

Hatsu Henka Summary

by Lon Howard

In the first full year of basho included in Henka Sightings, the name of Aminishiki was barely a blip, recording just one henka. Starting with the 2006 Nagoya Basho though, he's been a side-wheeling machine, and with the departure of Roho last year, has been atop the list of active henka-makers by a heady margin. His 29 henka so far gives him a henka rate of nearly nine per cent, more than 3½ percent ahead of number two Yoshikaze. He continued to bump his margin in the Hatsu Basho, adding three more to his total in just eight trips to the dohyo – recalling that he went on kyujo due to a knee injury on nakabi.

Yoshikaze's 2nd position has been earned through consistency, registering at least one henka in each of the past 10 basho, but more than one on just two occasions during that time. Asasekiyu remained steady in 3rd with a single henka himself, but after that – a most surprising development. Not even one of the remaining seven rikishi on the top ten active list unleashed a single henka – and even more amazing, none of them were even awarded a nomination. However, all ten men on the list remained there, and in the same order.

Here is that list again, ranked in order of the *percentage of their total bouts in which they have henka'd*. Of course, only the henka bouts that received a majority of yes votes are counted.

| | |
|------------|------|
| Aminishiki | 8.98 |
| Yoshikaze | 5.38 |
| Asasekiyu | 5.06 |
| Hokutoriki | 4.71 |
| Kakuryu | 4.33 |

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Kotooshu | 4.14 |
| Harumafuji | 3.94 |
| Kasugao | 3.41 |
| Kotomitsuki | 3.08 |
| Tokitenku | 3.03 |

It should be noted that two of the most familiar names in henka-land have been quietly mending their ways. Hokutoriki hasn't slipped by in four basho now, while Kotooshu has done so only once in ten basho. Their mucky past continues to haunt them though, as they are still mainstays on the list.

So if the old guard is going straight, who's taking over? Here are at least two newbies to watch: Aran and Kimurayama. Aran is the new (and only) Russian on the block, and appears a more than reasonable facsimile of his countryman, Roho, who was dismissed last year for testing positive for marijuana. Another slapping, pulling mawashi man, he has now booked six henka in just 30 makuuchi bouts and seems destined for the top five, once he gets to 100 total bouts. As for Kimurayama, he begins almost every tachiai with some kind of off-center action, and in 49 makuuchi bouts, has been nominated for a henka at a mind-boggling 39 per cent clip. Presently, his henka rate stands at 14 per cent, and if he can maintain any kind of makuuchi presence, he will also bump some of the old-timers out of the top ten.

Let's now turn to the targets of the henka-meisters. Hidden somewhat from view by the fact that he's still well atop the list of targets, it's still noteworthy that Hokutoriki has been hit by a henka only once in the past five basho.

This has reduced his target percentage by a whopping 2.39 per cent, but like Aminishiki on the perpetrator side, no one else is even close. The next two men on the list – Dejima and Miyabiyama – were not targeted either in Hatsu so he didn't lost any ground to them. Since no one was targeted more than once, there was no real movement on the list, with the first eight names remaining the same.

Here's the current top ten list of targets, ranked in order of the *percentage of their 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 | 8.42 |
| Dejima | 6.97 |
| Miyabiyama | 6.21 |
| Kotooshu | 5.41 |
| Tosanoumi | 5.4 |
| Chiyotakai | 4.9 |
| Kasugao | 4.55 |
| Iwakiyama | 4.41 |
| Kasuganishiki | 4.05 |
| Kaio | 3.94 |

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 %).

Overall, there were 32 henka nominations in the Hatsu Basho, with just 15 getting a majority yes

vote. Nine of those perpetrators won their bouts, a little below the overall winning percentage of 71 per cent. Specifically, there have been 411 voter-validated henka bouts since the beginning of the study (Nagoya 2005), and 291 were won by the perpetrators.

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 411 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 |

Since the overall perpetrator win rate for those 411 henka bouts is 71 per cent, it continues to hold that the win rate is higher for those bouts validated with a higher yes-no vote disparity, and that the win rate increases further for those disparate bouts receiving a higher number of votes – with the one

small exception for the 2-1/3-1 subcategories under 10+ Votes.

All of these numbers are exactly the same as they were the last time they were presented, two basho ago. This is probably due to the fact that voting continues to decline, a trend started in September of last year. Perhaps fans, unlike the rikishi, are getting henka-weary?

Thanks again for sticking with the henka study; of course the more votes that are cast, the more credible the results. So warm up the chanko and re-energize for the Haru Basho. If there are any suggestions about how to make the voting process easier, please send them to me at itsulon@wavecable.com.