

Eric Evaluates The Sumo Forum

by Eric Blair

Is the international interest level in all things sumo dying a death... of sorts?

The common bond linking so many reading this piece is a passion for sumo. In – and perhaps because of – that bond, however, lies a problem; the slow death of that passion as a result of too few creating too much of too little.

And that means what exactly?

Look at Sumo Forum, for example. Once a vibrant online community in which dozens participated on a daily basis in the lead-in to, and for the duration of, a basho, the forum has today become a far less active community. A few new members appear from time to time but tend to disperse like the morning mist once their own initial flurry of excitement over this exotic sport dissipates.

This arrival and departure of the next generation is truly sad as the forum that now approaches its

10th year has become a place of long termers seeking new, evermore irrelevant angles on sumo to satisfy an ever present hunger - in themselves - for the fresh approach they enjoyed back in the day, their own early days of following the sport. Missing is the lack of welcomes offered new members compared to just a few years ago while ALL are immediately 'scoped' by the old hands viewing member profiles, and followed up with.....silence. Are new fans, new members really so invisible?

Much is reduced to binary. The concept of learning together and enjoying the sport for the sake of itself has long since vanished, having been replaced by a degree of stagnation as opposed to the Christmas morning style anticipation basho used to be filled with.

The forum was once a magnificent avenue down which to approach the sumo world in English, and is still a wonderful resource of

knowledgeable and interesting individuals, but it is gathering dust in much the same way as the earlier Sumo Mailing List did in the last few years of Musashimaru's reign.

No other site exists at present to compete with the forum but that day will come and the forum will fade away. Fans will make their choices and some will stay with the forum as others leave or frequent both old and new in the same manner the mailing list continues to scrape by – a shadow of its former self living in the shadow created by the forum.

The exact course sumo reporting, coverage and fan interaction will take on the net remains to be seen but when the time comes to move on, few if any will ever forget the baton carried by the Sumo Forum – a site in its genre without equals this past six or seven years – but a site that shall one day, probably sooner rather than later, breathe its last in the never changing, never stationary world of sumo.