



## Eric Evaluates Look not at the splinter in the NSK's eye



*by Eric Blair*

Look rather at the beam in your own sumo fans and fanesses.

Sumo has taken some hits of late. I won't go through them all again for the simple reason too much has already been penned, by the informed and those liking to announce themselves as informed.

So just a few rambles from my beach hut in the wonderful land of Siam - looking north as I sit here in semi-retirement, pondering how the world is getting on without my musings courtesy global interviews in print or broadcast form. Fortunately others have taken up where I left off. I wish them well.

The sport has changed over the past decade in many ways even if there is one persistent poster on the outdated, cobweb-covered SML bemoaning the fact that the 253-year-old sport represented by the NSK has not changed one iota. This is presumably because it fails to jump on hid 234-year-old US born and bred biggest equals best 'reform bandwagon' long pitched, but increasingly so to ears that do not want to hear, and eyes that opt to skip his posts.

Still with the SML – the chest beaters were out in force ("two" or "three" a number that suffices when using the term 'out in force' by SML standards nowadays) again recently, announcing they were still alive, in similar form to the US military radio channels in Japan having to broadcast messages of what it means to be a

US serviceman – honor, respect, courage, yawn to their OWN members! (oddly the female voices on the radio call themselves 'airman' too. Funky!) Is it that if we repeat the "same old same old" often enough it will come true perhaps – or at least will be thought true? Funkier! Perhaps Mr. Jobs can create a mailing list AED iPhone application to be used when things get too quiet over there. Truly funky!

Over on Sumo Forum, membership is as high as ever, but poster numbers have dwindled to a fraction of five or ten years back. Were the famed and much loved Golden Nuts to depart, the forum would die a death even with his 'read here' loving news scouring, babelfish filtering, protégé pairing doing their darndest to occupy similar shoes.

SF has of course fallen foul of the current generation of sumo groupies with many a post turning into poor attempts at modesty when relaying personal connections to so-and-so-zeki, oyakata, yobidashi, sewanin, okamisan, etc etc. Ho-hum to such cling-ons and whatever beats their bush! But let's not forget, the SF owner is still looking for financial donations. Read here to see that post.

And of course Sumo Talk, junior to all other forums in age, (I think several items in my fridge are older – must have the maid confirm that!) and showing that 'junior' label to be oh so correct in

the quality of posts, threads and the like. It is as if the locust swarm that used to push their hits through the roof has been devoured by the birds over at SF; higher, more intelligent forms of life. As is, schoolboy giggles may still be enjoyed on the site courtesy of a thread on which posters copy paste images of female bodily parts – not too nasty for the most part it must be said. But when real posts on the sport they claim to be 'experts' on are far, far less popular, what says this of their members?

But readers around the world, as enthralled as you are with my 'thread prep' for your respective forums analyzing, berating and insulting this cuddly old granpappy type, Eric must once again return to the comment about sumo having changed greatly, but to answer I must request a brief delay for the sun is now dipping behind the palms, and the pool beckons prior to dinner, so adieu my friends up north, in the US, the EU and elsewhere.

Listen to your hearts true fans – not the ramblings of those for whom eternal recognition of self-import or connections to rikishi with the phone numbers to prove it reigns supreme. Your OWN hearts. If you like what you see, see what you like.

Happy tachi-ai.

Le Grand Eric