

Older and Wiser?

April 09, 2012

The Economist:

One stereotype of wisdom is a wizened Zen-master smiling benevolently at the antics of his pupils, while referring to them as little grasshoppers or some such affectation, safe in the knowledge that one day they, too, will have been set on the path that leads to wizened masterhood. But is it true that age brings wisdom? A study two years ago in North America, by Igor Grossmann of the University of Waterloo, in Canada, suggested that it is. In as much as it is possible to quantify wisdom, Dr Grossmann found that elderly Americans had more of it than youngsters. He has, however, now extended his investigation to Asia—the land of the wizened Zen-master—and, in particular, to Japan. There, he found, in contrast to the West, that the grasshoppers are their masters' equals almost from the beginning.

Read the whole story: [The Economist](#)