The Social Context of Social Policy in Social Work in Japan

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1. Diversity of the Welfare System

2. Characteristics of the Welfare System of Japan
3. Limitations of the Welfare State of Japan

The welfare state of Japan has its limitations, and these are reflected in various aspects. While it provides extensive benefits to individuals, it also faces challenges in maintaining its financial sustainability and addressing regional disparities. Despite its success in reducing poverty rates and improving overall living standards, the system faces pressure from increasing costs and shrinking public revenues. As a result, there is a need for continuous reform and innovation to ensure its effectiveness in the long run.
4. Japan, the Welfare State and Neo-liberalism

The current economic system in Japan is characterized by a high degree of state intervention and regulation in the economy. This system has been instrumental in shaping the development of Japan's economy, and has been referred to as the "Japanese model." The Japanese model is based on a combination of government-led business regulations, a strong emphasis on education and training, and a robust social welfare system. This system has been successful in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty, but it has also been criticized for limiting the role of individual entrepreneurs and for inhibiting innovation.

The welfare state in Japan is characterized by a high level of government spending on social programs. The government provides a wide range of services, including health care, education, and retirement benefits. This system has been successful in promoting social stability and reducing poverty, but it has also been criticized for being too expensive and for creating an overly倚赖 state.

In recent years, Japan has been moving towards a more market-oriented economy, with a greater emphasis on private enterprise and less government intervention. This shift has been driven by a desire to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, and to improve the competitiveness of Japanese businesses in the global market.

In conclusion, the Japanese economy is characterized by a combination of government intervention and market competition. This system has been successful in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty, but it has also been criticized for limiting the role of individual entrepreneurs and for inhibiting innovation.
“Social security is not something that can be considered in isolation. We emphasize that it is important to ensure a balance with various economic and social systems and practices. This being the case, we believe we should abandon our passive reliance on state and public institutions to provide a uniform peace of mind in the form of social security. Instead, individual choice exists and, let’s say we have reached an era where we should carry out systems preparations in support of this.”

“Making individual responsibility the basis and diversifying the range of individual options also means changing the role of government, which will have to be strictly limited. This must be more than a matter of streamlining; the aim must be to improve the efficiency of government and thereby raise the level of quality of services provided to the public. The fundamental principle should be that the government will handle only those areas that the private sector is incapable of handling”.

“Even as the role of the Government is strictly limited, domestic roles involving the protection of people’s lives from disaster, accidents and environmental deterioration, still exist. However, we are entering an era where the Government alone cannot perform these functions. As much as we may try, we cannot achieve absolute safety. And, as we have learned from the experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, in a highly developed society like ours, it is impossible for the Government to provide all the necessary services across the board in an emergency. Naturally, the government must establish appropriate legislation and necessary procedures for crisis management, but the key to a successful response is adequate advance disclosure of information concerning dangers, a joint crisis-management setup, and a strong cooperative relationship among the national government, local governments, businesses, local communities, civil society organizations, and others with regard to both preparatory measures and post-emergency countermeasures.”


The lives of the Japanese are divided broadly into three stages: the acquisition of knowledge through education, work and child rearing, and finally old age. To achieve this self-realisation, however, essentially life should be a single continuum. People should be able to choose the lifestyle that best meets their needs at every life stage, regardless of gender, and age. Making this possible requires the formulation of integrated policies that address education, employment, child rearing, continuing education and training, medical care, care services for the elderly and disabled, pensions, economic revitalization, and so on as a whole. It is natural for people to prefer high-benefit, low-burden policies, but such policies are not sustainable. Therefore the relationship between costs and benefits should be articulated and policy options presented in an easily understood manner so that individuals can plan each life stage as they wish.

The minimum necessary social security must be guaranteed by the state and public institutions. Over and above that, however, individuals should choose from among diverse options on their own initiative to support a self-reliant way of life. The systems of long-term employment and seniority-based pay and promotion have fallen apart, companies’ life spans have shrunk, and the age when employment was synonymous with joining a company is coming to an end. The new requirements are fair assessment of one’s skills, the ability to engage in satisfying work, the ability to choose from among a number of employment formats, and the provision of opportunities to develop skills and start over throughout life even if one changes jobs.

The idea of individuals choosing the kinds of pensions that suit their own life plans, paying in for a period so that they can receive benefits later in life, will be important. It will also be necessary to increase options with regard to elderly care services, preventive medicine, and public health services.

Society will never be free of uncertainty, nor will individual anxieties disappear. What is needed is not the eradication of uncertainty and anxiety but resolve to coexist with uncertainty and anxiety, using them as a springboard to explore new horizons.\(^\text{xxx}\)
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