

Raiden Tame'emon, a living legend

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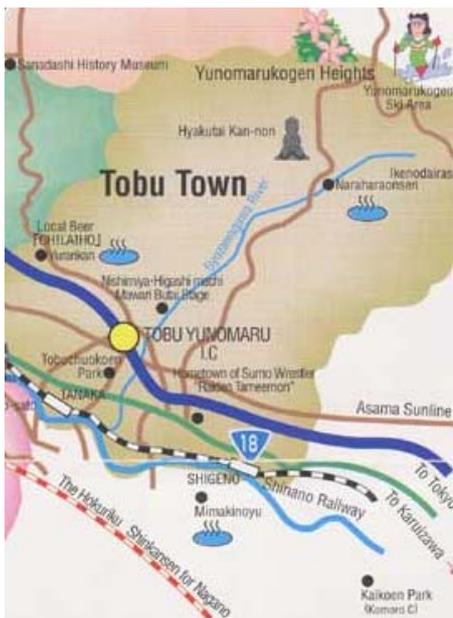


“Raiden Tame'emon, une légende vivante”, Le Monde du Sumo #2, february 2004, pp 6-9
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An ever-present cult



In Japan, there is a rikishi who lived more than 200 years ago for whom the Japanese dedicate a sort of cult. This exceptional rikishi was never allowed the supreme rank of yokozuna, but for many specialists, he is the strongest sumo wrestler ever to have seen the light of day. This legend is none other than ozeki Raiden Tame'emon, native of what is now the town of Tobu in Nagano Prefecture. In his 22-year career, he fought 285 official bouts for a record of 254 wins, 10 losses and 21 draws. (See later his career hoshitori with the names of his opponents). His results enabled him to win 28 yusho and to have a success rate on the dohyo of 96.2%, the highest of all time, outclassing all the yokozuna!



The town of Tobu, like the whole area of Nagano, is so proud of its hero that the presence of the legendary ozeki Raiden still hangs over the place. It is not possible to find a map on which his place of birth is not mentioned. As for the tourists who stop at Shigeno station, they are assailed as soon as they get out of the train by a life-sized natural

portrait of the hero with the caption "Shigeno, Raiden's village".



Shigeno station in Tobu, Raiden's village of birth, flaunting a portrait of the local hero on the platform

In any case, ozeki Raiden Tame'emon is what one could call a living legend who has for generations touched people's hearts, thanks to his extraordinary performances on the dohyo. Let us invite you to the Edo Period (1603-1867) to follow this unusual rikishi's exploits.

A singular physique

The month of January 1767 saw Ken Seki give birth to her son Tarokichi in a village called Oishi, which later became the town of Tobu. Tarokichi's father is none other than Han'emon, a poor farmer who performs sumo with passion at rural celebrations. Also a great lover of sake, it is he who pushes his son and future ozeki into sumo as his body and unusual strength develops. Already as a child, his strength is the talk of the town, when villagers see him cutting wood or carrying large bowls of hot water at the family home. What the villagers don't know is that Tarokichi is developing the adult body, which will make him seem all his life like an outlandish giant.



In an era when the average height of a makuuchi rikishi – already greater than for ordinary Japanese is scarcely 168 cm, Tarokichi will measure 197 cm as an adult and weigh 169kg, with an extraordinary physique. Indeed this giant of his time (and even for our own) has astonishingly large arms and hands. His tegata (handprint) - luckily kept in the Shofukuji temple near Okayama - proves in fact that there was 24 cm between the base of his palm and the end of his middle finger. It is unnecessary to say that with such palms, coupled with a



Enlargement of Raiden's Tegata

superhuman strength, Tarokichi Seki is to become a formidable exponent of Oshi-zumo, known as pushing sumo, with his violent and destructive Tsuppuri.

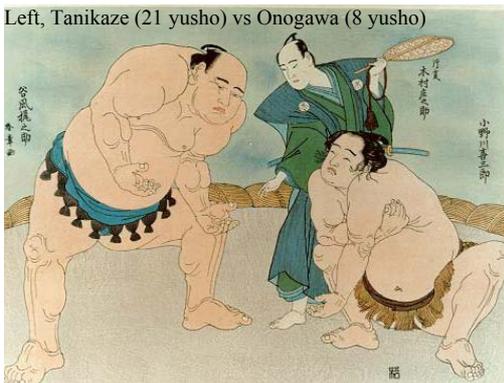
A swiftly noticed talent

As an adolescent, Tarokichi is already taller than all the adults around him and becomes a local attraction. In 1781, knowing that his father is a fan of sumo, Gengo'emon Uehara, mayor of a nearby village named Nagaze, (now the town of Marukochi), and owner of a dohyo, allows him to enter his sumo club, though he isn't yet 15 years old. Very soon his reputation goes beyond the bounds of the village of Nagaze to such an extent that the fighter Urakaze Kazuuki, member of the Sumo Association in Edo (now Tokyo), decides to go and oversee him in 1783. For 9 months, the experienced rikishi trains with the adolescent and is convinced that he has found a rough diamond, which just needs to be polished.

The tutelage of Tanikaze in Edo

In 1784, Urakaze decides to take the marvel

Left, Tanikaze (21 yusho) vs Onogawa (8 yusho)



of Oishi village with him so that he can make him enter the real thing, namely the Edo Sumo Association. At the age of 18, Tarokichi joins Urakaze Beya, later to be transferred to Isenoumi Beya where his mentor, ozeki Tanikaze Kajinosuke, who will win a mere trifle of 21 career yusho, is waiting for him. If one judges by the impressive number of prints of his effigy, one could truly say that ozeki Tanikaze is the first star known to sumo. Even if he is officially only the 4th yokozuna, he is nevertheless the first rikishi to have been promoted to the ultimate rank in his lifetime (in November 1789) at a time when the title of yokozuna is merely honorific – it will become official in 1890 with the appearance of yokozuna on the banzuke.



Raiden at his debut with Ashiwatari



Raiden crossing Ryogoku bridge

According to the tradition whereby one is even tougher on a promising rikishi, Tarokichi is submitted to a rough training and a discipline of steel by Tanikaze, who will make him undergo long years of preparation. In 1788, he is at last adjudged to be ready to go,

and he is presented with sponsors, members of the fief of Matsue, controlled by the Matsudaira family from the stronghold of Unshu (now Izumo) in Shimane prefecture. The latter grants Tarokichi Seki the shikona of Raiden (雷電) Tame'emon (爲右衛門). Rai means thunder and den means lightning, hence Raiden, lightning thunder.

A clan outside of power

Before we continue to follow Raiden's career, it is appropriate to linger on his unfortunate patronage from the Matsudaira clan, which will influence his whole career.

Following the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, which resulted in Tokugawa Ieyasu from the east inflicting a decisive defeat on a coalition of western rivals, Japan enters an era of peace where the inter-clan warfare ends. In order to establish his power and forestall any offensive intent, Tokugawa

introduces the sankin kotai system of alternate residences, which forces all the daimyo (warlords) to maintain a household in Edo

village and to stay there every alternate year far from home. In this way, all the daimyo are given over to a battle of influence close to power and there are many opportunities to attract the Shogun's attention and be granted privileges. Thus, patronage of great wrestlers becomes an important business, which has political importance.

Nevertheless, the story becomes complicated for Raiden, since not all the daimyo are treated equally. Those in power have a long memory and distinguish between the daimyo of the interior who were allies of the Tokugawa clan at the battle of Sekigahara and the daimyo of the exterior – tozama – who fought Tokugawa. Thus all important posts are conferred on the daimyo of the interior, with the others getting only crumbs. Unfortunately for Raiden, Matsudaira Harusato, former master of the tea ceremony, is the descendent of a daimyo of the exterior. For this reason, his modest clan is distant from the heart of power and the Yoshida clan, sole authority to award the title of yokozuna, will ignore completely the extraordinary performances of Raiden Tame'emon so as not to honour the descendants of traitors

and April 1800 Raiden wins all the tournaments he participates in, despite the presence of yokozuna Tanikaze and Onogawa in the competition. During these 7 years, only Kachoozan has the honour of beating him, and that is at their very first meeting. But like the other nine who beat him, Raiden will never let him have the opportunity of repeating the exploit. With his 11 consecutive yusho including a sequence of 44 bouts undefeated, he is henceforth a national hero and draws the crowds wherever he appears. His considerable strength and his gigantic hands mean that the organisers are soon forced to forbid him



Raiden (left) and Kachoozan

the use of certain techniques, such as tsuppari, limiting him to fighting body to body using yotsu-zumo.

Tragic events

During this splendid period, a black year occurs, which removes him from competition. In fact, the year 1795 sees in quick succession the death of his mentors, ozeki Tanikaze and Urakaze. With these deaths he takes up the vacated position of west ozeki, which he will not leave until his retirement. He also becomes Urakaze Oyakata and manages all the current business of the heya in Edo.



Yokozuna Tanikaze



Raiden, beside Tanikaze (far left), indicating child Daidozan

The arrival of a meteor

In 1789 Raiden's shikona appears for the first time on the banzuke and the Osaka Sumo Association has already granted him the rank of komusubi because of his reputation. But Raiden doesn't compete in the tournament and prefers to stay in Edo, awaiting the winter tournament in November 1790. For his first tournament he is granted the rank of Sekiwake and he causes a sensation by winning the first of his 28 yusho without conceding a single defeat. Everyone is now warned, and from now on lightning will strike the dohyo.

In 1792 Raiden marries Yae, a native of Chiba who will give him several children. With this emotional stability, Raiden concentrates once more on his art and becomes invincible. Between November 1793

Raiden understands quite quickly that his unfortunate patronage will prevent him from ever attaining the supreme rank of yokozuna, but what does it matter: there is no doubt that he is the strongest, far above the others. Evidence of sympathy comes from all over Japan and in 1796 his village even builds Nio statues – the two giant warriors protecting the entrance to Buddhist temples – to his glory and that of Ken Seki, the champion's mother.

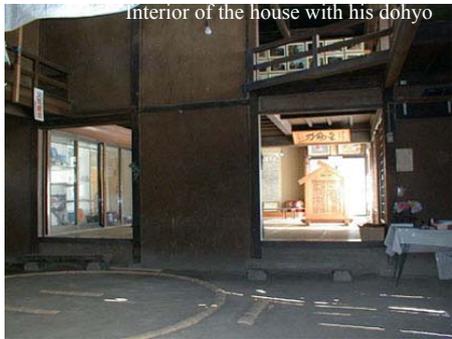
Nio statues, representing Raiden and his mother



Japan in 1600 before the battle of Sekigahara

× bataille
chiffres romains camp de l'est
chiffres arabes camp de l'ouest
chiffres arabes encadrés daimyo qui passèrent au camp de l'est

Histoire du Japon, by Francine Héral
Publications orientalistes de France



Raiden's family home, rebuilt in 1802 with a faceless portrait in front of the door

Interior of the house with his dohyo



Raiden with sake and Sadogake dancing

you are in the area. Later, in 1802, he has a stone sculpture made to represent a ton of sake in memory of his father so that he will not feel abandoned. But Raiden does, terribly.

A glorious swan song

The 19th century sees Raiden approaching 40. He's not quite as dominant as previously, but he is still satisfied with being stronger than the others. In fact, from the death of his father in 1798 to his retirement in 1811, there are but 2 tournaments in which Raiden participates without winning. This shows how far the ozeki is from the pack, a fact that discouraged several generations of rikishi. At the age of 40, he notches up a series of 38 undefeated bouts at a time when there are only two tournaments per year, each of them counting 10 days. His performances are so unreal that the Japanese adopt him as a demigod. Moreover as will later be the case for yokozuna in



Raiden in the company of courtesans

the modern era, the religious authorities are keen to request him to consecrate the dohyo in the temples. On the ninth day of the October 1810 Tournament Raiden suffers his second hikiwake, (a bout drawn due to being too long so that the rikishi were immobilised in the body to body grip) of his career against the powerful ozeki Kashiwado, who would have had a brilliant career without Raiden. The latter, at 43 years old, realises that it's time to hang up his mawashi. In the process he wins his 9th consecutive yusho, his 28th and last.



Raiden (behind) vs ozeki Kashiwado

The grateful nation

The ozeki Raiden Tame'emon withdraws from competition in 1811 but he doesn't leave the sumo world forever. He is granted the post of President of the Sumo Association of the province of Unshu, now Shimane prefecture, from where his patrons, the Matsudaira clan, originated. Many famous people across Japan organise tournaments so that as many Japanese as possible can admire the national hero, who has now become a living legend. Raiden will gather the fruits of his glory for 5 years and in 1816 finally leave the world of sumo to take refuge in an Edo temple. At the same time, he stops writing a journal that he has kept since his entry into sumo nearly 27 years earlier.



Statue of Raiden in Tobu

Shortly after his admission, he breaks all ties with the Matsudaira clan in 1819. After that everything speeds up. His mother dies in 1821 and he joins her on 11 February 1825. As for his wife Yae, she will not survive him for long, as she will pass on in 1827. Raiden's body is buried in Edo in Asakusa cemetery. But Oishi, the village of his birth, does not rest: they recover some hair with which to dedicate a tombstone to him.

Matsue, the principal village of Unshu province, does the same, offering him a third grave.

The ardour around Raiden does not seem to fall for many years after his death and even continues to inspire many artists. To that effect, the artist Sakumachozan will pay him a fine homage in 1861 by erecting the famous tombstone named Raiden-hi at Oishi, which is now at a short distance from Shigeno station at Tobu in Nagano prefecture.

But after the rank of yokozuna is made official in 1890, the Sumo Association finds itself embarrassed with the case of Raiden,



Raiden-hi tombstone by Sakumachozan

probably the strongest rikishi of all time. So, to settle this thorny problem, they take the decision in 1900 to have his name engraved on the yokozuna tombstone – yokozuna rikishi-hi – with the official description of Murui Rikishi, exceptional wrestler. To this day, Raiden Tame'emon is the sole non-yokozuna to have been put in this sanctuary. A century after the event, the ruling authorities again try to get themselves excused for this injustice, separating him from the rank of yokozuna for political reasons. But history often reasserts his rights and nevertheless puts Raiden in the place he deserves, sky-high.



Raiden's portrait in the sky

**Thierry Perran
And Stéphane Castella,
English translation by Olivia Nagioff**



Haori worn by Raideen



Raideen Alcoholic beverage

Hoshitori of the legendary ozeki Raideen Tame'emon, with translations of all his opponents' shikona (for the first time ever)

Thierry Perran

English translation by Gilles Furelaud

Thanks to Atsuo Tsubota, Kazuhisa Takayama, Dave Melton for their wonderful Internet sites, as to Yuko Hendo and Alexander Nitschke for the reading of some difficult shikona.



Authentic kesho-mawashi worn by ozeki Raideen



Print by Shumei (dated from 1796-97), representing yokozuna Onogawa using a « Kawazu » hold to defend himself against ozeki Raideen Tame'emon.



On September 9th 1978, Japanese postal services paid homage to legendary ozeki Raideen, by issuing a stamp representing one of his bouts vs Jinmaku Konosuke.

November 1790	- Yusho (1) - Sekiwake west	鈴鹿山 Suzukayama	時鐘 Tokinokane	出水川 Izumigawa	友衛 Tomochidori	箕嶋 Minoshima	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	磐井川 Iwaigawa	小野川 Onogawa	雷電 Raideen	名草山 Nagusayama	
April 1791	Sekiwake west	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	箕嶋 Minoshima	友衛 Tomochidori	和田ヶ原 Wadagahara	梶ヶ濱 Kajigahama	磐井川 Iwaigawa	雷電 Raideen	Lack of opponent	陣幕 Jinmaku	Lack of opponent	
November 1791	Sekiwake west	七ッ嶋 Nanatsushima	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	時鐘 Tokinokane	出水川 Izumigawa	八ッヶ峰 Yatsugamine	和田原 Wadagahara	磐井川 Iwaigawa	陣幕 Jinmaku	小野川 Onogawa	Lack of opponent	
March 1792	Sekiwake west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho.										
November 1792	Sekiwake west	Lack of opponent	五百峰 logamine	茂り山 Shigeriyama	The basho is suspended due to three days of rain and snow.							
March 1793	Sekiwake west	七ヶ滝 NANATAKI	木曾谷 Kisogatani	獅子嶽 Shishigatake	熊山 Kumayama	出水川 Izumigawa	出羽海 Dewanoumi	和田原 Wadagahara	常山 Tsuneyama	高根山 Takaneyama	No tenth day	
November 1793	- Yusho (2) - Sekiwake west	友衛 Tomochidori	箕嶋 Minoshima	磐井川 Iwaigawa	高根山 Takaneyama	和田ヶ原 Wadagahara	雷電 Raideen	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	勢見山 Seimizan	玉垣 Tamagaki	Lack of opponent	
March 1794	- Yusho (3) - Komusubi west	Lack of opponent	八ッヶ峰 Yatsugamine	手柄山 Tegarayama	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	和田原 Wadagahara	梶ヶ濱 Kajigahama	勢見山 Seimizan	陣幕 Jinmaku	玉垣 Tamagaki	Lack of opponent	
November 1794	- Yusho (4) - Sekiwake west	箕嶋 Minoshima	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	龍門 Ryūmon	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	大空 Oozora	出水川 Izumigawa	和田ヶ原 Wadagahara	玉垣 Tamagaki	勢見山 Seimizan	Lack of opponent	
March 1795	- Yusho (5) - ozeki west	箕嶋 Minoshima	八ッヶ峰 Yatsugamine	鬼勝 Onikatsu	平石 Hiraishi	和田ヶ原 Wadagahara	The basho is suspended due to five days of rain and snow.					
November 1795	ozeki west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho.										
March 1796	ozeki west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho.										
October 1796	- Yusho (6) - ozeki west	岩井川 Iwaigawa	友衛 Tomochidori	八ッヶ峰 Yatsurugi	大空 Oozora	盤石 Banjaku	陣幕 Jinmaku	玉垣 Tamagaki	伊勢ノ濱 Isenohama	小野川 Onogawa	Lack of opponent	
March 1797	- Yusho (7) - ozeki west	箕嶋 Minoshima	出羽海 Dewanoumi	八十嶋 Yasoshima	高根山 Takaneyama	和田原 Wadagahara	論鶴羽 Yudzuruha	花頂山 Kachoozan	磐石 Banjaku	陣幕 Jinmaku	Lack of opponent	
October 1797	- Yusho (8) - ozeki west	茂山 Shigeriyama	茨木 Ibaragi	乃ノ森 Tsukinomori	鯨 Shachihoko	出潮 Izushio	平石 Hiraishi	箕嶋 Minoshima	不知火 Shiranui	小野川 Onogawa	五人掛 Goningakari	
March 1798	- Yusho (9) - ozeki west	八角 Hakkaku	荒渡 Arawatari	揚羽 Ageha	大綱 Ootsuna	伊勢ノ海 Isenoumi	花頂山 Kachoozan	出羽海 Dewanoumi	鴻ヶ峰 Koogamine	不知火 Shiranui	Lack of opponent	
October 1798	- Yusho (10) - ozeki west	揚羽 Ageha	八角 Hakkaku	山巡り Yamameguri	出潮 Izushio	大綱 Ootsuna	鴻ヶ峰 Koogamine	不知火 Shiranui	木幡山 Kibatayama	花頂山 Kachoozan	Lack of opponent	
February 1799	- Yusho (11) - ozeki west	出潮 Izushio	比羅海 Hiranoumi	山巡 Yamameguri	大綱 Ootsuna	荻ノ海 Oginoumi	揚羽 Ageha	Lack of opponent	Basho suspended due to continuous rain for seven days.			
November 1799	- Yusho (12) - ozeki west	和田ヶ原 Wadagahara	木幡山 Kibatayama	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	大空 Oozora	鬼面山 Kimenzan	山嵐 Yamaoroshi	平石 Hiraishi	手柄山 Tegarayama	陣幕 Jinmaku	Lack of opponent	
April 1800	ozeki west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho.										
November 1800	ozeki west	鯨 Shachihoko	出潮 Izushio	荻ノ海 Oginoumi	田子ノ浦 Tagonoura	鴻ヶ峰 Koogamine	大綱 Ootsuna	花頂山 Kachoozan	平石 Hiraishi	Lack of opponent	Lack of opponent	
March 1801	- Yusho (13) - ozeki west	Lack of opponent	Lack of opponent	出潮 Izushio	田子ノ浦 Tagonoura	大綱 Ootsuna	花頂山 Kachoozan	論鶴羽 Yudzuruha	鴻ヶ峰 Koogamine	平石 Hiraishi	Lack of opponent	
November 1801	ozeki west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho.										
February 1802	ozeki west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho.										
November 1802	- Yusho (14) - ozeki west	Lack of opponent	濱ヶ関 Hamagasaki	揚羽 Ageha	雲切 Kumokiri	荒馬 Arauma	大綱 Ootsuna	山嵐 Yamaoroshi	大梁 Utsubari	押尾川 Oshigawa	Lack of opponent	
April 1803	- Yusho (15) - ozeki west	黒鷲 Kurowashi	八十嶋 Yasoshima	論鶴羽 Yudzuruha	揚羽 Ageha	大綱 Ootsuna	荒馬 Arauma	鯨 Shachihoko	Due to a smallpox epidemic, the basho is suspended after the 7th day.			
October 1803	- Yusho (16) - ozeki west	八十嶋 Yasoshima	緑川 Midorikawa	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	鯨 Shachihoko	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	荒馬 Arauma	秀ノ山 Hidenoyama	鬼面山 Kimenzan	平石 Hiraishi	Lack of opponent	
March 1804	ozeki west	Raideen didn't take part in this basho..										
November 1804	- Yusho (17) - ozeki west	佐野山 Sanoyama	論鶴羽 Yudzuruha	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	柏戸 Kashiwado	荒馬 Arauma	大見崎 Oomisaki	鬼面山 Kimenzan	平石 Hiraishi	Lack of opponent	
February 1805	- Yusho (18) - ozeki west	佐野山 Sanoyama	田子ノ浦 Tagonoura	鹿間津 Shikamatsu	四ッ車 Yotsuguruma	音羽山 Otowayama	揚羽 Ageha	大綱 Ootsuna	荒馬 Arauma	柏戸 Kashiwado	八十嶋 Yasoshima	
October 1805	- Yusho (19) - ozeki west	佐野山 Sanoyama	鹿間津 Shikamatsu	田子ノ浦 Tagonoura	三保ヶ関 Mihogaseki	揚羽 Ageha	春日山 Kasugayama	荒馬 Arauma	雷 Ikazuchi	柏戸 Kashiwado	平石 Hiraishi	
February 1806	ozeki west	佐野山 Sanoyama	鹿間津 Shikamatsu	Lack of opponent	音羽山 Otowayama	四ッ車 Yotsuguruma	The basho is suspended due to a big fire lasting five days in the city of Edo (now Tokyo).					
November 1806	- Yusho (20) - ozeki west	佐野山 Sanoyama	大角 OKADO	八十嶋 Yasoshima	音羽山 Otowayama	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	荒馬 Arauma	柏戸 Kashiwado	春日山 Kasugayama	揚羽 Ageha	雷 Ikazuchi	
February 1807	- Yusho (21) - ozeki west	大角 OKADO	佐野山 Sanoyama	八十嶋 Yasoshima	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	四ッ車 Yotsuguruma	揚羽 Ageha	春日山 Kasugayama	荒馬 Arauma	柏戸 Kashiwado	Lack of opponent	
November 1807	- Yusho (22) - ozeki west	佐野山 Sanoyama	大木戸 Ookido	浅香山 Asakayama	揚羽 Ageha	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	鬼面山 Kimenzan	柏戸 Kashiwado	荒馬 Arauma	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	
April 1808	- Yusho (23) - ozeki west	論鶴羽 Yudzuruha	八ヶ峰 Yatsugamine	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	音羽山 Otowayama	四ッ車 Yotsuguruma	揚羽 Ageha	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	Lack of opponent	柏戸 Kashiwado	Lack of opponent	
October 1808	- Yusho (24) - ozeki west	荒海 Araumi	大角 OKADO	四ッ車 Yotsuguruma	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	揚羽 Ageha	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	荒馬 Arauma	柏戸 Kashiwado	鬼面山 Kimenzan	音羽山 Otowayama	
February 1809	- Yusho (25) - ozeki west	荒海 Araumi	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	音羽山 Otowayama	揚羽 Ageha	Lack of opponent	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	荒馬 Arauma	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	柏戸 Kashiwado	鬼面山 Kimenzan	
October 1809	- Yusho (26) - ozeki west	八十嶋 Yasoshima	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	立神 Tatsugami	揚羽 Ageha	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	大岬 Oomisaki	荒馬 Arauma	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	Lack of opponent	Lack of opponent	
February 1810	- Yusho (27) - ozeki west	北國 Hokkoku	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	立神 Tatsugami	揚羽 Ageha	江戸ヶ崎 Edogasaki	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	大岬 Oomisaki	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	柏戸 Kashiwado	音羽山 Otowayama	
October 1810	- Yusho (28) - ozeki west	北國 Hokkoku	滝ノ音 Takino'oto	佐野山 Sanoyama	頂 Itadaki	江戸ヶ崎 Edogasaki	緋鯨 Hiodoshi	揚羽 Ageha	鏡岩 Kagamiwa	柏戸 Kashiwado	Lack of opponent	
February 1811	ozeki west	The legendary ozeki Raideen with his 28 yusho retires from competition with an exceptional record: 254 victories, 10 defeats and 21 draws. His brilliant career gives him a success rate of 96.2%, the highest of all time, far above that of any yokozuna!										

Explanations (details for the three kinds of draws are given next page):

- Victory: « Shiro-boshi »
- Defeat: « Kuro-boshi »
- Draw due to uncertain result: « Azukari »
- Draw due to too long bout: « Hikiwake »
- Draw without fight, due to a bad gyōji: « Shobu-nashi »

Extract from “Le Monde du Sumo”'s Lexicon

Hikiwake	引き分け	Drawn bout, due to an overlong fight leading to the rikishi being too tired to go on. In Raiden's times, there was no mizu-iri and, after a period of inactivity, the gyoji sent the rikishi back without choosing a winner.
Azukari	預かり	Drawn bout, due to a doubtful and too close ending, which couldn't be elucidated during the mono-ii. In the past, in this case, there was no tori naoshi and the gyoji didn't choose a winner. This draw was abolished from hatsu basho 1916, and a tori-naoshi is now called.
Shôbu-nashi	勝負無し	Drawn bout due to the gyoji, who didn't raise his fan (gunbai). Actually, in order to start the fight, the gyoji has to raise his gunbai and check that neither rikishi steals the start. But in Raiden's times, a bad gyoji could quite well never raise his gunbai, and the fight never take place. One can see here the influence of powerful daimyo (warlords) toward their protégé. This rule was revoked respectively in February 1865 and 1868 by the sumo associations of Edo and Osaka.

Translated by Gilles Furelaud

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