

Views of Japanese Sumo Fans

What Sumo Means to Me #4

by Aoba

I think traditional things are always beset with prejudice.

Young people have an image of sumo as a boring sport carried out by fat, half naked people in a mawashi. Young men in particular hate the mawashi aspect because they think it will bite their head off. On the other hand, young women don't think like that. They see sumo as interesting but sadly don't have much opportunity to go to Ryogoku.

Like sumo, the world of rakugo is changing. Rakugo is another

traditional aspect of Japanese culture and in rakugo, young women fans are increasing rapidly in number among the ranks of the elderly. In addition, in recent times, girls studying in college have started a new, free, magazine called Rakugo Magazine. Highly popular with young people now, it will soon be printing an estimated 20,000 copies per issue. Indeed, the editor said "If you come to yose, you will soon see just how interesting rakugo is."

She added "Yet more traditional sides of Japan include sumo and

kabuki. Please visit the theatre and 'feel' the culture." (whatever type of theatre that may be)

I quite agree with her in that regard. I think schools should take their students to sumo or to see traditional Japanese theatre more and more from now on to let those children develop an interest in their own country.

They will then know how absorbing that country is – and just how strong and meaningful that man in a mawashi really is.