

Hatsu Henka Summary

by Lon Howard

There were so many henka records set or tied in the Hatsu Bashi that I'm running in circles hunting for a starting place. How about 30 total validated henka, six more than the previous high? And Roho? If I was a fly on the wall of the Rijkai break room, I'd be hearing enough about him to make me blush, and I don't even speak Japanese. Already the unchallenged henka leader, he added a jaw-dropping eight more, sending his henka rate soaring to 15.91 percent – more than double that of any other active rikishi. On the target side, Hokutoriki set a new standard by being victimized four times, three of those coming on successive days.

All of this action means a rise in the henka and target rates for most of those on both top ten lists. Besides Roho, the other perpetrator leaders with three each were Wakanoho, Takekaze, Ichihara, and (gulp)... Ama! Yep, Mr. Clean got off to a horrid start in what some were calling an ozekitori basho, and so he needed to pile up some wins in the final week to establish a base for another run. All of his miss-deeds were in the basho's last eight days, and boosted him onto the top ten list, in 7th place.

Wakanoho followed up his double henka as a shin-nyu-maku in Kyushu with three more this time, but they were all in the first week and the last two were losers. A few cheers went up when he tried his now patented flying henka move on day 5 against Iwakiyama, who appeared to be waiting for it as he

quickly gave Waka the bum's rush out. Waka said he wouldn't do it anymore... we shall see. If he does retire the henka, maybe Ichihara will claim it, as his own shin-nyu-maku stint also included three sidesteps.

Wakanoho and Ichihara haven't recorded enough bouts to be considered for the active list of top ten henka men. The order of the top six men on the list didn't change. No. 5 Kotooshu is at least buffing up his image – if not his ozeki resume – as he hasn't recorded a henka since last July. Besides Ama, the only other new addition to the top ten is Kokkai, with Kaio and Kyokutenho dropping off.

Below is the current top ten list of perpetrators, ranked in order of the *percentage of their total bouts in which they have henka'd*.

Roho	15.91
Aminishiki	6.67
Hakurozan	6.51
Hokutoriki	5.8
Kotooshu	5.19
Yoshikaze	4.12
Ama	3.33
Tokitenku	3.33
Kokkai	3.33
Kotomitsuki	3.33

It should be noted that only the top five can be considered major henka-makers. This is because the average henka rate for all bouts included in the study so far (since Nagoya 2005) is 3.05%, so anything under 5.00% is not really that significant. Of the 42 rikishi with at least half the total

maximum bouts possible so far (120 bouts), only 16 are above the average rate while 26 are below it, so the 3.05% average is clearly being ballooned some by the men at the very top.

And here is the standard reminder: only the bouts that were validated as henka by a majority yes vote are included in these calculations.

As with the perp list, the only changes of note at the top of the list of henka targets were with the numbers, which were mostly up. Hokutoriki padded his position as king of this dubious hill by being hit on four times, and obligingly losing all four bouts. Kakizoe started the parade on day 10, and then on days 12-14, it was Kasugao, Yoshikaze and Ichihara having their turn in the candy store. You'd think that, at some point in this sequence... oh well...

After being a nobody in the target realm up to now, Takekaze suddenly started smelling like red meat, as he was singled out three times, losing two. Perhaps it was just timely payback, as he also henka'd three times on his way to his 12 wins. He's still below the radar on both lists though.

Takamisakari had already proven to be one of the best defenders against the henka but still they come a knockin.' Wakanoho, Tamakasuga and Roho all tried their hand with the blinkster and all were handed a kuroboshi for their trouble. The Robocop has now dumped six of the seven

miscreants to come his way.

I had wondered when Toyohibiki's opponents would turn matador against him, because of his tendency of starting his tachiai way behind the shikiri-sen. The answer came during Hatsu as he was successfully targeted twice. He now has top five numbers as a target but needs to accumulate more bouts to be considered.

Here is the current top ten list of henka targets, ranked in order of

the percentage of their total bouts in which they have been henka'd.

Hokutoriki	10.63
Miyabiyama	6.47
Dejima	5.42
Kotooshu	5.19
Chiyotaikai	4.63
Kasugao	4.44
Iwakiyama	4.31
Tochinonada	4.29
Tamanoshima	4.26
Tosanoumi	4.21

As always now, the entire henka

database can be downloaded [here](#), and the columns in the perpetrator and target worksheets are sortable on one's own computer.

The more detailed version of the Henka Summary will appear in the April issue. Until then, here's hoping you saw Valentine's Day coming. If not, Takamisakari's your man to see, as he proved once again that he can spot trouble on the way. Cheers!