

Eric evaluates One man, one nail vs a world of hammers

by Eric Blair

One man, not a rikishi, never an official NSK member, and shorter than most all those atop the dohyo, yet still involved in sumo to a deeper level than many others ever will be has taken a beating of late in the online sumo following forums and hotbeds of self professed experts on sumo.

The man in question is often quoted in the sumo following media – because he knows what he is talking about. Television appearances have become the norm this past year or so because his opinions matter, and yet each time he offers an opinion, illuminates an aspect of the sport others may not have considered, perhaps take for granted, or, more likely were unaware of to begin with, his words are twisted, taken and misinterpreted – used against him by the unseeing, the unknowing.

A leading figure in his chosen field, his career established on the back of sheer talent and hard work, he has become, in foreign eyes at least, an object of derision; his opinions not falling in line with the group-like mentality so many share on sumo.

That he is, for the most part, more

informed, more involved, more knowledgeable and more aware of the ins and outs, the comings and goings and the history of sumo than almost all that take it upon themselves to criticize him, makes his being held up for ridicule something almost beyond comprehension – or the result of envy....?

Oddly, however, no single branch of the established, accredited Japanese or international media has seen his comments as worthy of the same ridicule as is bestowed by non-Japanese fans.

Not one report has been split into two, exaggerated in length or severity, thrown onto the bandwagon where all those along for the ride stamp on it, attempt to show his views to be off the mark, blinkered and unbalanced.

Now why would that be? Do the Japanese think SO differently? ALL of them?

How could a real media dedicated to reporting on sumo daily if need be, weekly or monthly at least – nope, not the keyboard yokozuna that award themselves unearned degrees of expertise and sit anonymous behind a screen as

their only link to the sport – fail to see this man in the same light as the majority of those for whom English be the sumo following lingua franca?

Is each and every single member of the Japanese media in the pocket of the Nihon Sumo Kyokai?

Or, and just a wild, unsubstantiated thought here, could it be the domestic Japanese media demonstrating a fairer, more balanced, and professional view of sumo from multiple angles that simply irritates international fans acting so stereotypically Japanese in thinking as one, acting as one, typing as one, and bleating as one each time they have little else to do bar work on character assassination techniques – without actually knowing the person in question?

Either way, I am pretty sure Yaku Mitsuru looks at such views, shrugs his shoulders and continues on with a grin on his face - aware that no one man, no one sport is one thing – aware that each time he speaks, people DO listen – aware that true experts are always criticized.