

# Heya Peek - Tamanoi today – the local perspective

*by Mark Buckton*

Should a lone adjective be required to describe Tamanoi Beya in Tokyo's Adachi-ku, then the most fitting would surely be 'homely'. Enter, and you are welcomed, depart and you are bidden farewell, even pass by if the doors are open and the odd nod or bow will be forthcoming. But is it too friendly? Not enough hunger?

Tamanoi is essentially a local project in that Adachi tax to the tune of several million dollars (US) was apparently put up in order to facilitate a move from its old Umejima base to a more convenient, central Adachi locale in Nishi Arai – site of a 1200 year old Buddhist temple. As such, local support has never been in short supply and unlike other heya in places with several stables competing for the attention of the locals, Tamanoi has almost no competition in attracting the majority of sumo fans in Adachi to



*The next oyakata and Tamanoi fans - Chris Gould*



*Writer MB, with former Tamanoi man Takaazuma and a future yokozuna..... - Mark Buckton*

its supporters club.

Admittedly Sakaigawa in the extreme north west of the ward pulls in a few as it is home to several sekitori, but few folk live out there when comparing to Nishi Arai and firsts count for something in this neck of the Tokyo woods; the result being an almost undivided loyalty for things Tamanoi.

Former ozeki Tochiazuma was, for so long top dog at Tamanoi and still is in many ways. He will take over the ultra modern facility with its gymnasium, dedicated office space and much publicized living quarters plus purpose built kitchens in late 2009 when his father, Tamanoi Oyakata, reaches

retirement age.

Like his father, Tochiazuma has a soft spot for golf and can often be seen practicing in the driving range near his heya, but unlike his father he has more recent ring experience which is slowly shining through with some of the heya's younger rikishi – rikishi the man born Daisuke Shiga will be hoping to push through to the sekitori ranks.

Time will be his judge in that

regard, but in the eyes of one local cynic, a contender for the attention of his instructions will be the relative comfort Tamanoi rikishi live in when comparing to other, less luxurious heya – think Miyagino, Michinoku and Mihogaseki to name but a few SFM has already covered.

Tamanoi then, for all its obvious blessings in the shape of and enthusiastic and vocal local support base, as well as the experience of Tochiazuma to draw

upon when he becomes oyakata, will have to shape up quickly to please its fans. Local rumblings about the lack of a sekitori are never too far beneath the surface nowadays and while the next 9 months will be seen as wind-down time for Tamanoi, Tochiazuma, on assuming the same name must himself be ready to produce quickly.

The proverbial ball is in the yusho winning ozeki's court now – what he does with it is up to him.