

Old Age in Pre-Nara and Nara Periods*

by

Susanne Formanek

(Vienna)

Demographic meaning of old age and age classes

In trying to establish the demographic meaning of old age in the Pre-Nara and Nara Periods we learn from the surviving evidence that it was rare for people to reach an advanced age. It is likely that only 5% or even less of all fifteen-year-olds in the Jōmon Period could expect to live until the age of 50 or more. On the basis of life tables it can be seen that life expectancy, while being very low in all age classes, stayed at either virtually the same level or declined only very slowly after the age of 40 or 50; therefore the chances of living even longer after having attained that age were comparatively good.¹ Very much the same structure but with improved overall mortality rates was apparently maintained till the Nara Period, where the *koseki* show persons of over 60 to account for 3 to 5% of the population, a still small but by no means insignificant number, since about 40% of the population was made up by children under the age of 15. Thus the number of the aged was of no little importance among the adult population. Furthermore, having reached the age of 40 or 50, one had very good chances to live for another 20 or 30 years.²

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1 KITŌ Hiroshi: *Nihon nisennen no jinkōshi*. Kyōto: PHP kenkyūjo 1983, 34–35.

2 *Ibid.*, 60 and Irene B. TAEUBER: *The population of Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1958, 10–11. For this trend mortality due to epidemics, which favoured older people who could have developed immunity in earlier years may have been responsible. See William Wayne FARRIS: *Population, Disease and Land in Early Japan, 645–900*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1985 (= Harvard Yenching Institute Mono-

This demographic characteristic, namely the fact that on the one hand only very few people ever reached adulthood whereas on the other hand it was by no means impossible to attain very advanced ages, may be the reason for a feature to be encountered in many archaic societies and in Japan too: the existence of the view of a theoretically extremely long human life span of 100 or even 120 years and the occurrence of outstanding men becoming as old as Methuselah. Thus the ages of the first *tennō* as recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* are very often and especially in the case of the most important ones given in three figures³ and although these ages were mere constructs,⁴ they must have been thought of as at least conceivable and as conferring outstandingness on those who had reached them. In the figure of Takeshi-uchi-no-sukune, of whom it is more than doubtful whether he ever actually existed, but whose service for the Court under five *tennō* from Keiko to Nintoku, as recorded in the *Nihon shoki*, covers a period of more than 240 years, the compilers shaped the image of Japan's own Methuselah as which he was bound to be revered throughout Japan's history.⁵

Apart from these age-record-holders, awareness and importance of actual calendaric age was obviously rather weak in the Pre-Nara Period and one's being considered as old depended not so much on one's real age as on one's pertaining to the former generation. Already in the Nara Period certain calendaric ages seem to have gained importance. Thus the age of 40 appears to have been considered as the turning-point between youth and old age.⁶ It was at this calendaric age that birthday celebrations began to be held and the two poems in the *Kaifūsō*⁷ composed on such an occasion clearly show the transitional character

graph Series. 24), 165–167, showing population pyramids for *Ritsuryō* villages with approximately the same percentages in the age classes from 50 to 70 years.

3 137 in the case of Jinmu Tennō, 168 and 153 for Sujin and Suinin, 100 for Jingū, 130 for Ōjin, 124 for Yūryaku and so on.

4 Some commentators have even suggested that the compilers of the *Kojiki* actually mistook the characters for *mitoshi* as „years“ although they originally would have meant „rice harvest“ as an index of the respective emperor's privately owned farm land, see Donald L. PHILIPPI (transl.): *Kojiki*. Tōkyō: University of Tōkyō Press 1977 [19681], 209.

5 Although records clearly giving his age as 280 or even 360 years at the time of his death seem to date from later periods (see AKIMOTO Kichirō (ed.): *Fudoki*. Iwanami shoten 1971 (19581) (= *Nihon koten bungaku taikai*.2), 479), it is obvious from the way he is referred to in both *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as being a *yo no nagahito* or a *yo no tohohito* (KURANO Kenji / TAKEDA Yukichi (eds.): *Kojiki. Norito*. Iwanami shoten 1971 (19581) (= *Nihon koten bungaku taikai*.1), 281 and SAKAMOTO Tarō / IENAGA Saburō / INOUE Mitsusada / ŌNO Susumu (eds.): *Nihon shoki. Jō*. Iwanami shoten 1971 (1967¹) (= *Nihon koten bungaku taikai*.67), 410), that he was considered to be a man blessed with an outstandingly long life.

6 As in later times where it came to be called *shorō*, or first, beginning old age.

7 The poems No. 64 and No. 107, see KOJIMA Noriyuki (ed.): *Kaifūsō. Bunka shūreishū. Honchō monzui*. Iwanami shoten 1970 (1964¹) (= *Nihon koten bungaku taikai*.69), 127 and 171.

of this phase of life: They contain reminiscences about the years of youth and speculations on the symptoms of senescence.⁸

Birthday celebrations being held every ten years together with another frequently observed feature, i. e. the rounding off of given ages to the last decade, emphasize the fact that life was thought to be divided into ten-year periods each with its very own characteristics. At the same time another division unit was borrowed from China, namely that of 8 years, which is shown by the fact that the age of 40 was expressed in the above-mentioned *Kaifūsō* poems by the term *gohachi* or „five times eight“, although we do not know whether by the same token the Japanese had adopted the whole view of the physiological development of men the Chinese had based on that number.⁹

A complete age class system covering at least the whole male population was not to be evolved but for fiscal purpose, the *Ritsuryō*-Code laying down that with the age of 60 one entered the status of *rō*, old man, whereas by the age of 65 one was defined as a *ki* or *dotard*.¹⁰ In establishing this system the Japanese for once did not follow the example of Tang-China, where there was only one class of elders which included all persons over the age of 60, but probably a Korean one, by which tax revenue could be increased, only the *ki* being granted total tax exemption. This subdivision into *rō* and *ki* appears to have been a rather artificial one, the ages at which one entered these statuses being easily subjected to change, as was done in 758, when they were advanced by one year,¹¹ the *Ritsuryō*-Code itself laying emphasis for all other purposes on other age limits, important barriers thus being the ages of 40, 60, 70 and 80.

Of gods and old people

One of the characteristics of old age in Japan most often alluded to is the closeness of the aged to the ancestors as expressed in such sayings as „*rokujū de*

8 This timing of the beginning of old age was certainly due to Chinese influence for one thing. For example the *Huang-di nei-jing su wen*, a Chinese classic on medicine, already had taught how the vital energies began to decline from the age of 40 onward. See Gudula LINCK-KESTING: „Alt und Jung im vormodernen China“, *Saeculum* 32 (1981), 378. But it may have been also closely related to actual demography, since such a rather early date for the beginning of old age is understandable under circumstances where relatively bad living conditions probably caused people to age quickly and since the above-mentioned demographic characteristics really made the age of 40 the door to later life stages. People seem to have been aware of this to a certain degree, the age of 40 being considered as an omen for a long life. See *Kaifūsō* No. 107, in: KOJIMA 1970. op.cit., 171.

9 The *Da Dai Li ji* and the *Huang-di nei-jing su wen* had based their whole discussion of the physiological evolution of male human beings on the number 8, important steps in this evolution being always reached at multiples of that number. See LINCK-KESTING 1981, op.cit., 376–378.

10 *Koryō* 6, in: INOUE Mitsusada / TSUCHIDA Naoshige / AOKI Kazuo (eds.): *Ritsuryō*. Iwanami shoten 1976 (= *Nihon shisō taikai*.3), 226.

11 See *Shoku Nikongi* 20, *Tenpyō hōji* 2.7.3, in: KUROITA Katsumi (ed.): *Shoku Nihongi*. Ōyashima shuppan kabushiki gaisha 1944 (= *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai*.2), 248.

senzo ni kaeru“,¹² a closeness which in a setting of ancestor worship, where the souls of the dead are thought to ascend to the status of gods, endows the aged with a godlike image. Looking at the earliest written monuments of Japanese culture, old people are indeed first mentioned as holding the status of gods, or rather, gods appear in the shape of old people. When in the Dragon-Slaying myth Susanoo descends upon earth, the first beings he meets are an old man and an old woman, Ashinazuchi and Tenazuchi, who present themselves as being earthly gods or *kunitsu-kami*.¹³ Such meetings of Heavenly Deities or their descendants and an Earthly God evoking the appearance of an aged human being one way or another, occur several times in the early myths. When the Heavenly Grandson Hononinigi is beginning his descent upon earth, he meets in his search for land a god named Koto-katsu-kuni-katsu-no-kami, of whom it is said that his other name is Shiho-tsutsu-no-oji.¹⁴ Although we do not learn anything about his appearance, he is equated to an old man by his name. His behavior, at least in the mentioned episode, in which he is presenting the Heavenly Grandson with land over which he seems to reign rather confers on him, too, the character of an Earthly God. This same Shiho-tsutsu-no-oji appears once more in a somewhat related episode, namely as the one who pointed out to Jinmu Tennô where the land the latter ought to extend his power to was situated,¹⁵ in other words, as an Earthly God who is able to bestow the land on those who are apt to reign over it.

There are still other gods who in their encounter with Heavenly Deities bear characteristics of old men, as for example Sarutabiko¹⁶ or Shihinetsuhiko. The latter first appears in the *Nihon shoki* as an Earthly God named Uzuhiko. Later on, when Jinmu Tennô's progress is stopped by seemingly invincible indigenous enemies, this Shihinetsuhiko and a certain Ukashi disguise themselves as an old man and an old woman by putting on a *kasamino* (a kind of grass coat) and a *mi* (winnowing-tray) respectively. In this attire they break through the enemy lines to ascend Mount Kagu, thus bringing about the success of the whole enter-

12 KAMATA Toji: *Ôdôron. Kodomo to rôjin no seishinshi*. Shinyôsha 1988 (= Nomado sôsho), 28.

13 See *Kojiki* 1/6, in: KURANO / TAKEDA 1971, op.cit., 85 and *Nihon shoki* 2, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (19671), op.cit., 121.

14 *Nihon shoki* 2, ibid., 156–157.

15 *Nihon shoki* 3, Jinmu Tennô (Preface), ibid., 189.

16 An Earthly God standing more or less adversely in the way of Hononinigi at the time of his descent upon earth but leading him finally to Takachiho Mountain in Hyûga after having been subdued by the Heavenly Ame-no-Uzume. Both *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* describe only the fierce traits of his appearance, whereas representations depicting him invariably as a fierce but old man as well as folk masks providing him with an exuberant white beard are of a later date. But the association of this god with the Shirahige Myôjin, the white-bearded god worshiped in the Shirahige shrines all over the country, whose tradition seems to reach back at least to the Nara Period, indicates that this Sarutabiko, too, was regarded as an old man. See SHIMONAKA Yasaburô (ed.): *Shintô daijiten*.2. Heibonsha 1939, 118 and 198–199.

prise.¹⁷ Both the *kasamino* and the *mi* which serve to transform the young gods into an *okina* (old man) and an *omina* (old woman) are items which in Japanese folklore are heavily related to magic and religious practices. Especially the wearing of the *kasamino* connects this episode very closely with certain religious folk ceremonies held on New Year's Day, where villagers descending from the mountains wearing a *kasamino* visit the houses of the people. The words they utter are considered as sacred benedictions or forecasts for the year to come. A related rite taking place in Yakujima in which the disguise consists of a *kasamino* and masks representing old men with long white beards,¹⁸ has an even more striking resemblance with our episode. These rites have been related to the belief in the *marebito*, visitors from the realm of the dead, who appear on certain occasions in the villages to give benedictions to the living. In this context it should be noted that the item serving to transform Shihinetsuhiko into an *okina*, namely the *kasamino*, is the same which Susanoo wore when he was exiled to the *nenokuni* or Japanese Hades. By putting on a *kasamino*, one took on this unearthly character of a traveler coming from remote realms, alienated from the human world. This seems to reveal that the *okina* too was regarded as a being with such characteristics.

This similarity or closeness of the aged with the souls of the dead is also suggested by the word *kamusabu* as used in the *Manyōshū*. Meaning literally „to behave, act like a god“, this word is used to describe the transformation of the souls of the dead into gods¹⁹ as well as the ageing of things and of persons.²⁰ The pertaining to or being connected with the other world which thus characterized the *okina* is also exemplified by the already mentioned Shihotsutsu-no-oji. In the *Nihon shoki* variants of the Yama-no-sachi legend he is the one helping Yama-no-sachi to reach the Palace of the Sea God²¹ which can be interpreted to be related to that other world beyond the sea where the souls of the dead went to. The whole episode seems to be a mythical relation of a kind of initiation rite in which the initiand is made to die a symbolic death to come back to life provided with the knowledge of the other world²² and may hint at the fact that in the remote past of Japan's history old men played the part of the initiator in initiation rites of this kind. As to Ashinazuchi and Tenazuchi, whose names have come to be interpreted as 'spirit of the late' and 'of the early rice

17 *Nihon shoki* 3, Jinmu Tennō (Preface), in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (19671), op.cit., 199–201.

18 See MITANI Eiichi: *Nihon bungaku no minzokugakuteki kenkyū*. Yūseidō shuppan kabushiki gaisha 1965 (19601), 273–274.

19 As in *Manyōshū* No.420. See MITANI 1965, op.cit., 278.

20 See *Manyōshū* poems Nos.522, 762, 1612, 1927, 2427, in: TAKAGI Ichinosuke / GOMI Tomohide / ÔNO Susumu (eds.): *Manyōshū*. 1–4. Iwanami shoten 1970-1971 (= *Nihon kotenbungaku taikai*.4-7), 1/253 and 313, 2/337, 3/75 and 173.

21 See *Nihon shoki* 2, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op.cit., 164, 168, 176 and 180.

22 See KAMATA 1988, op.cit., 26.

crop' respectively,²³ they seem to be involved in the Dragon-Slaying myth in a kind of fertility rite and may thus be the antecedents of those characters wearing masks of old men and old women who in folk culture as *taaruji* and *yasume* perform the rites of the *haru tauchi* or *taasobi* in order to secure a rich harvest.²⁴

Unlike many scholars I would be very hesitant to conclude from the above-mentioned evidence that in the early periods of Japan's history old people were considered to be living gods, as scholars have amply done. For one thing the equation old human being – god was for example no longer true for the compilers of the *Nihon shoki* itself. When, apart from the mythical episodes, Earthly Gods appear in the shape of old men or old women, these are no longer deities *a priori*. Rather now a deity explicitly borrows the shape of an aged person to appear in the human world.²⁵ This is the tendency which was to lead not much later under Buddhist influence to the legends in the *Nihon ryōiki*, where Buddhist gods manifest themselves to rescue humanity by incarnating themselves in old people who, after leaving a mysterious trace in the human world, vanish never to be seen again.²⁶

If it is safe to conclude that certain gods were imagined as bearing the shape of old people, there is still no way of knowing whether those *okina* and *omina* which we encounter in the early myths were meant to be real aged men and women, or whether those records simply were descriptions – transposed into the realm of myths – of religious rites involving the appearance of characters wearing old men's masks, as is the case in the Shihinetsuhiko episode. This certainly would have had some bearing on how the elderly were regarded in general, but it is important that even in the mythical records the equation god = old human being is true only for certain Earthly Gods, who, in all the mentioned episodes, act as subordinates to the Heavenly Gods, the latter definitely showing the behavior of young people.²⁷

23 UEDA Masaaki / IDE Itaru (eds.): *Kojiki*. Kadokawa shoten 1978 (= Kanshō Nihon koten bungaku.1), 109.

24 See YAMAORI Tetsuo: *Kami kara okina e*. Seitosha 1984, 224 and MISUMI Haruo (text) / WATANABE Yoshimasa (ill.): *Matsuri to kamigami no sekai*. Nihon engeki no genryū. Nippon hōsō shuppan kyōkai 1979, 100–102.

25 See for example *Nihon shoki* 14, Yūryaku 7, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (19671), op.cit., 475 and *Shoku Nihongi* 25, Tenpyō hōji 8.11.7, in: KUROITA 1944, op.cit., 312.

26 For example *Nihon ryōiki* 1/6 and 2/8, in: ENDŌ / KASUGA (eds.): *Nihon ryōiki*. Iwanami shoten 1971 (= Nihon koten bungaku taikai.70), 88–89 and 200–203.

27 Since the Heavenly Deities have come to be interpreted as being the gods worshiped by the Yamato nobility whereas the Earthly Gods would have been the gods of the indigenous people, it may be in the course of the conquest of the land by a people worshipping „young“ gods that the originally old men-gods of the rest of the inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago came to be relegated to their subordinate place. In this context it may not be wholly coincidental that the turning point between the *okina* and the *omina* being *a priori* gods and the later descriptions of gods only ephemerically borrowing the shape of old people is to be

Furthermore there is textual evidence that old people may have performed important roles in certain religious practices as shown by the regulation whereby old women just as priestesses were exempted from submitting to the new Chinese hair style.²⁸ But as far as the worship of the Heavenly Gods is concerned, growing old could on the contrary incapacitate for service. There is for example the case of Inishiki no mikoto who transferred the duty of guarding the sacred treasure of Isonokami to his younger sister when old age crept up on him,²⁹ or that of Nunaki-no-iri-hime-no-mikoto who when showing signs of decrepitude was no longer able to do the worship of the Gods.³⁰ In these cases senescence is obviously but a pretext, but one that must have afforded a plausible explanation. Still more striking although belonging to another context, is the Imperial Edict of Tenmu Tennô, which stated that old and sick persons who had up till then been housed in the temples now had to have quarters built for them outside the precincts in order not to pollute the holy places,³¹ thereby clearly equating decrepitude in old age with illness and assigning it the same polluting character, which does not combine well with the image of aged people as gods.

What brought about the association of old men and women with gods does not seem to have been the fact that in everyday life old people played such a dominating role that gods only could be imagined in their shape, but rather their unearthliness. This unearthliness, far from being contradicted by the polluting character of decrepitude, may on the contrary have been prompted by it, or rather it may be just another aspect of the same thing. Senile degeneration, being considered as nuisance at times (see below), could at other times by its association with death be helpful in connecting this world with the other world. It is remarkable that in the *Shihinetsuhiko* episode, the old man and the old woman, being disguised in the same way as Susanoo on his being exiled to the *Nenokuni*, or realm of the dead, succeed in their task, not because the soldiers are overcome with respect at their awe-inspiring sight, but because they find them difficult to look at (*ana miniku*) and that their appearance is greeted with great laughter. Laughter in such a mythical setting of course does not only express the ridicule for the object, but also fear, in the same way as the expression *ana miniku* does not only mean ugliness, but rather a frightening quality which makes people shun its sight, so that this seems to me to be a rather clear illustration of the kind of abhorrence mixed with fear and admiration in which senescence was held at times.

found in the episode of *Shihinetsuhiko* disguising himself as an old man, which takes place precisely in the militaristic setting of the conquest of the land.

28 See *Nihon shoki* 29, Tenmu 13.4.5, in: SAKAMOTO Tarô / IENAGA Saburô / INOUE Mitsusada / ÔNO Susumu (eds.): *Nihon shoki. Ge.* Iwanami shoten 1971 (1965¹) (= *Nihon koten bungaku taikai*.68), 462.

29 *Nihon shoki* 6, Suinin 87.2.5, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op.cit., 276.

30 *Nihon shoki* 5, Sujin 6, *ibid.*, 238.

31 *Nihon shoki* 29, Tenmu 8.10, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op.cit., 438.

Superhuman knowledge of the aged

This connection of the aged with the other world certainly accounted in part for the superhuman knowledge they were credited with. Of course, this derived also from the importance of their role in transmitting past events to later generations which is not to be underestimated in a culture without a written tradition, as illustrated by the figure of Okime *omina*. When Kenzô Tennô has finally ascended the throne and is looking for the mortal remains of his murdered father – a matter of no little importance, since the existence of one's father's grave assured dynastic continuity and mentioning of its site was never omitted – it is an old woman who helps him succeed in his task and after having bestowed on her the name of Okime *omina*, The Woman who Keeps an Eye, he keeps her beside him and consults with her every day.³²

This function the elders maintained even after the introduction of the writing system, for then it was further enhanced by the Confucian value of upholding the ancient traditions, making it an act of virtue to question the old people, the natural transmitters of these traditions, about them.³³ Thus the order for the compilation of the *Fudoki* stated that the old and amazing things handed down by the elders should be recorded,³⁴ an order to which the *Hitachi fudoki* corresponded to *expressis verbis* in its title³⁵ and along with the other surviving ones by the repeated formulation *furuokina no ahitsutahete iheraku* introducing the relation of past political as well as godly events, thus showing how the knowledge the aged were credited with extended not only to past, but most importantly to divine and occult things.

When under Jingû Tennô life itself is threatened by a long-lasting solar eclipse, it is an old man who saves the world by identifying the phenomenon and its cause, so it can be removed.³⁶

This occult knowledge the aged were thought to have and which surpassed what one could acquire solely through one's memories and experience thus could be expanded in a rather shamanistic way to future events too. The prototype of the elder paralleling a shaman can be acknowledged in the figure of the above-mentioned Takeshi-uchi-no-sukune. When under Nintoku Tennô a wild goose is said to have laid an egg in Yamato, it is he, being a man of well advanced years, who is not only able to tell if this has ever happened before, but also – and most importantly – to grasp the meaning of this event never witnessed before for the future, foreseeing by a shamanistic *koto*-play the long

32 *Kojiki* 3, Kenzo 1, in: KURANO / TAKEDA 1971, op. cit., 329–331.

33 Thus, for example, the *Ritsuryô*-Code ordered in his paragraph Koryô 33 province governors on their yearly tours through the province to question the indigenous old people about ancient customs and rites prevailing in their region. See INOUE et al. 1976, op. cit., 236.

34 *Shoku Nihongi* 6, Wado 6.5.3, in: KUROITA 1944, op. cit., 52.

35 See AKIMOTO 1971, op. cit., 35.

36 *Nihon shoki* 9, Jingu Tennô (Preface), in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op. cit., 344.

reign of the emperor.³⁷ Old people interpreting unusual events as omens for things to come occur in many more instances in the *Nihon shoki*.³⁸

Seniority and retirement

Although these abilities, which should have predestinated aged persons to be permanent advisors for the rulers, surprisingly do not seem to have given birth to an institution such as a Council of Elders as is known in other early societies,³⁹ the important political figures of the Pre-Nara Period being in general the family heads of powerful clans, we are bound to imagine them as being men of advanced years to say the least. The records sometimes designate such important political figures *expressis verbis* as being old men, depicting them as exercising power on account of the experience gained with age, although their actual age is rarely mentioned.⁴⁰ But we have to take into account that mortality caused many of them to die – either of natural or violent causes – before they reached an age when senescence would manifest themselves, making place for younger ones who thus were far from being relegated from power. Furthermore they seem to have maintained power only as long as they had both the physical and political strength to do so, neither age nor experience preventing them from being removed either violently – as for example Tagishi-mimi-no-mikoto, the eldest son of Jinmu Tennô, who although described as well advanced in years and experienced in governing was murdered by his younger half-brother⁴¹ – or smoothly – as in the case of Soga no Iruka who seems to have taken over power

37 *Kojiki* 3, Nintoku 5, in: KURANO / TAKEDA 1971, op. cit., 281.

38 See for example *Nihon shoki* 24, Kôgyoku 3.6., in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op. cit., 257.

39 Both Takeshi-uchi-no-sukunc and Okime omina seem to have acted as permanent advisors to the rulers. Whether or not this has ever been institutionalized in Japan during the period we are concerned with to give birth to something like a Council of Elders advising or ever controlling the ruler is a question difficult to answer. In most cases the appearance of such an advising elder is depicted as an almost accidental, ephemeral event, or, as in the case of Takeshi-uchi-no-sukune and Okime *omina*, they gained their limited authority through individual merit. In the *Nihon shoki* version of the Okime *omina* episode, however, the *fu-ruokina* out of whom Okime is to emerge are summoned by the emperor as one single entity, which may have acted as a consulting group. There is also one instance in the written materials available to us, where elders act as an authoritative group to advise a ruler. In a *Nihon shoki* episode a young prince is warned against aggressive behaviour by the elders and because he ignores their warning he is defeated and his father is killed. After having sworn to listen to elders in the future he is nevertheless enthroned by them. But this episode takes place in Kudara (Korea). See *Nihon shoki* 19, Kinmei 15.12. and 16.8., in: SAKAMOTO et al 1971 (1965¹), op. cit., 111 and 116.

40 As for example Soga no Emishi, see SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op. cit., 223–224, or Tagishi-mimi-no-mikoto, see below note 42.

41 *Nihon shoki* 4, Suizei Tennô (Preface), in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op. cit., 219.

from his father while the latter was still alive, relegating him to the background.⁴²

Under the *Ritsuryō*-state this changed only very slightly. On the one hand seniority principles allowing officials to climb the rank ladder as superiors died away and the time of their own service progressed, made sure that the highest governmental posts were occupied by men of no less than 45 or 50 years of age and much older, as can be seen by reading the obituary notices of such person-ages in the *Shoku Nihongi*, although this of course lacks statistical precision. But careers, which depended heavily on the starting point, did not progress automatically and evenly, seniority being by no means equal to superiority and seemingly even losing its importance in determining hierarchy as time went by. The *Ritsuryō*-Code paragraph regulating relative hierarchy of bearers of the same court rank made it depend on the respective calendaric age only for persons of the 6th rank downwards, whereas for the higher ranks it was decided through the length of time that had elapsed since the rank was conferred.⁴³ By the late Nara Period this seems to have been further replaced by a system even more independent of age, in which it was determined by the relative hierarchy of the posts occupied.⁴⁴ This can also be observed in the regulation on roads where age was of course a criteria for priority just second to rank, but which at the same time made it very clear that the slightest superiority in rank made up for any inferiority in years.⁴⁵

On the other hand the *Ritsuryō*-state institutionalized the replacement of officials who were getting too old by introducing a kind of retirement system which applied to certain calendaric ages as for example in the case of soldiers and palace-guards at the age of 60⁴⁶ or simply to evident signs of senility as for the Buddhist bishops⁴⁷ or the poststation guards.⁴⁸ For all other officials the *Ritsuryō* regulated pensioning at the age of 70, the paragraph being formulated in a way that left it open to question whether compulsory retirement was meant or only the possibility to quit one's job if one wanted to.⁴⁹

In actual practice retirement seems to have been far from compulsory, at least for the higher officials, and as can be gathered from certain entries in the *Shoku Nihongi* the age of 70 could be widely surpassed while being still on duty. Retirement on the grounds of old age was mostly granted following the

42 *Nihon skoki* 24, Kōgyoku 1.1.15., in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op. cit., 246.

43 *Kushikiryō* 55, in: INOUE et al. 1976, op. cit., 396.

44 *Ibid.*, 663.

45 *Giseiryō* 22, *ibid.*, 349 and 632.

46 *Gunboryō* 36 and 37, *ibid.*, 328.

47 *Sōniryō* 14, *ibid.*, 220.

48 *Kyumokuryō* 50, *ibid.*, 417.

49 *Senjoryō* 21, *ibid.*, 276.

petition of the office holder himself⁵⁰ and there are even some cases where it appears officials were kept on duty longer than they wished to.⁵¹ Moreover, in some cases the petitions themselves were probably prompted by the frustrated political will of the petitioner rather than by his old age.⁵² But the view that one had to know by oneself when „it was enough“ (*taru o shiru*) existed⁵³ and since there is at least one recorded instance where a high official was dismissed, among other things, on the grounds of his not behaving as his age requested,⁵⁴ it cannot be excluded that some of these petitions may have been preceded by something quite similar to the modern *katatataki*.

With minor officials retirement seems to have occurred in an even more forced way, as in those examples where *daigakuryō* professors were discharged because the Dajōkan thought them too senile to deliver their lectures properly,⁵⁵ or in the case of district clerks, who seem to have been made to retire in a rather compulsory way at the age of 70, at least if they were disliked by their superiors.⁵⁶

Thus the attainment of a certain calendaric age on the one hand was by no means equivalent to one's resignation, since the aged officials, following Chinese examples, were frequently even honored for their longevity by presents and by the permission to use a cane at Court. It seems that in most cases senescence served as a pretext: for the superiors to get rid of undesirable individuals and for the officials themselves to escape from a situation where they found they could no longer exert enough influence. But it is noteworthy at least that growing old was no insurance against the loss of political power and that by pensioning off the aged officials, which was outwardly justified by the necessity to care for their health, this loss could be subsequently sanctified.

Since the political power in a clan-oriented society such as Pre-Nara Japan is linked to the power within one's family, it is not surprising to find the elder generations exert considerable influence on the rest of the family members. This can be seen for example in the fact that it was long customary for fathers or grand-fathers to sell their children or grandchildren as slaves as they pleased, a custom which under Chinese influence came to be prohibited, but was not pun-

50 As for example in the case of Tachibana no Moroe, who resigned from his post as Minister of the Left in 756 being 72 years old, or of Funya no Kiyomi, see *Shoku Nihongi* 19, Tenpyō shōhō 8.2.2. and 25, Tenpyō hōji 8.9.4., in: KUROITA 1944, op. cit., 223 and 303.

51 As for example Kibi no Makibi, Minister of the Right, or Onakatomi no Kiyomaro, holder of the same office, who at the ages of 77 and 72 respectively were denied retirement, see *Shoku Nihongi* 31, Hōki 1.10.8. and 33, Hōki 5.11.21., *ibid.*, 419 and 424.

52 This seems to have happened with Kibi no Makibi. See YAMAGISHI Tokuhei / TAKEUCHI Rizō / IENAGA Saburō / ŌSONE Shōsuke (eds.): *Kodai teiji shakai shisō*. Iwanami shoten 1979 (= *Nihon shisō taikai*.8), 39–41.

53 See for example *Shoku Nihongi* 25, Tenpyō hōji 8.9.4., in: KUROITA 1944, op. cit., 303.

54 Tajihī no Hiroitari, see *Shoku Nihongi* 20, Tenpyō hōji 1.8.2., *ibid.*, 240.

55 *Shoku Nihongi* 10, Tenpyō 2.3.13., *ibid.*, 122.

56 *Shoku Nihongi* 6, Wadō 6.5.7., *ibid.*, 52.

ished as severely as the Chinese model would have it and lingered on for a long time. The household head, as designed in the *Ritsuryō*-laws, per definition the same as the family head and pertaining to the eldest family generation,⁵⁷ had almost unrestrained power over the other family members in all civil matters⁵⁸ and since there is no trace of any such legal institution as the later *inkyō* (retirement of the family head), could at least in theory continue to exercise this power as long as he lived, till an unlimited age. Moreover, the elder family members were by law protected from misbehavior against them on the part of their younger relatives through rather Draconic measures.⁵⁹

But it is important that the position of power in the family was not linked in the first instance to one's being the eldest family member, not even the eldest male. Although this was not clearly stated in the *Ritsuryō*-texts,⁶⁰ the preserved *koseki* often show surviving elder males, brothers of the former household head, under a younger household head, son of the former,⁶¹ so that an older family male may have come under the control of a younger one,⁶² which was of course invariably true for elder women.

Caring for the elderly

According to the *Ritsuryō*-laws the administration of family wealth was put into the hands of the family head, thereby denying the other family members the right to contract affairs on their own.⁶³ In principle this should have secured the livelihood of at least part of the aged. But this perhaps did not correspond closely to actual practice, as may be seen from the fact that on many occasions in the *Nihon ryōiki* fathers and mothers appear who are punished in later lives for having disposed of parts of their children's property without their permission.⁶⁴ Furthermore the concept of the responsibility of the offspring for the support and general well-being of their elderly parents may have been weak, as is suggested by the fact that the *Yōrō*-Code, in transposing the Ten Major Crimes of the Tang laws to Japanese conditions, dropped the sin of not nourishing the parents lovingly from the definition of the crime of impiety under which

57 *Koryō* 5, INOUE et al. 1976, op. cit., 226.

58 *Zatsuryō* 18, *ibid.*, 479.

59 *Myōreiritsu* 6, Hachigyaku, fukō, *ibid.*, 18.

60 The later *Ryō no gige* and *Ryō no shuge* comments go on to lengthy discussions on who had to succeed to this position on the death of the former family head, finally arriving at the conclusion that it should be the designated heir, even if older male family members were still alive, who should have preceded him according to a pure anciennity principle.

61 *Ibid.*, 551.

62 There are of course indications that these uncles of the new household head could exercise some of the prerogatives of the household head in his place, such as the administration of family wealth, that direct succession of the heir was meant only to guarantee succession in the main line, but there seems to have existed legal uncertainty in this field.

63 *Zatsuryō* 18, INOUE et al. 1976, op. cit., 479.

64 For example *Nihon ryōiki* 1/10 and 2/15, in: ENDŌ / KASUGA 1971, op. cit., 97 and 219.

heading it was included in the Tang models, without even mentioning it as a minor crime in other paragraphs as was done with similarly omitted items.⁶⁵

Of course this is not meant to imply that the elderly parents were left starving nor that there existed any customary *obasuteyama*-practice (abandoning of old people) which hardly ever can be traced in materials from the Nara Period. There are indications that in early periods incapacitated aged people may have been denied food under circumstances where it had become scarce even for the rest of the population.⁶⁶ The only other allusion to the abandoning of old people is to be found in the *Manyōshū* poem No. 3791 and clearly refers to the Chinese story of Genkoku (Yuan Ku).⁶⁷ But we may be close to reality by assuming, as some *Nihon ryōiki* legends indicate,⁶⁸ that the aged were expected to contribute something in exchange for their livelihood; this could have been the surrender of their former prerogatives or possessions to the next generations.

It is remarkable that while trying to foster filial piety – a concept which seems to have been difficult to understand for the Japanese in the beginning⁶⁹ – by various means such as tax exemption,⁷⁰ the *Ritsuryō*-state apparently did much more for the maintenance of the aged than its laws provided for. To those over 60 and 65 years of age the *Yōrō*-Code only granted gradual tax and corvée

65 See INOUE et al., op.cit., 447–448.

66 As may be inferred from the mentioning of old people eating the roots of herbs during a famine, see *Nihon shoki* 22, Suiko 34.6., in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op.cit., 212, but this may have been a mere saying.

67 TAKAGI et al. 1971/4, op.cit., 123–125. „When Yuan Ku was fifteen years old his parents, in spite of his tearful protests, took his aged grandfather to the mountains in a cart, and there abandoned him. The boy went and brought back the cart. Being questioned by his father why he had done so, Yuan Ku replied: 'You may not be able to make a cart when you are old.' The father, much ashamed of his misdeed, brought back the old parent and took good care of him thereafter“, in: *The Manyōshū. The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai Translation of One Thousand Poems*. New York and London: Columbia University Press 1965, 76.

68 Mostly *Nihon ryōiki* 1/23, where a mother has nothing to maintain herself and borrows rice from her son, who in exchange takes debentures from her. Because the son insists on the repayment of her debts, he is punished for this lack of filial piety by madness and an early death. This occurs because he stubbornly persists in being paid back, although he is wealthy and does not need the money whereas his mother has nothing to give in exchange. But the mere fact of taking debentures for rice given to one's parents for their livelihood apparently was not as inconceivable as one might think. Moreover, Endō and Kasuga stress the fact that on the mother's part to take things belonging to her son already constituted a misbehaviour in itself, which was bound to make her meet an ill retribution, and that the kind of bargaining between the generations as is illustrated by the exchange of debenture notes may well be a rather accurate reflexion of the life of the common people under the *Ritsuryō*-state. See ENDŌ / KASUGA 1971, op.cit., 124.

69 The *Ryō no shuge* comments for example found it necessary to accompany the concept with rather lengthy discussions which quote Chinese examples of filial piety, among them the above-mentioned episode of Yuan Ku, which in fact is nothing else but a story about the refutation of a practice of abandoning the aged.

70 *Fuyakuryō* 17, in: INOUE et al. 1976, op.cit., 255–256.

exemption.⁷¹ As to the over 80s, they were to be given a *ji*, or servant.⁷² Regulations concerning these *ji* provided for their staying with the persons they were in charge of and *Ryô no shuge* comments implied that they were also responsible for their maintenance, whereas in a somewhat difficult to interpret paragraph it was regulated that the aged without children, widows and widowers as well as those very advanced in years without close relatives were to be cared for by their villages.⁷³

In reality, since the reign of Jitô Tennô, the records show rice grants bestowed on this group of the population in the whole realm or in more limited places becoming customary practice accompanying every important political or social event, so that they appear to have occurred almost yearly or even more frequently. That these alms-givings really took place may be confirmed by the existence of a series of fiscal documents, dating mostly of the Tenpyô Era, in which rather detailed information is given about the receivers and the amounts given.⁷⁴ These varied widely, but since they ranged from 3–5 *to* to 1–3 *koku* of rice they should have been enough to guarantee a considerable part of the livelihood of the receivers who included almost the whole aged population. Prompted by the Buddhist concept of pitying the poor and the Confucian idea that the well-being of the aged was at the same time proof and guarantee of the excellence of the government,⁷⁵ these *jingô* may have been due also to the idea that the incapacitated aged were to be cared for by the community. This of course was necessary for the considerable number of elderlies whom high mortality rates especially in the early stages of life had left without relatives⁷⁶ and who had thus been reduced to the state of vagrants and mendicants.⁷⁷ This in

71 Whereas the Tang-China laws had exempted everyone over the age of 60 from taxes, the *Yôrô*-Code granted full exemption only at the age of 66, the 60 to 65 years old still having to render half the amount of head tax and corvee of the full tax payers. See *Fuyakuryô* 1 and 4, in: INOUE et al. 1976, op. cit., 250–252.

72 *Koryô* 11, *ibid.*, 228.

73 *Ritsuryô*, *Koryô* 32, *ibid.*, 235.

74 The most detailed records of the receivers and the amounts given are contained in the *Izumo no kuni ôchikara jingô rekimyôchô* (see TÔKYÔ TEIKOKU DAIGAKU (ed.): *Dai Nikon kamonjo*.2. Insatsukyoku 1901, 201-246), dating from 739 (Tenpyô 11), which deals exclusively with this kind of alms-giving and shows persons over the age of 80, men over 60 without a wife, women over 50 without a husband being granted 5 *to* each, regardless of their having relatives or not. Other records containing information about these *jingô* bestowed on aged people are the *Settsu no kuni shôzeichô* (736), the *Nagato no kuni shôzeichô* (737), the *Bungo no kuni shôzeichô* (737), the *Tajima no kuni shôzeichô* (737), the *Awaji no kuni shôzeichô* (738) and others.

75 See for example *Shoku Nihongi* 9, *Yôrô* 7.10.23. and *Shoku Nihongi* 36, Tenô 1.6.1., in: KUROITA 1944, op. cit., 97 and 473.

76 As they are depicted, for example, begging for their livelihood in neighbouring houses, in *Nihon ryôiki* 2/16, in: ENDÔ / KASUGA 1971, op. cit., 222–226.

77 See *Nihon shoki* 30, Jito 1.8.6., in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op. cit., 490, which seems to be describing an assembly of begging old men and old women.

turn may have contributed to the wandering image that often surrounded the aged.⁷⁸ Some may have been denied staying with the rest of the community, as already hinted at by the fact, that of the *kasamino* serving, as mentioned above, to transform Shihinetsuhiko into an *okina*, the *Nihon shoki* had said that those who wore it should not be allowed to enter the houses of humans.⁷⁹

The glory and misery of old age

Turning now from the discussion of material circumstances of the aged to appreciations and judgments of old age, it is not surprising in view of the high mortality rates in the early stages of life to find that the long lease of life which was regarded as theoretically possible was considered a kind of reward granted by the gods, as is often mentioned in the speeches of gods addressing mankind.⁸⁰ This view came to be complemented under Buddhist influence by the concept of a long life being the repayment of earlier good deeds, a belief expressed for example in Yamanoe no Okura's foreword to his poem on age and illness.⁸¹ But these seem to have been merely theoretical speculations occurring in thoughts about life, while sympathies which were with heroes dying young managed to explain how by misfortune and the working of evil spirits they were not able to complete the whole life span they merited, and led to the idea that it was rather unfair and unjust that in this world the young often had to die even before the old.⁸² In this sense, for Yamanoe no Okura, there is nothing as pathetic as the case of that young man who to help an old one was bound to die on a mission originally conferred on the latter.⁸³ To have reached an advanced age was therefore no guarantee for one's virtue. From the old man Ikai stealing the provisions of the already miserable Oke and Woke who had just lost their father through murder,⁸⁴ to Tagishi-mimi-no-mikoto who is described as a perverse character,⁸⁵ there is a series of figures of old, rather wicked persons, whose wickedness seems to become exacerbated with age or perhaps the power they gained through it and who finally are either actually or at least morally defeated by the younger generation, perhaps as an expression of latent generation conflicts.

78 See for example the *Manyōshū* poems Nos. 4128 und 4133, where the pin-cushion of the traveller and the *suribukuro*, a casket used on journeys, are described as the attributes of the *okina*; see TAKAGI et al. 1970/4, op.cit., 303 and 305.

79 See SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op.cit., 118.

80 As for example in the *Nihon shoki* 6, Suinin 25.3., where the god Yamato-no-ōkami promises the emperor the reward of a long life if he is to worship properly, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op.cit., 270, or in a similar episode appearing in a fragment of the lost *Owari no kuni no fudoki*, in: AKIMOTO 1971, op.cit., 442.

81 China jiaimon, *Manyōshū* 5, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/2, op.cit., 109.

82 Ibid., 109.

83 TAKAGI et al. 1971/4, op.cit., 157–159.

84 See *Kojiki* 3/126, in: KURANO / TAKEDA 1971, op.cit., 307.

85 *Nihon shoki* 4, Suizei Tennō, in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1967¹), op.cit., 219.

As to more direct judgments on old age, there is a series of songs and poems lamenting old age in erotic settings or at least with sexual undertones. There is for example the legend of Hiketa no Akaiko, whom Yûryaku Tennô had promised to marry when she was a young girl, and who after having waited for 80 years in vain, goes to remind him – albeit to late – of his promise. This serves to introduce an exchange of poems in which the two of them lament their age and their incapacity for love.⁸⁶ Although this is true lamenting of old age, there is also a certain comical quality about the whole story, Hiketa visiting the Emperor loaded with a bridal dowry, although she knows very well that he won't marry her at her age, and beneath the lamenting there is also a certain pride to have grown so very old that she feels the urge to show herself to him. There is also a famous *Manyôshû* poem of the old bamboo-cutter, who on being shunned by the Heavenly Maidens he meets, tells them how his present avoidance was preceded by his being adored by everyone when a young man.⁸⁷ These and other similar poems have come to be interpreted as being either folk songs or literary remakes of such songs sang by old people on the occasion of *utagaki*, where their function was not so much to really lament old age but to prompt the young people to comply with their roles and to join in the ceremonies duly as long as they are able to do so,⁸⁸ serving as a reminder of the transitoriness of human life.

Be it as it may, the kind of depreciation of old age that shines through in these and similar folk-song-like poems, going as far as the truly not flattering comparison of old men to mountain-goats,⁸⁹ seems to have been merely due to their loss of fecundity and the overall tune is not one of despair whereas laments on old age really grow bitter in poems composed by court nobles and officials. Not only is the old man depicted as one who is disliked and shunned by others – and this not only in erotic settings; he is himself aware that not only is he afflicted by physical handicaps and deficiencies – the former beautiful black hair he was once proud of has turned grey or white, the skin once so smooth has become all wrinkled, his teeth have fallen out so as to show the tongue, making it difficult to utter words correctly, the back is bent, he has difficulties in walking, sometimes even in moving – but that his whole personality seems to have deteriorated as well. Not only are other people annoyed by old people's endless and aimless talk,⁹⁰ they themselves are painfully aware that in their senility they

86 See *Kojiki* 3/129, in: KURANO / TAKEDA 1971, op.cit., 311–313.

87 *Manyôshû* No. 3791, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/4, op.cit., 123–125.

88 See MITANI Eiichi: „Taketori monogatari no sozai to kôzô“, in: *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō*. 23/2 (1958), 2–5; TSUCHIHASHI Yutaka / KONISHI Jinichi (eds.): *Kodai kayoshu*. Iwanami shoten 1957 (= *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*.3), 94–95 and TSUCHIHASHI Yutaka / IKEDA Yasaburō (eds.): *Kayo I*. Kadokawa shoten 1975 (= *Kanshō Nihon koten bungaku*.4), 39–54.

89 *Nihon shoki* 24, Kōgyoku Tennô 2.10.12., in: SAKAMOTO et al. 1971 (1965¹), op.cit., 249.

90 *Manyôshû* No. 236, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/1, op.cit., 145.

utter senseless things.⁹¹ Despise of old age which may be underplayed when speaking of men of high rank, really gets crude when it comes to old servants or subordinates. Otomo no Yakamochi does not spare his old falconer, calling him an idiot of a dotard and deploring his helpless senility.⁹² Compared to what one was like in one's youth, growing old has brought only decay, as is shown by the expression *sakari wa kutachinu*.⁹³

Consequently it is not surprising to find the *Manyōshū* poets dreaming of regaining their youth⁹⁴ and longing for rejuvenating elixirs.⁹⁵ These poems have generally been interpreted as showing the influence of the Chinese idea of the *furō fushi no yaku* (elixir of life) of the Taoistic Paradises. But whereas in the Chinese tradition this elixir was thought to bring eternal life in a kind of ageless state in the Japanese context it became an *ochimizu*, a rejuvenating elixir. This was obviously meant to bring back the lost youth, probably because the Chinese concept had met with the indigenous belief – as can be gathered from certain folk legends⁹⁶ – that the moon beheld a rejuvenescent water which had been intended for mankind, but was lost through misfortune or misbehavior. The scandal of death and ageing as a result of the inability to renew oneself as the moon can thereby entered the human world. The belief that this elixir could come forth again at certain times or in certain places shines through even in Buddhist ceremonies, such as the *omizutori* of the Tōdaiji,⁹⁷ where the holy water was drawn from a well named Wakasai,⁹⁸ indicating that it was thought of as fountain of youth, or, rather ironically, where fostering of the respect for the aged was intended, the *nengō* Yōrō being proclaimed because a rejuvenating source, the later Yōrō no taki, was found,⁹⁹ making all those ugly features of senescence disappear. Even the ancient *norito* show this ambiguity between the hope for a long lease of life and the striving for youthfulness, the Izumo no kuni no miyatsuko no kamuyogoto wishing the emperor on the one hand that he

91 *Manyōshū* No. 2582, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/3, op.cit., 203.

92 *Manyōshū* No. 4011, in Takagi et al. 1970/4, op.cit., 239.

93 *Manyōshū* No. 847, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/2, op.cit., 81.

94 *Manyōshū* Nos. 331, 1034, 1046, 2689, 3043, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971, op.cit., 1/175, 2/183 and 185, 3/223 and 295.

95 *Manyōshū* Nos. 627, 628, 847, 848 and 3245, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971, op.cit., 1/283, 2/81 and 3/349.

96 See N.A. NEVSKII: *Tsuki to fushi*. Tōyō bunko 1978 and MATSUMAE Takeshi: „Tsuki to mizu“, in: TANIGAWA Kenichi (ed.): *Taiyo to tsuki. Kodaijin no uchūkan to shiseikan*. Shōgakukan 1983 (= Nihon minzoku bunka taikai.2), 133.

97 MATSUMAE 1983, op.cit., 133.

98 The association with a fountain of youth is not only alluded to by its name, but also by the tradition according to which this well would have been connected with a source in the precincts of the Wakasa-hiko Shrine in Fukui, whose deities, being identical with Hikohohodemi-no-mikoto and Toyotama-hime-no-mikoto, were worshipped as beings of eternal youth. See AKIMOTO 1971, op.cit., 465.

99 *Shoku Nihongi* 7, Yoro 1.11.17., in: KUROITA 1944, op.cit., 70–71.

might live to enjoy the white hair of old age and on the other hand that he might maintain everlasting and ever renewed youthfulness.¹⁰⁰

Thus old age clearly did not correspond to the cultural values of beauty and vitality prevailing at the Nara Court, and it is almost surprising how any mention of any possible positive quality to be acquired by growing old is nearly completely missing in the *Manyôshû*. The only exception is a poem where it is stated that men grow better as they age, but from the title of this poem, „Lament on old age“, we would guess that whatever kind of goodness was meant, it was not one that brought any pleasure.¹⁰¹ As can be felt in certain *Manyôshû* and *Kaifûsô* poems, old age – being not a valuable thing in itself but rather the contrary – could only be made bearable by certain achievements to be gained from growing old: to be honored for one's former deeds,¹⁰² to attain high positions¹⁰³ and to enjoy the merits of a numerous offspring.¹⁰⁴

100 See KURANO / TAKEDA 1971, op. cit., 455–457.

101 *Manyôshû* No. 1885, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/3, op. cit., 67.

102 *Kaifûsô* No. 18, KOJIMA 1970, op. cit., 88–89.

103 This is hinted at in a negative way in various poems expressing the sadness of having grown old without having made the career one had hoped for, see *Kaifûsô* No. 91, *ibid.*, 154–155, or the bitterness of being old and still of low position, see *Manyôshû* No. 848, in: TAKAGI et al. 1971/2, op. cit., 81.

104 *Kaifûsô* No. 107, KOJIMA 1970, op. cit., 171.