



Let's Hear From You! What Made You A Fan?



Grandmothers, tatami and manners *by Shuto Ishiguro*

Grandmothers give us so much in life – and having been brought up by my own grandmother, one of the passions she instilled in me – besides that for dora-yaki (a kind of baked sweet popular in Japan) – was for sumo.

I do recall sitting on her knee cheering somebody on when I was younger – I just don't recall who that person was – and with my grandmother since departed, I will never be able to confirm. I'd like to think it was a local rikishi but I really cannot guess.

It really doesn't matter though. Memories of that tatami floored-back-room behind my grandmother's tiny sweet shop in a busy shopping district come flooding back each time I think of

sumo and each time I see it on TV.

Today's sport of sumo – and in saying 'sport' I mean sport, for I see the true essence of sumo as having been removed by the behavior of some of the Europeans. A foreign presence is actually a good thing in my opinion, but their behavior, or rather the behavior of a handful of the ill-mannered folk such as Asashoryu and the three Russians fired this year has really upset the concept of sumo. I know it has upset me.

We really can do without Asashoryu now. Hakuho alone can carry the sport now and Ama has recently been promoted to ozeki. Asashoryu doesn't know how to conduct himself anyway.

If truth be told, I am more of a baseball fan, keen on watching the Giants. That said, it (sumo) is a part and parcel of our culture, my culture, and I think it has been tarnished by many of the goings on of late.

One of my local rikishi is an ozeki who is now retired, and a guy I admired greatly. My family belongs to his supporters club and each month it receives a banzuke in the post.

I think that is one aspect of sumo dying with the onset of the Internet – the local support base. That's sad, but that's life. But in the end – sumo is sumo. That doesn't change.