

Consul General of Japan in Toronto Matsunaga's  
Congratulatory Speech at the Conferment Ceremony of  
the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays to Mr.  
Tiger Jeet Singh (Mr. Jagjit Singh Hans) on 25  
September 2024

Dear Mr. Tiger Jeet Singh,  
His beloved family members,  
Mr. Will Bouma, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the  
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs,  
Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal, MPP, Parliamentary  
Assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and  
Gaming,  
His Worship Gord Krantz, Mayor of Milton,  
His Worship Patrick Brown, Mayor of Brampton,  
Distinguished guests,  
Friends and colleagues,  
Good evening.

On the 29th day of April this year, His Majesty the  
Emperor of Japan conferred upon Mr. Jagjit Singh  
Hans, also known as Mr. Tiger Jeet Singh, the Order of  
the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays. In witness  
thereof, the Seal of State has been affixed to this patent  
of decoration at the Imperial Palace. I extend my  
heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Tiger Jeet Singh.

Since his first visit to Japan in 1973, Mr. Singh has fought memorable matches against such legendary professional wrestlers as Mr. Antonio Inoki, Mr. Giant Baba, Mr. Jumbo Tsuruta, Mr. Ueda Umanosuke, and Mr. Abdullah the Butcher. Furthermore, from 1980 onwards, he fought young wrestlers such as Mr. Choshu Riki, Mr. Onita Atsushi and Mr. Hase Hiroshi. For over 30 years, Mr. Singh greatly contributed to the development of the Japanese professional wrestling by promoting its popularity, exciting the living rooms all over Japan.

Among the matches Mr. Singh fought, the series of matches with Mr. Antonio Inoki were called the “fateful showdown,” and monopolized the talk of the town all over Japan, sparking the professional wrestling boom. Whenever his matches were broadcast live on television, they earned high viewer ratings.

Mr. Singh’s fight against Wajima, a former Sumo grand champion, for the latter’s debut professional wrestling match on November the first in 1986, dominated the headlines throughout Japan.

The venue was packed to capacity, with 150 reporters from five TV stations rushing in. The live TV broadcast from 7 p.m. on Saturday recorded a high viewership rating of 23.7%, which is said to be the highest viewership rating for a professional wrestling broadcast since 1986 to the present.

The professional wrestling boom in the 1970s and the 1980s energized Japan's social economy. Mr. Singh frequently took to the ring on the weekly "Friday 8 p.m." professional wrestling broadcast series, which was a most popular TV programme in the Showa era, marking a social phenomenon. Whenever his signature entrance theme song "Saber Tiger" echoed throughout the arena of the match, all spectators as well as viewers and listeners became breathless for an anticipated bombshell frenzy and nail-biting excitement!

While he was active in professional wrestling, Mr. Tiger Jeet Singh visited many schools in Japan, actively engaged in social activities, interacting with young people, playing a role in anti-drug activities, and supporting medical facilities through charitable organizations nationwide. While he was greatly awed giving frisson of excitement nationwide as one of the

most recognized professional wrestlers, Mr. Singh at the same time, outside the ring, was known to many as a devout philanthropist. In 2010, he established the Tiger Jeet Singh Foundation in his home city of Milton, and has made social contributions through anti-drug activities, promotion of citizens' health, and provision of scholarships and other support for children. One of the local public school, Tiger Jeet Singh Public School in Milton, is named after him. He is active in introducing Japanese culture to the local community, and he has held classes on Japanese food and kimono culture at this school.

After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, the Foundation, in cooperation with the local District School Board, launched a donation drive dedicated to children in the disaster-affected area in Japan. In August of the same year, he visited Japan to participate in the Great East Japan Earthquake reconstruction charity "INOKI GENOME," reviving his tag-team with Mr. Abdullah the Butcher for the first time in 32 years, contributing to the recovery of the earthquake-hit area, energizing the audiences. The Foundation sold red and white wristbands for 5 Canadian dollars each and donated the proceeds to children in the disaster-affected area. Mr. Singh later recalled that "I was very

shocked when I heard about the tsunami and Fukushima. It's been about 50 years since I came to Japan, and there are many places which I feel like my hometown, and people who I feel like family to me. I'm doing what I can to help those who suffered (from the earthquake) so that they feel a little more peace and happiness."

Mr. Tiger Jeet Singh, you have always cared about the people of Japan. We are truly grateful for your friendship with the Japanese people.

To conclude, I am delighted to celebrate with all the guests present the accomplishments of Mr Tiger Jeet Singh, an invaluable supporter of Japan, an esteemed philanthropist and a distinguished community leader who has made profound contributions through sports to the advancement of friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and Canada.

And once again, I thank the distinguished guests, and family members and friends of Mr. Tiger Jeet Singh who have taken time from their busy schedules to attend this event.

Thank you.