

Natsu Henka Summary

by Lon Howard

With each basho, it's more clear that Roho is the unchallenged captain of the good ship Henka. He was in 2nd place behind Kyokushuzan for most of 2006 and since Shoes-on's intai last November, he has stayed on top of the active list and also increased his percentage of henka. He led the way again in the Natsu Basho with another three-bagger: three nominations, three henka and three wins. This bumped his percentage of total bouts henka'd to 10.47 per cent, stretching his lead over 2nd place Jumonji to nearly four percentage points. Jumonji was in juryo for Natsu and made just one makuuchi appearance. The numbers for 3rd place Toyozakura didn't change, as he was also in juryo.

The big mover in Natsu was Aminishiki, who was nominated five times, with three confirmed henka, and two wins in the three henka bouts. He's now in 4th place with a percentage of 6.11. Recently, the threesome of Roho, Aminishiki and Kotooshu has separated itself from those currently in makuuchi. Kotooshu stayed in the game with one more – also a winner – and climbed into 5th place ahead of Hokutoriki, who returned to makuuchi after two basho in juryo. Hokutoriki played it straight this time, which was surprising since – with his henka resume – you'd think he'd ramp up the action to prevent another juryo trip – or perhaps he's reformed...

Except for Roho and Aminishiki at three each, no other rikishi had more than one henka in Natsu. In fact, besides these two, only six other rikishi even had more than one nomination, Kotooshu being among them. Another ozeki – Kaio – also recorded two nominations and one henka.

There were 31 nominations in Natsu, with 16 of them getting a majority yes vote, and 11 of those 16 resulting in wins for the perpetrator. All this is right in line with the overall data.

As a reminder, this data is based only on the bouts that were validated as henka, i.e., those receiving a majority yes vote. The overall data is based on all basho since the beginning of the study period – 2005 Nagoya.

The biggest henka hit with the voters in Natsu was Ama's move vs. Kotooshu on day 10. It not only delivered his 5th win, but also was a big hit with the voters, setting a new Henka Sightings record with a unanimous 56-0 yes vote.

As a result of the Natsu action, there were no additions to, nor deletions from the top ten list of henka perpetrators. They're the same ten guys, only shuffled around some. It should be recognized though, that four of them had little or no makuuchi participation this time: Jumonji, Toyozakura, Hakurozan and

Kyokutenho. Here is the new top ten list, again ranked in order of *the percentage of their total bouts in which they have henka'd*:

Roho	10.47
Jumonji	6.76
Toyozakura	6.60
Aminishiki	6.11
Kotooshu	5.56
Hokutoriki	5.44
Hakurozan	5.33
Tokitsuumi	4.00
Kotomitsuki	3.89
Kyokutenho	3.64

Before shaking your head at the idea of an ozeki being in the top ten, just know that Kaio and Hakuho are in 11th and 12th place, at 3.29 and 3.14 per cent respectively; although at these levels, the difference between them and those further down the list is not that meaningful. The first seven men are the only ones who can really be looked at crossways, unless you hold the view that any henka makes one a bad boy.

Among the top ten, there are only two who are still undefeated (i.e., won all of their henka matches): Kotooshu with 10 and Kyokutenho with 6; but since Roho is more prolific, his 16-2 record is probably more impressive. Hokutoriki is just one shy of perfection at 7-1, and Aminishiki knows how to get it done as well, at 9-2.

Now let's look at the biggest victims (er... targets). With henka,

it's probably better to give than to receive, but lately Kotooshu has been doing plenty of both. He was picked on three more times in Natsu to push him into 4th place. His target percentage – as well as his henka rate, coincidentally – is now 5.56 per cent, meaning that this is the percentage of his total bouts in which he's been a henka target. He and Hokutoriki are now in a very elite henka club: they are the only two rikishi whose perpetrator rate and target rate are both over five per cent. Hokutoriki's leading target rate over 2nd place Miyabiyama slipped a little since he wasn't targeted in Natsu, but it's still at a healthy 7.48 per cent. If you add together the perp rate and the target rate for these two guys, you get 12.92 for Hokutoriki and 11.12 for Kotooshu. But if you think that's impressive, look at Roho. With a target rate of 4.07 to go with his perp rate of 10.47, his combined rate is at 14.54 per cent – in other words, he's involved in a henka in nearly 15 per cent of his bouts!

The makuuchi men welcomed shin-nyu-maku Satoyama to the big tent by slapping three henka on him, but since he was victorious in two of those matches, they may want to re-think the strategy. It seems all they're doing is allowing him to use his mobility to a greater extent. Kasugao and Dejima were both targeted twice, so their target

rate continues up. Kasugao is now pushing Miyabiyama for 2nd place while Dejima now shares 4th place with Kotooshu, despite his own rate increase.

Roho is still the only rikishi on the top ten target list who's lost all his matches as a target – seven in all; while Hokutoriki, Miyabiyama and Kotooshu are at or over a 90 per cent loss rate, all having won only once.

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*:

Hokutoriki	7.48
Miyabiyama	6.40
Kasugao	6.06
Kotooshu	5.56
Dejima	5.56
Kasuganishiki	4.59
Roho	4.07
Iwakiyama	3.98
Tosanoumi	3.90
Kisenosato	3.89

In March, the overall henka win rate leapt to 70 per cent, and that rate was sustained by the action in Natsu, as the henka perpetrators won 11 of the 16 confirmed henka matches. Overall, since the beginning of our study, there have been 201 confirmed henka, with 140 of them won by those committing them. Naturally, this overall increase in the past two basho has pushed up the win rate

in our two subcategories as well.

As a reminder, in these subcategories, the win rate is segmented out, based on the percentage of yes votes a particular match received. With one small anomaly, the results in these subcategories continue to show that when the percentage of yes votes for a particular match increases, so does the likelihood that the perpetrator will win that match, and that when those matches attract 10 or more votes, the likelihood climbs even more. I doubt if the rikishi themselves keep any kind of data (I can guarantee they don't have the time!), but in this case, it seems that reality does confirm perception, which is: if a rikishi is really desperate for a win, an all-out no-doubt-about-it henka will probably deliver one.

Here are the current overall numbers in these subcategories, covering the entire duration of our study. As a starting point, remember that the overall win rate is 70%.

Yes-No Vote Disparity	Win % Any # Votes	Win % 10+ Votes
2-1	73	80
3-1	75	78
Unanimous	81	93

That's all for now. Stay tuned to HENKA for more news in August.