

Ryutaro Hashimoto

Prime Minister of Japan

Mr. Hashimoto was born on July 29, 1937 in Tokyo. He graduated from Keio University's Faculty of Law in 1960.

First elected to the House of Representatives in 1963, he served as director of the Social Affairs Division of the Liberal Democratic Party Policy Research Council and chairman of the Standing Committee on Social and Labour Affairs.

In 1978, at the age of 41, Mr. Hashimoto became Minister of Health and Welfare. He also served as chairman of the party's Research Commission on Public Administration and Finance from 1980 to 1986.

In 1986, Mr. Hashimoto became Minister of Transport and, from 1987 to 1989, held various high-level party positions, including Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party. In 1989, Mr. Hashimoto was appointed Minister of Finance and, in 1993, he became chairman of the party's Policy Research Council.

In 1994, Mr. Hashimoto was appointed Minister of International Trade and Industry and the following year was elected President of the Liberal Democratic Party. He assumed the post of Deputy Prime Minister in October 1995 and remained a mainstay of the administration.

After Prime Minister Murayama stepped down in January 1996, Mr. Hashimoto was elected Prime Minister. In October 1996, Mr. Hashimoto's Liberal Democratic Party improved its standing in national Lower House elections.

Prior to becoming Prime Minister, he held the key Ministry of International Trade and Industry portfolio and since 1979 has held the Health and Welfare, Transport and Finance portfolios in successive Liberal Democratic Party cabinets.

Mr. Hashimoto is married and has two sons, three daughters and two grandchildren.