**Long live cash!**

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I love cash, coins and notes. I love looking at them. I love the sound of coins jingling in my pocket, the sound that coins make when I drop them on a desk or on a table. I especially like the 500-yen coin. It just looks nice and chunky. I count my cash every morning to check how much I can spend that day. I adore money. To me money is cash.

But now, cash is slowly losing the battle against the cashless society. In 2007, according to data from the Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Industry in Japan, only 13.6% of Japanese people were using cards when paying for purchases, services and so on. By 2016, that number had jumped to 19.8%. The trend is obvious. Cash is fast losing popularity. This is because governments and banks are pushing for change. Supporters give many reasons. The five main reasons have been put forward by the Danish government.

The government says it will help fight crime by people not having to carry cash. But criminals will always find a way, using methods such as hacking. It will help economic growth by shortening payment times. But that’s only a theory. It will be more convenient for consumers. Yes, but if you tip on your card, for example, the restaurant owner can keep the money and the server can get nothing and won’t feel the customer’s gratitude. Printing and storing money is a waste of taxpayers’ money. But cards cost a lot to make and sometimes do not work. The government and banks will be able to control money “for the good of the country.” They are doing it for banks and not for the consumer.

If the government controls our money, we will lose our privacy and our freedom to spend our money the way we want. If there is a “cashless” society, if for some reason the banks or government don’t like me or agree with my political views, they can in theory cancel my card and shutdown my money.

There are some places where we still can’t use cards in Japan for example cheap candy stores. Children usually go to places like candy stores with their pocket money and that's how they learn to buy things and learn the value of things. They also use cash to learn the art of saving by putting coins and notes in a piggy bank and watch it grow. You can't do that with a card! To pay money, to buy things while thinking about how much they can spend is very important for children. I love the “warmth” of paying money hand to hand, person to person; I love the personal touch.

Cash is private and anonymous. Every time you use a suica, a pasmo, a debit or a cash card, your data is being gathered and sold. What I do with my money is my business.

When I buy something in a shop, I don’t want other people being able to view a history of my shopping. Of course, cards are useful and convenient. But there is a place for both cash and cards. We should be able to strike a balance.

So all I can say is Long Live Cash.

Thank you