

Sumo: Record-setting champion Hakuho emotional in retirement ceremony

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Former yokozuna Hakuho, current stablemaster Miyagino, has his topknot removed by his former stablemaster Magaki during his retirement ceremony on Jan. 28, 2023, at Ryogoku Kokugikan in Tokyo. (Pool photo/Kyodo)

Miyagino. "I couldn't sort out my feelings, there were ups and downs and it was hard (during the ceremony)."

Hakuho also performed his final ring entering ceremony, with New Year meet-winning ozeki Takakeisho serving as sword bearer and sekiwake Hoshoryu, the nephew of former Mongolian-born yokozuna Asashoryu, as usher.

TOKYO (Kyodo) -- Record 45-time Grand Sumo Tournament winner Hakuho had his retirement ceremony Saturday when his topknot was cut, one strand at a time, by some 280 acquaintances including former wrestlers and prominent figures in Japan.

Mongolian-born Hakuho retired in September 2021 and fellow former yokozuna Kisenosato, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and Toyota Motor Corp. President Akio Toyoda were among the participants at Tokyo's Ryogoku Kokugikan.

Hakuho wiped away tears when former yokozuna Harumafuji, also from Mongolia, snipped at the base of the knot before his former stablemaster, sumo elder Magaki, finally removed the bun active wrestlers wear.

"There is a sense of loneliness, as if losing part of my body," said Hakuho, currently known as stablemaster

"He is also from Mongolia and his uncle and I share a bond," said Hakuho of Asashoryu, a powerful yokozuna at the time Hakuho also reached the sport's highest rank in 2007.

The 69th yokozuna, Hakuho set many records including 1,187 career wins. He took over the Miyagino stable last July.

"I've promised I'll raise yokozuna and ozeki as fast as I can and return to the raised ring (next time as their master)," said Hakuho, who rubbed his head against the dohyo surface after the ceremony.

"That was to show my gratitude to the raised ring."