

Aki Henka Summary

by Lon Howard

For those who 'enjoy a good henka,' maybe the Aki Basho was a bit of a downer as the henka world lost a superstar when Roho received a lifetime ban for testing positive for marijuana. From the very outset of Henka Sightings over three years ago, Roho was at or near the top, but in his last year of action he turned into a henka machine, once recording eight in a single basho. This surge sent his henka rate from 10.29 to 16.73 in a single year! No end was in sight either, as his sidestepping remained effective – he was ranked maegashira 3 when booted.

The retired Kyokushuzan actually had a higher percentage of 17.36, but this was in only 121 bouts, compared to 263 for Roho, and 'Shoes-on' was giving signs he could have been on his last legs when he left – no such indication from Roho.

But all 'good' things must end, eh? So it's back to the mundane world of ordinary henka-meisters such as Aminishiki, who at least has some of Roho's videos to study. Based on his four Aki basho henka, Aminishiki would have leapfrogged Hakurozan into 2nd place anyway, but now of course he's the top practitioner of sumo's softer side, having boosted his henka rate by one full point to 7.67 per cent.

With Roho and Hakurozan missing, the list of top-ten active henka men does look different near the top, with Asasekiryu jumping five spots into 2nd place with his double henka-dip in Aki. Newcomers are Kasugao and Tokitenku. Here is the new list, ranked in order of the *percentage*

of total bouts in which they have henka'd. Only the henka bouts that received a majority of 'yes' votes are counted.

Aminishiki	7.67
Asasekiryu	5.24
Hokutoriki	5.24
Yoshikaze	5.22
Kakuryu	4.92
Kotooshu	4.58
Ama	4.33
Kasugao	3.41
Kotomitsuki	3.33
Tokitenku	3.00

With two henka of his own this time, Kakuryu appears to be an up-and-comer who seems to realize that his aspirations exceed his abilities. Unfortunately, this may also accurately describe Kotooshu but he has just one henka this year, which is to his credit, if not to his benefit.

Ama has always had his share of henka nominations, but until this year, not many of them received a majority yes vote. That has changed, as the two new additions in Aki brought his yearly total to eight. He has added one full point to his henka rate in the past two basho, and one wonders if the esoteric 'quality of sumo' quotient will affect his chances for ozeki promotion after Kyushu.

As an aside, among rikishi with at least 10 recorded henka, Ama is tied with Kotooshu for the highest henka winning percentage of 92%. Asashoryu, Chiyotakai and Kyokutenho are actually at 100%, but with only four, five and six henka respectively.

In his makuuchi debut at least,

Kitataiki made a huge henka splash with four validated off-center tachiai, with three of them coming in the last five days as he made a late unsuccessful push for kachi-koshi. This may have been due to the knee injury suffered on Day Two, so we'll have to wait and see if these really are his true colours. The rest of the Aki double henka club included Kasugao, Chiyohakuho and Dejima.

As a reminder, only those with a henka rate of over five per cent should be looked at as real henka men, since the average henka rate for all bouts since the beginning of our study in Nagoya 2005 is 3.14%.

Since neither Roho nor Hakurozan was on the top-ten list of henka targets, that list is largely unchanged, with Hokutoriki, Dejima, Miyabiyama and Kotooshu still occupying the first four slots. Although Dejima was the favorite henka target in Aki with three, he seems to be getting the hang of defending against it, as he won two of those, and now has a loss percentage of only 62%, besting the current norm of 71%. He leapt past Miyabiyama, who was targeted twice himself. The biggest mover on the list was Chiyotakai, who dropped from 5th to 9th last time, but is now right back in 5th, having also worn the bull's-eye twice, and like Miyabiyama, lost them both.

The most notable new entry on the top-ten target list is maegashira 6 new hope Goeido, who was a popular dance partner with the henka group until this basho. He wasn't hit on here, but overall has lost four of the five bouts in which

he has been sought out.

Here's the current top-ten list of targets, ranked in order of the *percentage of total bouts in which they were a henka target*. Again, only the henka bouts receiving a majority 'yes' vote are used in these calculations:

Hokutoriki	9.36
Dejima	7.00
Miyabiyama	6.85
Kotooshu	5.63
Chiyotaikai	4.71
Goeido	4.67
Kasugao	4.55
Tosanoumi	4.44
Kisenosato	4.33
Iwakiyama	4.30

The entire henka database can be seen [here](#). The perpetrator and target worksheets include all makuuchi bouts since the beginning of the study. All categories in the perpetrator and target worksheets are completely sortable by anyone on their own computer. As posted, the perpetrator list is sorted by Henka to Bouts % (H/Bouts %) and the

target list is sorted by Target to Bouts % (Target %).

The overall henka action in Aki was right in line with the norm: 36 nominations and 24 henka, with 16 of the 24 perpetrators coming up winners. Voting was noticeably down this basho, especially in the last four days.

Since the study began in Nagoya 2005, there have been 380 validated henka, with 270 of those perpetrators winning their matches. Below is the overall win percentage from the subcategories. This is where the win rate is segmented out, first based on all bouts regardless of the number of votes received, and then by only those bouts receiving ten or more votes. Within each of those categories, the win percentage is calculated for the bouts where the yes-no vote disparity was at least 2-1, 3-1, and unanimous. In the 10 + vote category, if there is just a single 'no' vote, it's still counted as unanimous, on the idea that there are some people who will never vote yes. It covers all 380 bouts that have been voted as henka.

Yes-No Vote Disparity	Win% Any # Votes	Win% 10 + Votes
2-1	72	78
3-1	74	77
Unanimous	75	82

So far 20 basho have been studied and it's still holding true that the likelihood of a henka perpetrator winning a particular match increases along with the increase in percentage of yes votes, regardless of the number of votes cast. But as more votes are cast, that overall likelihood grows higher.

Thanks again for sticking with the henka study; of course the more votes that are cast, the more credible the results. If there are any suggestions about how to make the process easier, please send them to me at itsulon@wavecable.com.

Now take a rest so we can critique the Kyushu Basho with vim, vigor and vitality.