



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



*by Ichiro Katsuta, a young city worker*

I first became a sumo fan in the era of Wakanohana and Takanohana, the first brothers to hold the yokozuna rank. Sumo was cool then. Japanese wrestlers were always competing for the yusho and it was very exciting when they would battle the Hawaiians.

I have been to the Kokugikan a few times, usually with business clients, and the time I remember best was in early 2003. Takanohana had recently suffered a huge injury and he was not performing well in that basho. Wakanohana had, of course, already retired, so the whole of Japan's expectation was upon Taka. My friend queued outside the Kokugikan for hours on the

morning of the fourth day, thinking it would be Takanohana's last match. Of course, that day, the yokozuna went kyujo, and my friend was so disappointed not to see him.

Undeterred, though, my friend returned on the Saturday to queue for another ticket, and I went with him. Takanohana also returned, but he didn't win his match and the atmosphere was horrible. The very next day, he lost to Aminishiki and retired, and it was the end of an era.

Recently, I have enjoyed going to sumo with my best friend, who is an expert on this subject. I enjoyed watching the charity tournament in February, and then

the yokozuna souken in April. That was my first time at the souken, and my friend and I ran past hoards of people to get the best seats. My friend even hurdled over several masu-seki to get a good view. He jumped like Mainoumi doing a henka!

Now, I also follow sumo on TV and on the internet as much as I can. During the last basho, it was very tense as we kept checking on Chiyotai's scores. We thought he would be demoted, but after the win against Kotomitsuki, we knew he would stay at ozeki. That was a big relief as I like to see Chiyotai at ozeki. Some of his tsuppari really is eye-opening!