

The New-Old and Social Participation

In 2010, a post-WWII generation (born after 1945) will reach age 65 and aging population will account for more than 25% of the Japanese population. Being recipients of post-war democratic education, post-WWII generation will constitute a new generation of the elderly whose values are different from those of their older peers.

Japanese people have long assumed that once one grows old, he/she will retire from work, retire from the forefront of the society and become dependent on the family and society. The new generation of the elderly, however, is capable of actively contributing to the society and many desire to do so.

In a society where elderly people constitute a large portion of the population, it is not practical for them to be dependant on society without contributing back simply because they are elderly. Such thinking is tantamount to the denial of their potential and agism.

As often mentioned, the rapidity aging in Japan is predominantly due to Japan's falling fertility rate. It is anticipated that the ramifications of this will be seen in population decrease, shortage of young labor force, and various other consequences.

The change in social situation and the emergence of an elderly population with a new set of values will result in a change in how the elderly relate to society: from dependence to independence.

This new conception of the elderly as active contributors to society was expressed in 'General Principles Concerning the Measures for the Aged Society' formulated in 2002. It is summed up in the following three points:

- 1) A fair and energetic society where people can be ensured of the opportunity to participate in diverse social activities or work throughout their lives.
- 2) The formation of a community based on both independence and social connectedness.
- 3) An affluent society where people can live peacefully and with fulfillment throughout their lives.

In a new framework of an unprecedented super-aged society, it is hoped that the elderly will actively participate in the society and even be the driving force of the society.

References

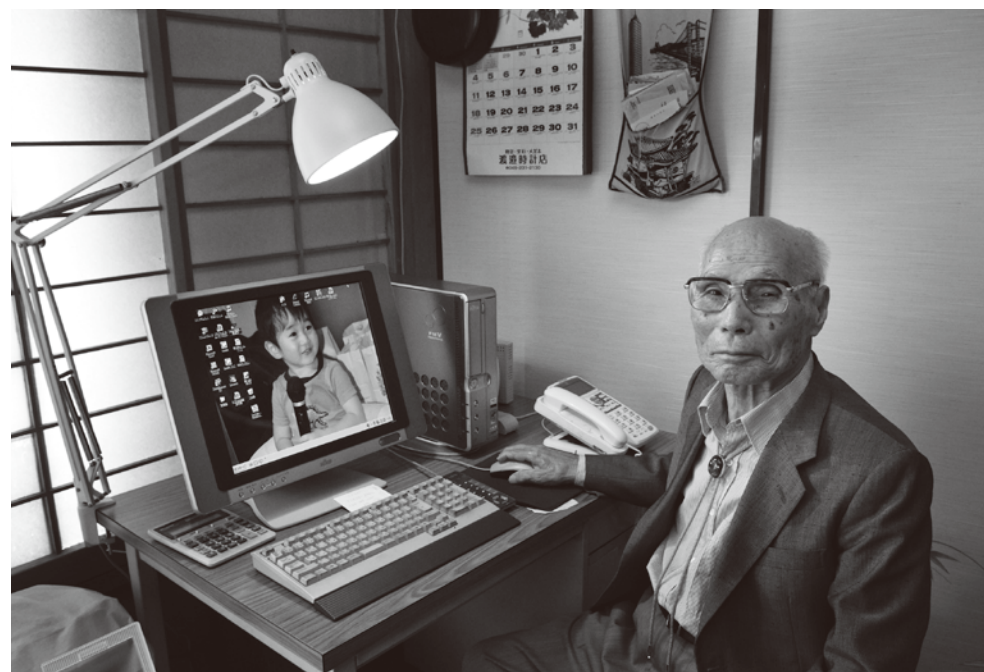
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Great Centenarians

〈Population Aged 100 and Over by Prefecture〉 (see map P56)

	per 100,000 people (people)	population aged 100 and over (people)
the most	Okinawa 61.03 (map No.47)	Tokyo 3,215 (map No.13)
the least	Saitama 4.22 (map No.11)	Tottori 231 (map No.31)

Source: Ministry of Health, *Labour and Welfare*, 2008



Kokichi Takeda
(Born in 1907, Age 100)

Mr. Kokichi Takeda started up a taxi driver in the early Showa Era (1926-1989), when there were only several private cars in Yokohama. He found joy in his job like learning about differences of national characteristics among British, French and American people, which appeared in the thinking about a 'tip' for a driver.

For more than 30 years he has made it a habit to get up at 5:30 every morning and practice an exercise routine he worked out on his own to maintain good health.

It is his recent pleasure to exchange e-mail with his grandchildren by use of a personal computer.

From a series of "HYAKU-SAI-OH (Great Centenarians) "
photographed by Shoichi Ono

These are photos of older people aged 100 and over who live in an exotic port city Yokohama.
956 centenarians live in Yokohama as of January 1, 2009.
Indicated is the age when the photo was taken.

Appendixes

1. Proportion of Population Aged 65 and Over by Prefectures
2. Proportion of social security expenditure to the general expenditure of the government
3. List of Policies
4. Resources Related to Aging Society