

## An emerging rivalry Pt II Kokonoe Beya's Chiyonokuni ....

by **Mark Buckton**

### Part I

Chiyonokuni is a lucky young man. To date he suffers not the fate of having been bestowed with the 'adopted' kiss of death – unlike poor old Chiyoarashi.

The upcoming Aki Basho will be his fourteenth proper following a mid-2006 debut atop the Kokugikan dohyo. His previous thirteen have seen him post ten kachikoshi winning records, one makekoshi when actually entering, and sitting out two basho entirely due to injury – Aki 2006 and Nagoya 2007.

Having posted six consecutive winning records since September of last year, the 18-year-old has now climbed into the upper echelons of the sandanme division – his position on the banzuke released this week a career high; and one attained in just his fourth basho as Chiyonokuni – the name he was given having assured himself a place in sandanme\* following a 4-3 at jonidan 21 at the Hatsu Basho this year.

So, what does all this mean for his heya-rivalry with Chiyoarashi, the other rising Kokonoe star – a young man also blessed with a proper shikona following promotion to sandanme?

The long-term answer, in truth, remains to be seen. Injury or interest could and always do play their part in mysterious ways. At sandanme 66 in Nagoya though, 'Arashi' went makekoshi and will fall a few ranks while 'Nokuni' moves in the opposite direction.

In the short term, for now, nothing has changed and these two are without a doubt the two most impressive youngsters on Kokonoe's books – perhaps two of the best the sport has at age at present.

Little separates them in terms of height – Nokuni is the taller of the pair but only just. The weight scales on the other hand favor Arashi, a naturally heavy lad now a good 10 plus kilos meatier than Nokuni.

How each will use their physiques as they continue to climb and be noticed remains unclear although kimarite posted do indicate both to be learning, and learning well, a range of techniques and methods with which to finish off a foe.

Away from the Kokonoe Beya keikoba of course they will never fight – unless both are in contention for a divisional yusho.

If and when that day comes, the eyes will determine the winner long before the bout is called by the gyoji, for these are two young lads hungry for success, and looking to prove themselves in the heya of one of the sport's all time greats.

Keep your eye on both 'Nokuni' and 'Arashi' for they have their eye on each other and are likely oblivious to their surroundings as they push onwards and upwards.

A rivalry to savor and one we will return to briefly at the end of each basho.