

To support this year's resolution, we propose that the government should provide the cash benefit worth of 50,000 yen to all Japanese citizens every month as basic income or BI. With a notable exception of socialized health care, current social security programs such as public assistance, unemployment benefits and basic benefits of the public pensions should be abolished and integrated in the BI. Funding comes from the general account.

This proposal will generate two comparative advantages.

Advantage One: Affirmative better realizes the constitutional right to subsistence.

A) The status quo infringes on our right to subsistence.

The current social security system or “workfare” is unable to meet the people’s needs.

Hayato Kobayashi, Associate professor in Social Welfare Department, Nihon Fukushi University, 2014

The features of the existing public assistance system in Japan limit its capacity to realize the right to subsistence, because it is a part of a social security system that was based on stabilized employment and family structures that no longer function. Therefore, it is important not only to improve the administration of public assistance in order to address poverty problems, but also to ask why the public assistance system has been unable to address them in the Japanese context of the welfare state reform.

Kobayashi continues:

[I]n the case of Japan the public assistance system was never fully developed, because it was launched in the context of Japan’s unique employment security system. Thus reforms inspired by workfare can be viewed as an attempt to reduce a public assistance system that is already quite limited in scope.

(location 2339)

(The future of the public assistance reform in Japan: Workfare versus basic income? *Basic income in Japan: Prospects for a radical idea in a transforming welfare state*. Eds. Yannick Vanderborght & Toru Yamamori. NY: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. Kindle Ed.)

B) We better guarantees the right of subsistence.

By delivering basic economic security unconditionally, BI can satisfy the basic human needs.

Hiroya Hirano, Lecturer of social policy and sociology at Meiji University, 2014

The unconditionality and universality of basic income not only protect individuals against arbitrary bureaucratic decisions, but it also guarantees a certain level of stability in people’s lives, even in times of unstable economic conditions. Depending on the level of income provided, it could guarantee a right to subsistence. Because the improvement of the social security system is a prime concern for the general public, as the results of the statistical survey show, introducing a basic income (and guaranteeing stability in people’s lives as a result) can meet their expectations in an effective manner. (location 5024)

(The potential of introducing basic income for the “new public” in Japan: A road to associational welfare state? *Basic income in Japan: Prospects for a radical idea in a transforming welfare state*. Eds. Yannick Vanderborght & Toru Yamamori. NY: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. Kindle Ed.)

Advantage Two: Affirmative realizes an alternative and better way of life.

A) BI liberates human beings from wage-labor and foster social cohesion and cultural development.

Julia Obinger, Research fellow and lecturer at the University of Zurich and the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, 2014

As the name “unconditional basic income” suggests, the proposals envision the replacement of monetary welfare provisions with a fixed income paid to each citizen, without condition of employment or any other service in return (cf. van Parijs 1991: 102). While some proponents see it mainly as an instrument for fighting poverty by way of fairer wealth redistribution or for simplifying existing welfare schemes, others are driven by more holistic visions. The latter aim at nothing less than lifting current restraints of wage-labor and employment, through providing the safety of an unconditional regular income. This should allow citizens to experience more security and individual autonomy, which in turn should foster social cohesion and cultural development (cf. Gorz 1999: 78; Dries 2007: 47). Their theories are based on the critique of what can be subsumed as the paradigm of labor in capitalist—or wage-based—societies (cf. Gorz 1999), which rests on the idea that being in employment (in whichever form) is not only an economic imperative, but also takes a decisive role in the determination of the social identity of an individual; conversely, not being employed is the number one factor for social and cultural exclusion in developed countries. (location 3339)

(Beyond the paradigm of labor: Everyday activism and unconditional basic income in urban Japan *Basic income in Japan: Prospects for a radical idea in a transforming welfare state*. Eds. Yannick Vanderborght & Toru Yamamori. NY: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. Kindle Ed.)

B) This empowerment promises our better and brighter future.

BI realizes more self-determined lifestyles in an interdependent society

Obinger again writes:

[A] UBI would establish a sufficiently solid financial base to allow citizens to be free of the “constraints of the labor market” (Gorz 2013 [1997]: 298), spend less time on wage-labor, and devote more time to other kinds of (unpaid and unprofitable) labor or training that is geared toward “humanistic development” (van Parijs 2013: 177). Thus, UBI is seen as an instrument to empower citizens to freely decide whether and how to spend their time on wage labor, and thus as a policy to promote more self-determined lifestyles. (location 3353)
 (Beyond the paradigm of labor: Everyday activism and unconditional basic income in urban Japan *Basic income in Japan: Prospects for a radical idea in a transforming welfare state*. Eds. Yannick Vanderborght & Toru Yamamori. NY: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. Kindle Ed.)

Overall, BI is a far better alternative to the current workfare.

Sakura Furukubo, Associate professor of urban policy at Osaka City University Graduate School, 2014

[T]he idea of a BI has the possibility to change the image of human beings on which the Japanese society is based. Nobody can start or end life without being cared by someone else. BI forces us to accept as a premise such image of human beings as basic constituent member of society. In today’s Japan, gendered social norms place people who lack autonomous independence inside the smallest unit of welfare, that is, the modern family. They have to rely on the private relationship that surrounds them. By contrast, a BI makes it possible to treat those dependent people as completely equal constituent members of society. (location 3232)

(Basic income and unpaid care work in Japan *Basic income in Japan: Prospects for a radical idea in a transforming welfare state*. Eds. Yannick Vanderborght & Toru Yamamori. NY: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. Kindle Ed)