



Japan's Historic Election: Takaichi's Conservative Landslide

February 8, 2026 · 10+ sources · Compiled by Dalen 🇯🇵

日本の政治展望 (JAPAN'S POLITICAL OUTLOOK)

The Result: A Historic Supermajority



Takaichi places victory ribbons at LDP HQ : Manami Yamada/Reuters via The Guardian

Prime Minister **Sanae Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 316 of 465 seats** in Sunday's snap election — the most ever won by a single party in Japanese electoral history, surpassing the DPJ's 308 seats in 2009 ([Wikipedia](#)). With coalition partner Japan Innovation Party (Ishin, 36 seats), the ruling bloc controls **352 seats — a commanding two-thirds supermajority** ([Japan Times](#)).

This is the first time since World War II that a single party has secured a two-thirds majority on its own (CNN).

Party	Before	Won	Change
LDP (Takaichi)	198	316	+118
Centrist Reform Alliance	167	49	-118
Ishin (coalition partner)	34	36	+2
DPP	27	28	+1
Sanseito (far-right)	2	15	+13
Team Mirai (new, e-democracy)	0	11	+11
JCP (Communist)	8	4	-4
Reiwa Shinsengumi	8	1	-7

Final voter turnout: 55.68% — down 1.84 points from 2024 ([Wikipedia](#)). Snow suppressed turnout in northern regions, with rare mid-winter conditions forcing 230 flight cancellations and shuttering dozens of train lines ([BBC](#)).

The Takaichi Factor: "Sana-Mania"



PM Sanae Takaichi · Reuters via CNN

The 64-year-old conservative — Japan's first female prime minister and self-described admirer of Margaret Thatcher — called this snap election just four months after taking office, vowing to resign if her coalition failed to win a majority. Her gamble paid off spectacularly ([The Guardian](#)).

"**Sana-mania**" has gripped Japan, particularly among young voters. Her social media presence — including a viral video playing drums with South Korea's president — has cultivated what analysts describe as "almost cult-like popularity." Her approval ratings hover above 60-70%, roughly **double the LDP's own rating** ([NYT](#), [BBC](#)).

The opposition crumbled. The newly-formed Centrist Reform Alliance (a desperate merger of the CDP and Komeito just weeks before the election) collapsed from 167 seats to just **49 — losing over two-thirds of its representation** ([Wikipedia](#)).

💡 Context: US Treasury Secretary Bessent hailed a "big victory," saying "when Japan is strong, the US is strong in Asia." India's PM Modi called it a "landmark result." Taiwan's President Lai said he hoped it would "bring a more prosperous and secure future" for the region ([BBC](#), [Reuters](#)).



Takaichi speaks to media on election night · Kim Kyung-Hoon/AFP/Getty via *The Guardian*

GEOPOLITICS Weeks after taking office, Takaichi triggered the **biggest diplomatic row with Beijing in over a decade** by publicly outlining how Tokyo might respond militarily to a Chinese invasion of Taiwan ([Reuters](#)). China's response was swift:

- Urged citizens **not to travel to Japan**, citing "safety concerns"
- Chinese tourist numbers to Japan **halved** ([Guardian](#))
- Ended decades of "**panda diplomacy**" — returning bears to China ([Guardian](#))
- Advised students not to study in Japan; disrupted cultural exchanges

Takaichi has **refused to walk back her remarks** — and it played well with voters. With no elections until 2028 (upper house), she now has breathing room to either repair ties with Beijing or double down ([Guardian](#)).

What It Means for Foreigners in Japan



Voter at polling station in Niigata amid snow · Manami Yamada/Reuters via The Guardian

IMMIGRATION Takaichi has pushed to **toughen the immigration system**, review rules around foreign ownership of Japanese land, and crack down on non-payment of tax and health insurance by foreign nationals ([BBC](#)). Only 3% of Japan's population are foreign nationals — critics accuse her of manufacturing anxiety over a statistically tiny population.

★ **The Far-Right Surge:** The far-right **Sanseito party** won 15 seats (up from just 2), fielding a record 190 candidates. Compared to the MAGA movement by the NYT, the party promises to put "Japanese first" and has attracted notable youth support with fiery warnings about foreigners ([NYT](#), [Reuters](#)). Their leader said they fell short of their 30-seat target due to the LDP's "strong momentum" ([NYT Live](#)).

For expats, the practical takeaways:

- ⚠ Expect **stricter immigration enforcement** and visa scrutiny
- ⚠ Possible **restrictions on foreign land/property ownership**
- ⚠ **Tax and health insurance compliance** will be scrutinized more closely
- ⚠ Anti-foreigner rhetoric is gaining political traction and youth support
- ✓ No immediate deportation fears — but keep your paperwork spotless

Also notable: **Team Mirai**, a new e-democracy party, won 11 seats from zero — showing demand for fresh political models beyond the traditional left-right spectrum ([Wikipedia](#)).

Economic Gamble: Spending Big on Borrowed Money

ECONOMY Takaichi's economic promises are aggressive:

- **21 trillion yen stimulus package** (£99 billion)
- **Suspend the 8% consumption tax on food for 2 years** — a ¥5 trillion annual revenue hit
- Record supplementary budgets for defense and infrastructure

Japan's public debt is already **more than twice the size of its GDP** — the heaviest burden of any advanced economy. Markets are rattled, and the yen faces renewed pressure ([Guardian](#)).

 "Takaichi's big victory means she will have more political room to follow through on consumption-tax cuts. Markets could react in the following days, and the yen could come under renewed pressure." — Seiji Inada, FGS Global ([Guardian](#))

The snap election also **delayed the 2026 budget**, originally expected by end of March. Takaichi's first task when parliament reconvenes in mid-February is to push through the stalled budget bill ([PBS](#)).

What Comes Next: Constitutional Change & Military Buildup

With a two-thirds supermajority, Takaichi is in a strong position to pursue her long-held aim of **revising Japan's pacifist constitution** (Article 9), which renounces war. This would require a national referendum, but the parliamentary hurdle is now cleared ([BBC](#)).

Takaichi has courted Donald Trump — who publicly endorsed her (unusual for a US president) — and both agree Japan should **spend more on defense**. She's also outlined potential military responses to a China-Taiwan conflict, a major escalation in Japan's postwar security posture ([BBC](#), [Reuters](#)).

 **Bottom Line:** Japan is entering uncharted territory. Takaichi has the mandate to reshape the country's domestic and foreign policy with no elections until 2028. For Japan's future: constitutional change is likely, defense spending will increase, China relations will remain tense. For foreigners: the era of lax enforcement is ending. Stay compliant, watch the policy space, and expect the political climate to shift rightward.

English Sources & Links:

1. [The Guardian](#) — Takaichi's conservatives cement power in landslide
2. [BBC](#) — PM Sanae Takaichi on course for landslide win
3. [Japan Times](#) — LDP secures two-thirds supermajority
4. [CNN](#) — Takaichi tightens grip on power
5. [Al Jazeera](#) — PM Takaichi's party wins supermajority
6. [NBC News](#) — Takaichi wins supermajority after snap election gamble
7. [Reuters](#) — Japan's 'Iron Lady' forges stunning election win
8. [NYT](#) — Japan's Sanae Takaichi wins snap election in a landslide
9. [AP News](#) — Japan's PM secures supermajority in lower house
10. [PBS](#) — Japanese PM's party secures supermajority
11. [Wikipedia](#) — 2026 Japanese general election

For expat discussion: search [r/japan](#) and [r/japanlife](#) for "election 2026"