We will make livelihoods, lives and the future key policy pillars.

We will take your words and your feelings to heart and continue with reform with the sole aim of "Helping to Protect Lives and Livelihoods".

Banri Kaieda

President

The Democratic Party of Japan

July 2013

Protecting Lives and Livelihoods

The DPJ Manifesto

Post-Earthquake Reconstruction and Revitalization of Fukushima

Standing by the Disaster Victims

Livelihoods and the Economy

Strengthening and Enriching the Middle Class

Life and Social Security

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The Future: Women, Childrearing, Education

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The Constitution

Envisioning a Future-Orientated Constitution

Foreign Policy and Defense

Strategic Diplomacy and Solid Defense

Reform

Maintaining the Momentum of Reform

We will stand by disaster victims to reconstruct the earthquake-devastated areas and revitalize Fukushima.

While at the helm, the DPJ administration provided group subsidies and other unprecedented forms of fiscal support and promoted deregulation for the reconstruction of Fukushima. More than ever before, we will stand by people who are still even now struggling to rebuild their lives and to recover from the impact of the nuclear accident, and will accelerate the pace of reconstruction tailored to local needs and conditions.

Accelerating the Pace of Reconstruction

We will provide uninterrupted long-term mental and physical care for children in the disaster areas, and will reflect in reconstruction projects the voice and needs of children, who will lead the nation in the future. We will utilize the provisions of the Act for the Support of Children and Disaster Victims to alleviate health concerns and future anxieties by strengthening health surveys, and to provide greater support to single-parent evacuees and returning evacuees.

We will create special economic zones for new industries in order to pursue wider use of renewable energy resources, and will promote economic revitalization through support for manufacturing, tourism, and other industries. We will accelerate the assistance provided to agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries by mobilizing all available policy resources, including implementing measures to counter harmful rumors and misinformation.

In view of the continued breakdown of the bidding for public works projects, we will make every effort to rectify the shortage of human and material resources and to counter rising prices. We will enact exemptions to the Civil Code to facilitate the acquisition of land for reconstruction projects.

We will strengthen the Reconstruction Agency, as well as systems for special reconstruction zones and reconstruction grants and subsidies and the like, in order to achieve reconstruction and redevelopment that realizes the hopes and dreams of local residents, and to promote relocation to higher ground and the creation of jobs and workplaces. We will also proceed with provision of one-step administrative services. Full attention will be paid to personnel support needed by disaster-affected municipalities to engage in recovery and reconstruction projects tailored to local needs and conditions.

Without the Revitalization of Fukushima, There Can Be No Revitalization of Japan

We will acknowledge the state's social responsibility for having promoted nuclear power, and will strongly promote revitalization and reconstruction from the nuclear accident. We will take all available measures to ensure the safety of the damaged reactors and play a leadership role in decommissioning nuclear reactors. We will rebuild and stabilize livelihoods as quickly as possible via thorough decontamination and speedy payment of compensation.

Causes of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident will be thoroughly investigated and findings will be reflected in regulatory standards. Given the frequent occurrence of accidents such as leakage of contaminated cooling water and losses of power, all measures will be taken to prevent recurrence in the process of coping with the nuclear accident.

Currently, there is no unified system for long-term monitoring of the radiation exposure levels of individuals. To cope with this challenge and to alleviate the health concerns of persons working on decommissioning the damaged reactors, we will develop a system for unified management of individual radiation levels to be operated under the responsibility of the government.

In line with the Basic Policy for Recovery and Reconstruction of Fukushima adopted in July 2012, we will stimulate the development of local economies and expand employment opportunities by creating hubs for renewable energy industries and medical and health care industries in this region.

A wide range of human resources must be trained and developed to support the revitalization of Fukushima. For this purpose, we will strengthen support for a broad spectrum of educational and research activities centered in Fukushima.

Can Economic Recovery?

I cannot feel it

Wages and pensions remain static, but the prices of household essentials, raw materials and fuel are soaring, and small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are suffering from their inability to pass on price increases.

We heard many opinions from people expressing concern about their future livelihoods.

Cartoon:

One Sunday. (in a family home)

Grandfather: Prices are going up yet again.

Grandmother: Times are getting harder and harder

Grandfather: Our pensions are not increasing though

Grandmother: It's getting to be a tough world for us old people to live in.

Father: We find it tough too you know. Wages are not going up either.

The current government seems to want to make it easier for us white-collar workers to be fired too.

Mother: Oh no! The electricity bill has gone up.

Pasta and mayonnaise keep on getting more and more expensive too.

Small boy: Oh, but I love spaghetti so much

Teenage boy: The delivery firm where I work part-time is having a tough time with the soaring gas prices.

Firm owner: I cannot take it anymore.

Teenage girl: My friend's dad's ramen restaurant is finding it hard too.

Ramen restaurant owner: The prices of everything from flour on down are increasing, but there is no way I can put up the price of things on the menu. What am I going to do?

Little boy: What?! Does that mean that bread and noodles and sweets are all going up in price?

Mother: Yes, that's what is going to happen.

Everyone: If things keep going on this way, we'll be in trouble.

Commentary: The current administration's economic policies have strong side effects. There are many concerns, such as the fact that wages remain static in the midst rising prices and abrupt changes in the interest rate for government bonds.

The Rush to Raise Prices on the Japanese Archipelago (Graph)

Electricity bill (example): Increased to ¥7,920 from July (a ¥647 increase compared to February)

Gas bill (example): Increased to ¥5802 from July (a ¥430 increase compared to February)

Imported wheat: Price rises of approx. ¥55000 per ton from July (approx. 10% increase compared to six months ago)

Bread (including loaves and pastries): 3-7% increase in shipping prices from July

Cooking oil: Price rises of more than ¥30 per kg from April

Ham, sausages etc.: Price rises of 5-11% in real terms from July (decrease in amount of product per packet)

Tablet PCs: Price rises of ¥4000-¥13000 from May

Mayonnaise: Price rises of 4-9% from July

Clingfilm: Price rises of more than 10% from April

(figures based on relevant companies press releases)

Flat-lining Wages (Salaries compared to one year ago) (Pie chart)

Increased 22.6%

Decreased: 26.8%

Unchanged: 49.7%

(figures based on polling conducted by Research Institute for Advancement of Living Standards (Rengo Soken) between April 1-6 2013)

More people experienced a decrease in their salary than an increase compared to a year ago.

The Impact of the Falling Yen on SMEs (pie chart)

Beneficial: 15.7%

Detrimental: 51.1%

Other: 33.2%

(figures based on polling conducted by Tama Shinkin Bank between March 4 to April 1 2013)

The falling yen is causing many SMEs (a total of 724 in this survey) to feel the pinch. 15.7% of SMEs said the falling yen was good for business compared with 51.1% who said that it had a negative impact.

Strengthening and Enriching the Middle Class

We will concentrate policy resources on (1) green innovation, (2) life-science industries, (3) agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries, and (4) SMEs to foster the development of industries that meet the requirements of the present age. Paying close attention to workers, raising their incomes, and providing for an ample and affluent middle class are the keys to achieving a true Japanese renaissance.

Green Innovation

In order to realize an energy-efficient and decentralized energy society founded on local production and local consumption, and to counteract global warming, we will exploit renewable energy sources, including solar and wind power, biomass, geothermal, hydroelectric, and ocean energy resources, and take measures to promote a dramatic increase in the use of such energy-saving technologies as fuel cells, storage batteries, and smart grids.

While strictly adhering to the three principles of (1) an absolute 40-year limit on the operation of nuclear reactors, (2) restarting of only those reactors that have been certified by the Nuclear Regulation Authority, and (3) no further building or expansion of nuclear power plants, we will invest all available policy resources toward decommissioning all nuclear power plants during the decade of the 2030s.

Ensuring stable supply of electric power at low prices and providing for consumer choices are critical requirements. To achieve this, we will reform the electric power system by strengthening inter- and intraregional power grids, stimulating the development of wholesale markets, fully deregulating retail markets, and unbundling power generation and distribution.

Life-Science Industries

We will bolster the foundations of life-science industries by increasing research funds and promoting the unified management of funding, and speeding up the certification process for pharmaceuticals and medical equipment by expanding and upgrading clinical research sites, and enhancing the functions of the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery Industries

We will aim for 50 percent self-sufficiency in food. We will formally legalise the individual household income support system for (arable) farmers and we will consider the introduction of similar systems for cattle-raising and dairy-farming households. To increase the farming population, measures will be taken to stabilize and raise income levels by, for example, promoting the "sixth sector" (involvement of primary industry producers in other sectors such as manufacturing and services), and to increase the number of new farmers. We will promote the development of urban agriculture.

To achieve 50 percent self-sufficiency in wood, we will promote the use of domestic lumber by developing road networks and consolidating forestry operations. We will stabilize fishery businesses by introducing an income support system for fishing households and through the introduction of energy-efficient and cost-effective fishing vessels.

SMEs and Smaller Enterprises

The cabinet minister in charge of SMEs will be given centralized authority over initiatives to transmit technology and skills to younger generations, to strengthen support systems for promoting entrepreneurship and creating and fostering new enterprises, to use ODA in supporting the cultivation of overseas markets, and to implement the principles enunciated in the SME Charter.

We will powerfully support SMEs by for example enacting a Financial Assessment Act, prohibiting third-party guarantees and work toward strengthening and improving tax measures for SMEs (in such areas as business succession taxes, revenue-stamp duties, and exceptions on entertainment expenses).

R&D, ICT, Human Resources Development

We will bolster the research environment by expanding research universities, enhancing international research centers, and improving the employment conditions of researchers. We will promote innovation in such fields as regenerative medicine, biosciences, and information and communication technologies (ICT). We will also promote the development and use of the oceans and outer space.

Employment

We will bring greater stability to employment and will oppose the current government's labor market deregulation measures, including the introduction of monetary settlement of employee termination, the creation of feigned full-time employment under the guise of limited period full-time

employees, white collar exemptions, and the easing of the provisions of the Act on Worker Dispatching.

We will promote fair and equitable treatment of both regular and irregular workers and will ensure access to capacity building opportunities for all. We will provide support to SMEs and will raise the minimum wage.

We will promote the employment of young people by further enhancing vocational education and career counseling in schools, and by providing vocational guidance and other support in job hunting. Regarding the problem of so-called sweatshop enterprises, we will seek to require job ads to indicate the company's job separation rate. We will increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and will create an environment in which seniors and persons with intractable diseases can work as much as their physical strength allows.

Economic Partnership and Economic Diplomacy

We will promote high-level economic partnerships and play a leadership role in setting international rules.

We will participate in Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations with a strong commitment to protect Japan's national interest by for example ensuring the exclusion of five key agricultural and marine products, protecting food safety, and ensuring that the universal national health insurance system remains intact. We will not shy away from leaving the negotiations if necessary to preserve these interests.

We will pursue strategic economic diplomacy such as promotion of the export of infrastructure packages and diversification of Japan's energy sources. We will promote such initiatives as the Enjoy Japanese Kokushu (Japan's distinctive national alcoholic beverages of sake and *shochu*) Project and Cool Japan.

Tourism

We will revitalize the tourism industry by, for example, creating high-value tourism resources and using cultural assets to promote regional and local development.

Housing, Transportation, and Logistics

We will enact a Basic Act on Urban Development. We will promote the remodeling of used houses and revitalize the market for used houses.

We will enact a Basic Act on Transportation and maintain local public transportation to ensure convenient and smooth transport.

Disaster Response and National Land Development

We will proceed with serious structural improvements in this field, such as by enacting a Basic Act on Life-Saving Disaster Response to upgrade disaster-response in the first 72 hours. We will promote cooperation with local fire brigades, neighborhood associations, and a broad range of civic and volunteer groups to expand disaster-response education and training. We will promote measures specifically designed to meet the challenges of earthquakes impacting the Tokai, Tonankai, and Nankai areas, as well as earthquakes occurring directly beneath the Tokyo Metropolitan area.

We will enact a Special Act for Rehabilitating and Promoting Use of Social Capital (tentative name) to further implement selection and concentration of public works from the perspective of disaster-response, disaster-mitigation, maintenance and management, and renewal.

Promoting the Development of Okinawa

We will increase lump-sum grants to Okinawa and create special zones for advanced technologies and industries. Through such measures, we will promote autonomous and sustained development in Okinawa by fostering the growth of industries that draw on the natural and regional strengths of the region.

Finally the collapse of the medical system has come to a halt.

But is it really going to be alright from now on?

The Democratic Party of Japan stopped the collapse of the medical system and restored missing pension records.

However, these reforms are still a work in progress.

There are people concerned that social security will take a step back under the current government.

Cartoon

Mother: Grandpa, Grandma, it's been a while since we've seen you.

Father: Come in.

Grandfather: We've just been to the hospital.

Grandfather: Things look brighter for hospitals than they did a little while back.

There are more doctors, and less shipping of patients from one hospital to another.

I hear that the number of people working in the medical and nursing care fields has also increased.

It was really terrible being discriminated against when receiving medical care just for being over 75, but the DPJ did a good job of sorting that out and I'm grateful for that.

Mother: The pay and conditions in the care facilities where we work have gotten better too, you know.

Father: The number of suicides has also fallen.

Grandfather: Oh I almost forgot: my pension record was restored and so the amount of pension I get has increased.

Grandmother: That's thanks to the DPJ administration too.

Grandfather: You're right.

Father: I also heard that people who haven't received any pension up until now are now able to receive it.

Father: But it looks like the current administration is going to cut funding for pensions and nursing care.

Teenage girl: I heard that pensions are not going to rise in line with price increases.

Grandfather: Things are going to get even tougher.

Mother: I really want them to enhance social security.

Grandfather: The present administration makes me worried about how I'm going to get by.

Grandmother: The DPJ took more care of people's lives.

Commentary: The DPJ administration raised the medical treatment fees received by medical institutions twice, in fiscal 2010 and fiscal 2012 (the first such increase in 10 years). Due to such measures, many hospitals managed to get out of the red, and people could continue to receive medical treatment near to their homes. The fiscal burden borne by local government was also reduced.

Following Implementation of Suicide Prevention Measures, the Number of Suicides Fell by Approx. 5000 (graph)

Number of Suicides:

In 2009: 32,845 people

In 2012: 27,858 people

However, the current LDP administration is reducing the budget for suicide prevention measures.

“With regard to the suicide prevention measures program, under the current difficult fiscal conditions, the budget for this will be reduced by 23% from approximately 130 million yen in fiscal 2012 to approximately 100 million in fiscal 2013.” (From a response made by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in a session of the House of Councillors Committee on Health, Labor and Welfare on June 13 2013).

Efforts to Resolve the 50 million “Missing Pensions” Discovered Thanks to the Efforts of the DPJ

December 2007: Un-integrated pension records: 50 million

September 2012: 28.73 million records: problem resolved

16.66 million records: integrated

1.7 trillion yen worth of pension benefits restored.

Drastic Reduction in Time Between Amendment of Records and Restoration of Pension Benefits

March 2009: 10 months

September 2012: 4.2 months

Commentary: Pensions have not kept pace with price hikes, so these have caused pensions to decrease in real terms.

The LDP administration is currently discussing the following social security cuts:

- Increasing the self-pay burden to 20% for those over 75 years old.
- Eliminating nursing care insurance coverage for seniors requiring moderate level care (approx. 1.5 million individuals).
- Raising the age at which people will be entitled to receive pension benefits to 68.

Toward a Society That Cherishes Human Life

We will create reliable pension, health care, and long-term care systems supported by all generations. We will realize a society based on mutual co-existence where all individuals are respected for their intrinsic worth and diversity is valued.

Medical and Health Care

We will raise medical compensation levels to stop the collapse of medical services. We will address the shortage of doctors and nurses, and will improve the severe working conditions of medical professionals.

We will enhance regional medical services by fostering a team approach to medical care involving the cooperation of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and others, and by expanding the use of bed-equipped clinics.

The National Health Insurance System will be maintained. To ensure stable management of all segments of the system, we will pursue equitable insurance premium levels and unified management of the health insurance system, including reorganization of the National Health Insurance System into prefectural units. As for the elderly, age discrimination in medical treatment has been eliminated. Similarly, we will eliminate age discrimination throughout the health insurance system.

Measures related to intractable diseases will be expanded in view of patient needs. We will increase the scope of routine immunization and support the development of vaccines while ensuring the safety of vaccination.

We will reduce the burden on patients requiring extended medical treatment by enhancing the High-Cost Medical Care Benefit System.

Dental health services will be expanded based on the Dental and Oral Health Promotion Act legislated under the DPJ administration. Healthy life expectancy will be extended by promoting hygiene and preventive health care and by enhancing programs for the prevention of locomotive disorders.

Long-Term Care

We will enable persons requiring long-term care to remain living in their local communities by developing comprehensive regional care systems featuring closer coordination between family doctors and home-visit nurses and other medical and long-term care personnel, ensuring adequate provision of sheltered housing for the elderly, and expanding home care services.

We will improve support for persons with dementia and their families.

We will legislate an Act for Securing Long-Term Care Providers to improve the working conditions of long-term care providers.

Pensions

To maintain the soundness of the universal national pension scheme under conditions of growing irregular employment, we will realize the DPJ plan for pension reform centered on a unified national pension program and introduction of minimum guaranteed pensions.

We will establish a Revenues Agency responsible for the collection of taxes and all insurance premiums for health care, pension, and unemployment insurance.

Persons with Disabilities

In view of the needs of persons with disabilities, we will create systems and mechanisms and engage in human resources development to enable all persons with disabilities, regardless of type and level of disability, age, and gender, as well as persons with intractable diseases, to lead comfortable and independent lives in their local communities.

To realize a symbiotic society where persons with and without disabilities can live together, we will strive to effectively implement the provisions of the Act for Elimination of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities enacted through DPJ leadership. We will also pursue early ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Welfare

While properly certifying persons truly in need of assistance, we will act to prevent wrongful receipt of welfare benefits. The medical assistance system will be rectified by enhancing the inspection of electronic medical billing and promoting the use of generic drugs.

The lowering of livelihood protection standards not only affects households on welfare but also increases the burden on many low-income families. With this in mind, we will examine the current situation and the impact of lower standards and will make revisions to prevent worker households from experiencing economic difficulties.

Self-reliance Support

To assist persons experiencing economic difficulties and persons isolated from society, we will enhance support for achieving independence, including assistance for reintegrating into society, finding employment quickly and securing housing. Measures to be taken will include greater use of support systems for job seekers, elimination of compartmentalized advisory services provided by Hello Work employment service centers and local government agencies, and promotion of partnering with nonprofit organizations.

Food Safety and Consumers

Effective measures will be taken to ensure safe and secure supplies of agricultural products and food, such as creating unified food-labeling systems, promoting food traceability including imported agricultural products, increasing the number of items subject to place-of-origin labels, and labeling of additives, genetically modified foods, and allergenic foods. We will uphold the principle of local production and local consumption to promote safe domestic agricultural and marine products.

We will strengthen local consumer affairs administration and enhance the function of the consumer counseling and advocacy system. We will establish a system for confiscating illegally amassed properties of dishonest businesses to render consumer class-action suits effective and to provide relief in cases of economic and monetary damages, which account for half of all consumer complaints.

Preventing Suicide

Under the DPJ administration, the annual number of suicides fell below the 30,000-mark for the first time in 15 years. However, the present government is cutting related expenditures, giving rise to fears that suicide-prevention programs may regress. We will act to save as many lives as possible by promoting depression-prevention measures in the workplace and local communities, expanding suicide hotlines, and ensuring sufficient funding for implementing programs in line with the Outlines for Comprehensive Measures to Prevent Suicide, including the review of basic laws.

Human Rights and Domestic Violence

To prevent miscarriage of justice, we will promote the revision of the Code of Criminal Procedure to make interrogation procedures more visible and to institute smooth and appropriate procedures for the disclosure of evidence. We will enact a Human Rights Commission Establishment Act at an early date to prepare for the creation of a human rights commission.

We will proceed with the revision and sound operation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Anti-Stalking Act. We will introduce stronger measures against sexual violence and sexual crimes and provide greater support for victims of sexual crimes.

Do I wonder if support for childrearing and education will continue?

Under the banner of "Children First", the DPJ succeeded in implementing one policy after another, making high school education free and reducing class sizes.

We are hearing anxious voices from people saying that the current administration's child policies are not rooted in real life experience.

Cartoon

Mother: Hello

Woman neighbour: Oh, haven't seen you for ages.

Woman neighbour: My, hasn't he grown since I last saw him!

Father: Yes. He's one year old now.

Woman neighbour: You must have had a hard time with the birth and childrearing.

Mother: Well, yes, but the assistance, such as with pre-natal check-ups and the benefit we got when he was born was really good and has helped a lot.

Woman neighbour: My kids are now in elementary and high school, but we didn't have that kind of support for them when they were small.

Mother: What's more fathers these days are hands-on with the kids so that helps me out.

Woman neighbour: I had a really tough time getting my kids into public daycare.

Mother: It doesn't seem to be that way now you know. The number of public daycare places has increased a lot compared with three years ago.

Mother: The child allowance has helped us.

Father: That's right.

Woman neighbour: It's really been a life-saver for us too.

And our household budget has benefitted from the introduction of free high-school education. That has also reduced the number of high-school dropouts I hear.

Father: There've also been advances in the tuition fee exemptions and scholarships at universities,

so people with children feel some financial freedom.

Mother: The DPJ really implemented a lot of child-rearing support policies didn't they?

Father: The DPJ are also strongly committed to anti-bullying measures, so that is a real boon to people with kids.

Woman neighbour: I wonder if the present government will continue with these kinds of policies. The move to reduce class sizes has ground to a halt I hear.

Do you think our kids are really going to be OK in the future?

Mother: Yes, it's a real worry isn't it?

Commentary: The DPJ administration supported childrearing and education.

Increase in the Child Allowance (graph)

For Children under 3

(or from 3 to end of elementary school for third child onwards): Increased from ¥10,000 to ¥15,000 per month

For Children from 3 to Elementary School Age (First or second child): Increased from ¥5,000 to ¥10,000 per month

For Junior High School Children: Increased from ¥0 to ¥10,000 per month

For Those Households Above the Income Cap: Increased from ¥0 to ¥5,000 per month

We increased the scope of the existing allowance to include junior high school students, and improved the system so that all children, including for example those living in childcare facilities, could receive the allowance.

The DPJ Administration Enhanced Pre-natal and Childbirth Support

Continued public funding of pre-natal checks (approx. ¥120,000)

In addition to the lump-sum childbirth payment, we implemented public funding to the tune of ¥540,000 in real terms.

Reduction in the Number of Students Dropping Out of High School for Economic Reasons
(graph)

2009: 1647

2010: 1043

2011: 945

The introduction of free tuition for public high schools, as well as of a certain amount of assistance for tuition fees at private high schools began. Thanks to this, the number of students dropping out of high school on economic grounds has decreased.

Large Increase in the Number of Daycare Places (graph)

2009: 2,130,000

2010: 2,160,000

2011: 2,200,000

2012: 2,240,000

The DPJ has greatly increased the number of places available at daycare facilities.

Investing in People for a Better Future

We will support the growth and education of children and will provide assistance for childrearing.

We will support women in realizing their plans at all stages of life.

Women

We will strive to create a society where women, regardless of lifestyle or situation, can fully develop their talents and abilities as members of society.

We will work toward more fully realizing a gender-equal society by supporting women taking on new challenges, and will develop an environment amenable to a good work-life balance. We will promote the participation of men in childrearing to increase time spent with family.

We will support the entrepreneurial activities of young people and women by promoting career education and the training of core experts, establishing an entrepreneurship support investment fund, and promoting the Grand Strategy for Working Women (for promoting the hiring of women and revitalizing enterprises).

Pregnancy and Childbirth

We will support women in continued employment and return to employment after marriage and childbirth. We will create a society where work and childrearing are not mutually exclusive, a society in which families can raise children with a full sense of security.

We will enhance childbirth-related assistance and achieve near total elimination of the self-pay burden for childbirth, including the provision of financial support for pre-natal checks. We will further increase support for infertility treatment.

Nursery and Preschool Education

We will increase the budget for children and childrearing support. In addition to a new child allowance system that provides direct childrearing support, we will enhance services provided by nurseries, certified childcare facilities, and on-site after-school childcare for elementary children to create an environment in which work and childrearing are not mutually exclusive.

We will act to eliminate daycare waiting lists and consider ways to reduce the financial burden of nursery and preschool education. To realize high-quality nursery and preschool education, we will develop plans tailored to the needs of parents and guardians and communities. We will also launch programs to increase the capacity of nurseries, develop on-site after-school childcare for elementary children, and improve work conditions and posting standards for staff. We will work toward providing diverse daycare services including daycare for sick and convalescent children.

Primary and Secondary Education

We will increase the number of teachers and staff members and steadily promote smaller classes in the nine years of compulsory education.

We will continue the tuition-free high school system with no income cap to enable all motivated high school students to study with a sense of security, regardless of their family conditions.

To encourage the development of creative and imaginative schools and education, we will promote the introduction of community schools and boards of trustees based on the participation of guardians, local residents, school personnel, experts in education, and others.

We will fundamentally revamp the current board of education system to ensure the political neutrality of education and to clearly determine accountability in education.

We will promote the use of ICT and launch a program to equip all elementary, junior high, and special needs schools with a basic Internet environment.

Higher Education

We will further expand scholarship and tuition exemption programs for universities and other institutions, and will establish grant-in-aid scholarships not requiring repayment.

Bullying and Corporal Punishment

We will protect the lives of children in line with the Anti-Bullying Act and work to ensure that no child is the victim of bullying and school nonattendance. We will enact a [School] Corporal Punishment Prevention Act and make far-reaching efforts to prohibit and prevent corporal punishment in schools.

Based on the Child Poverty Act, we will eliminate child poverty and break the generational chain of poverty. We will consider the introduction of additional support programs to prevent child abuse.

Safety of School Routes (Children's Safety)

We will ensure the safety of children on school routes by legislating an Act on Securing the Safety of School Routes and making the government responsible for developing necessary systems.

Sports and Culture

We will promote the candidacy of Tokyo as the site of the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics.

We will preserve and develop Japan's traditional culture and arts, and promote the development of new and creative culture and arts.

The Constitution

What do they want to do with Japan?

Protecting the freedom and rights of citizens. Pledging to never again wage war.

The Constitution is the embodiment of an important spirit. We received many opinions expressing concern about the movement to make it easier to change the Constitution, without debating the content of such change.

Cartoon

Grandmother: When it starts to get hotter it always reminds me that the anniversary of the end of World War II is fast approaching.

Grandfather: Yes, you're right.

Grandfather: We should never start another war.

Grandmother: Times were tough in those days weren't they?

Grandmother: Some people are calling for constitutional revision.

Boy: We learnt about the Constitution at school, but is it important?

Grandmother: It is the most fundamental rule in Japan, and an important mechanism for protecting the freedom and rights of the people.

Boy: Why change it?

Grandmother: They're insisting that they want to put a period to the post-war regime or some such thing.

Boy: So what's going to be changed?

Grandfather: Well, right now it takes a two thirds majority in both houses of the Diet to submit a revision proposal, but it seems they are talking about lowering that to a simple one half majority.

Boy: Is it really alright to change our precious Constitution so easily.

What are the people who want to change the Constitution thinking of doing?

Grandfather: Well, it seems they'll also put something in about limiting freedom of speech.

Boy: What?!

Grandmother: It's like we're living in some other country.

Grandfather: They want to change the name of the Self Defense Forces to the National Defense Army and make them carry out security operations inside Japan as well.

Mother: It's somehow a bit scary.

We need to think seriously about the future of our children.

Grandfather/Grandmother: That's true.

Commentary: The DPJ will protect the basic spirit of the Japanese Constitution.

1. The Japanese people, based on a spirit of self-reliance and co-existence, will create a society in which the people are sovereign, participating and taking responsibility by and of themselves.
2. We will ensure the protection of universal human rights, as well as establishing "new rights" such as environmental rights and the right to know.
3. We will show the world how to create an "environmental state", and rebuild Japan as a "peace-building nation" which cooperates with the international community.
4. We will establish national administrative mechanisms which are independent and full of vitality, and create a "decentralized state" founded upon the autonomy and collaborative power of the people.
5. We will respect Japan's traditions and culture, while establishing appropriate relations between individuals, families, local communities, local governments, national government and the international community.

(excerpted from the DPJ's 2005 Constitution Proposal)

Article 96 of the Constitution of Japan

Amendments to this Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds or more of all the members of each House and shall thereupon be submitted to the people for ratification, which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon, at a special referendum or at such election as the Diet shall specify.

The Procedures Needed to Amend the Constitutions of Various Countries Around the World

The United States of America: A two-thirds majority in both Houses of Congress and ratification by more than three-quarters of State legislatures.

Spain: Two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament must be obtained on two occasions (the

parliament must be dissolved and a general election held after the first majority is obtained) and then a national referendum held (according to the provisions there are some exceptions to this).

The Republic of Korea: Two-thirds majority in the National Assembly (unicameral) plus a national referendum.

The Federal Republic of Germany: Two-thirds majority in both the Bundestag and the Bundesrat.

Envisioning a Future-Orientated Constitution

The Constitution establishes basic rules for limiting the powers of the State in order to ensure the freedom and rights of the people. We will protect the sovereignty of the people, fundamental human rights, and pacifism, while working with the people to envision a future-orientated Constitution. We will oppose the advance amendment of Article 96.

We will respect and firmly adhere to the basic principles of sovereignty of the people, respect for fundamental human rights, and pacifism, the symbolic emperor system, and other principles of the current Constitution that have taken root in Japanese society and gained the unwavering confidence of the people.

Based on this foundation, the DPJ will engage the people in a dialogue on the Constitution aimed at fully realizing the principles of the present Constitution and establishing a true form of constitutional government. Through this process, we will envision a future-orientated Constitution by deepening public debate and discussion on points that need to be supplemented or revised.

Amendment Procedures

The function of the Constitution is to protect the freedom and rights of the people from State power running out of control and the tyranny of majority rule. Constitutional amendment requires thorough and careful discussion leading to the formation of broad consensus. The requirement that amendment be initiated through a concurring vote of more than two-thirds of each House of the Diet is rational and justified. In light of the principles of constitutionalism, we oppose the easing of amendment procedures without first creating a deeper discussion on the Constitution and debating the details of possible amendments.

Strategic Diplomacy and Solid Defense

We will firmly defend the lives and property of the people and our territories and waters. With the Japan-US alliance as the core, we will pursue diplomatic initiatives for realizing coexistence in Asia. We will actively contribute to global peace and prosperity.

Sovereignty

We will firmly defend the territorial sovereignty of Japan. We will actively communicate to the outside world Japan's position on the Senkaku Islands and other territorial sovereignty issues. We will expand and enhance the surveillance, patrolling, and guarding capabilities of the Japan Coast Guard and other agencies, and will take all measures to defend our territories and waters.

With regard to the Northern Territories, which are an integral party of Japanese territory, we will move forward on negotiations with Russia, based on the various agreements concluded between Japan and Russia, as well as on the principles of law and justice.

Both in light of historical evidence and in terms of international law, Takeshima is Japanese territory. We will urge the Republic of Korea (ROK) to accept a peaceful resolution based on international law.

Defense

We will improve the security framework while adhering to an exclusively defensive security policy. We will enhance Japan's dynamic defense force and pursue initiatives emphasizing the southwestern region, responding to cyberspace, outer space, and marine risks, strengthening Japan's intelligence gathering capabilities, and establishing a National Security Council.

The Japan-US Alliance

We will deepen the Japan-US alliance as the core of Japan's diplomacy and national security. We will steadily implement Japan-US agreements on the realignment of US forces in Japan. While maintaining the level of deterrence, we will make every effort to reduce the burden on local residents in Okinawa and elsewhere, including improving the application of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement.

Asian Diplomacy

We will pursue Asian diplomacy to realize coexistence. To make the East China Sea a sea of peace, friendship, and cooperation, we will promote mutual understanding with China, particularly regarding the marine sector. We will move forward on the Japan-China-ROK Free Trade Agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia, and other economic partnership agreements.

Abductions, Nuclear Weapons and Missiles

We will make every possible effort to resolve the problem of abduction, a grave violation of national sovereignty and human rights. With regard to the development and deployment of nuclear weapons and missiles by North Korea, we will act in cooperation with the United States, South Korea, and the international community to ensure the security of the region.

Reform

Maintaining the Momentum of Reform

The DPJ traces its origins to commitments to reform rigid political and administrative systems and rectify collusive relations. We will continue to be the party for reform by eliminating waste in government, promoting the transfer of power to local governments, and implementing painful and selfless reforms.

Political Reform

We will reduce the number of seats in the House of Representatives by 80, and the number of seats in the House of Councillors by about 40.

We will maintain the cutback in Diet member salaries and allowances during the period of reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake. We will engage in reforming the Diet, including review of the current state of joint conferences of the two Houses, to ensure thorough parliamentary discussion.

Administrative Reform

We will create waste-free and reliable government administration by enacting ten laws on administrative reform, including an Administrative Reform Implementation Act for reviewing the movement of funds and delegation of authority from the central government to independent administrative corporations and public service corporations. We will also launch a bold program for reorganizing and consolidating independent administrative corporations.

We will maintain the process of administrative project review initiated by the DPJ administration and strengthen the mechanisms for inspecting and verifying the use of tax revenues from the perspective of the people.

Regional Sovereignty Reform

We will continue to review obligations and restrictions placed on local governments, as well as the transfer of authority and fiscal resources to local government. We will reinstate lump-sum grants and act to abolish in principle all local branches of central government agencies.

Civil Service Reform

We will unify personnel management of high-level civil servants of all government ministries and agencies under the Cabinet. In addition to the 10 percent cut in civil service's total personnel costs already achieved through administrative reform, we will pursue the goal of implementing a further 10 percent cut (compared to fiscal 2009).

We will promote merit- and performance-based personnel management of national and local civil servants, and will adopt stricter restrictions on *amakudari* from government ministries to public-service corporations. While maintaining due flexibility to respond to local government conditions, we will restore fundamental labor rights to civil servants to create a mechanism for labor-management pay negotiations as in the private sector.

Tax and Fiscal Reform

We will pursue fiscal rehabilitation by enacting a Fiscal Soundness and Responsibility Act featuring the three pillars of spending reform, growth strategy, and revenue reform, aimed at halving the primary balance deficit by fiscal 2015 and achieving primary balance surplus by fiscal 2020.

We will significantly reduce special accounts, including the abolition of the Special Account for Social Infrastructure Improvement.

From the perspective of income redistribution, we will promote the transition from income deductions to tax credits and allowances. We will pursue taxation neutral to a variety of work styles.

Comprehensive Reform of Social Security and Taxation Systems

We will build sustainable social security systems spanning all generations from children to the elderly. Additional tax revenue from higher consumption tax rates will be used exclusively for social security expenditures. Unlike the past LDP-Komeito coalition governments, we will not implement across-the-board cuts in social security expenditures.

We will implement measures to reduce the impact of higher consumption tax rates, including measures for low-income households such as the introduction of simple benefits and tax credits. We will also reduce the impact on home acquisition, and fundamentally review and undertake fundamental review, encompassing the possibility of abolition, of automobile weight tax and automobile acquisition tax to reduce the heavy burden of automobile ownership. Necessary countermeasures will be taken to ease the impact and prevent the transfer of tax burdens to SMEs

and agriculture, forestry, and fishery businesses. Measures will be taken against the so-called tax loss problem that may affect medical institutions, long-term care facilities, and others.

Regulatory Reform

We will vigorously pursue regulatory reform, including the elimination of regulations and simplification of a broad range of administrative procedures obstructing the creation of new industries, new jobs, and the revitalization of local economies.

Postal Service Reform

Based on the revised Postal Service Privatization Act enacted under the DPJ administration, we will put national interests first in maintaining universal services and improving convenience to users.

New Public Commons

We will promote a new public commons in which a broad and diverse range of participants contributes to the public good. For this purpose, we will consider measures for providing tax and financial support to nonprofit organizations and other entities, and for providing assistance to intermediate support organizations, cooperatives, neighborhood associations, and others. We will also promote the transition to an open government system in which a diverse range of entities participates in the policymaking process.

The DPJ Manifesto

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