

Being old - examples from Kaohsiung, Southern Taiwan



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The ideal situation for the elder folks.....

You have a
very rich
son or daughter,
who is showing real
traditional filial piety

....
and pays all
your living expenses

.....
(if he has
no financial trouble
in the moment)

.....
Every Sunday, he or
his wife visits you,
sometimes with
the grandkids

.....



Normally, it is more like this....



I have to find the right balance
.....
between paying for the education
of my children and paying the
living expenses of my parents....
almost not possible for a working
class man and not easy for a lower
middle class man like me!





I solved the balance problem.....

finally, we took my parents into our flat. We do not have to pay their rent anymore and they can take care about our two little children and our household, when my wife and me are at work.

My parents are happy, that they can help us and that we all are together.

Once a week, we all have a meal in a restaurant and a walk in a park or we do a day trip to a nearby sightseeing spot.

But what, if you are old and alone?



I am 72
and still healthy. Today, I
am off and have a walk in
these lily fields.
I work as a doorkeeper, 12
hour shifts, very low
income, but it helps me to
survive. Anyway, I meet
people and can talk to
them! So, I do not feel
lonely!
However, I am very afraid
of becoming sick, cause
there is nobody to take
care of me!



That's Mr. Chen.
He is almost 80 years old.
He has also no family.
Some of the neighbors talk to him,
some do not like him,
because he collects garbage:
paper, plastic, tin cans, etc.
and sells it for a very little money.
He is not doing it for the money,
he is doing it out of pure boredom.
Mr. Chen has a little monthly pension
from the government,
because he worked as a soldier.
Therefore, he does not depend too much
on the money of the garbage collecting
in contrast to other old folks,
who look through garbage out of survival
and
you make them out easily
by their appearance.

Questions

- 1.) What do you think of the ideal, that three generations should live together under one roof?
- 2.) Do you want to live in a Nursing Home, when you have the chance to stay with your children?
- 3.) What are you doing in terms of intergenerational action?
- 4.) Old, lonely and digging in the garbage! Is this how a human should end his last days of life? Then, the abbreviation QOL is just a joke, isn't it? Do you see alternatives?
- 5.) How is the health care and retirement of citizens in the US organized (by the government)?
- 6.) Since I live in Taiwan, I learned to appreciate the values of family-life and feel sometimes ashamed about the selfishness and coldness I suddenly realized in my own country. Do you have similar feelings after you worked on this topic and became more aware about it?
- 7.) Are you interested in a very different concept of health care and retirement? If yes, check out my short article about the Social Welfare State in Germany.....