

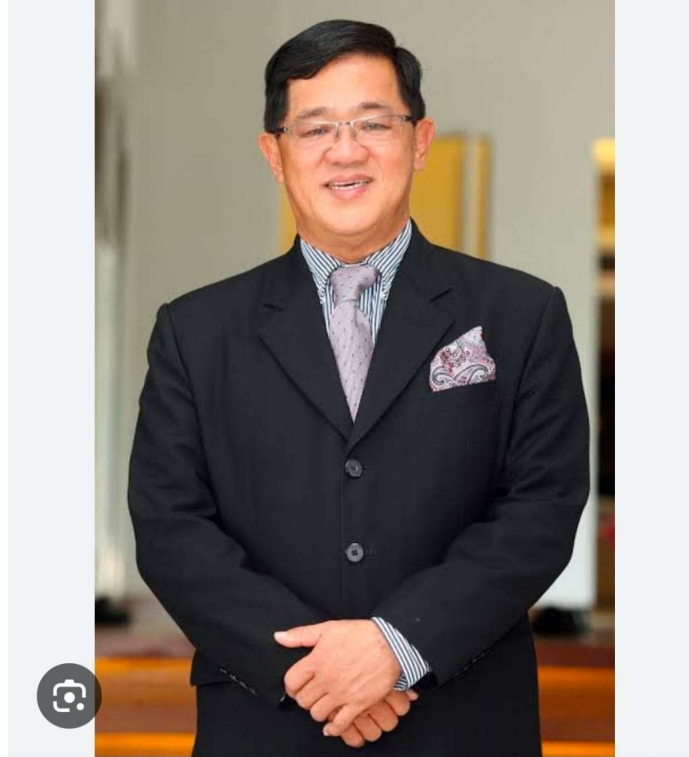
The Story of Tan Seng Leong



The Father of Kluang's Development

Chapter 1:

A Southern Beginning - A Hokkien Son Born in Batu Pahat in 1956



居鑾发展之父陈成龙封丹斯里| 国内|
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On 20 March 1956, a baby boy was born into a humble farming family in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaya. His parents named him Seng Leong, hoping that he would one day soar like a dragon and achieve extraordinary success. This child would later become known as Tan Seng Leong, one of Malaysia's legendary property developers, widely honoured as the "Father of Kluang's Development."

Tan Seng Leong traced his ancestral roots to Yongchun County in Fujian, China. Like countless Chinese migrants who journeyed to Nanyang, his forebears crossed the seas and made Johor their home. Batu Pahat, situated in the heart of Johor, was one of southern Malaysia's major towns, where the Chinese community was made up primarily of Hokkiens and Hakkas. The Tan family lived the simple life of farmers, modest in means but rich in perseverance. Growing up among fields and plantations, the young Tan came to understand the hardships of life from an early age.

Yet poverty never limited the ambitions of this eager student. Through determination and an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, he pursued his education with unwavering resolve. He enrolled at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, where he studied Architecture and Construction Management, receiving systematic professional training. This academic foundation later provided him with the technical expertise that would underpin his long and successful career in the property development industry.

After graduating from university, Tan Seng Leong chose not to pursue the conventional path of joining a large corporation as a salaried professional. Instead, he made a decision that surprised many—he entered the relatively

undeveloped field of property development. In the early 1970s, Malaysia's real estate industry had yet to evolve into a mature commercial sector, with most developers still following the traditional model of simply building and selling houses. Tan, however, recognised the enormous opportunities that would emerge from the country's accelerating urbanisation.

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Chapter 2:

The First Venture - Kluang's Pioneer Years in 1978

In 1978, at the age of twenty-two, Tan Seng Leong took the first step on his entrepreneurial journey. In Kluang, Johor, he launched his first property development project—**Taman Kurnia**. Although modest in scale, the housing project became the cornerstone of his business career and laid the foundation for everything that followed.

Located in central Johor, Kluang was the state's third largest town and an important railway hub. At that time, however, it was far from the modern township it would later become. Its urban landscape remained relatively undeveloped, and much of its infrastructure was still basic. Tan Seng Leong saw what many others overlooked. He believed that Kluang's strategic location and abundant land resources gave it enormous potential. With careful planning and thoughtful development, he was convinced it could be transformed into a modern and highly liveable town.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Malaysia's economy entered a period of rapid expansion. Seizing this historic opportunity, Tan went on to develop a series of

residential townships in Kluang, including **Taman Bukit Perdana, Evergreen Heights, and Bandar Putra Indah**. His vision extended far beyond simply constructing houses. He placed great emphasis on comprehensive township planning, ensuring that roads, drainage systems, landscaping and public amenities were all carefully designed and executed to the highest standards.

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Chapter 3:

The Rise of Dragon City - The Founding of BCB and the Transformation of Kluang

In 1988, at the age of thirty-six, Tan Seng Leong made the most significant decision of his business career by formally establishing **BCB Berhad**. The initials BCB stood for *Bandar Cemerlang Berhad*, meaning "Excellent City." The name reflected his ambition to transform Kluang into a model modern township.

Soon after BCB was founded, Tan was presented with an opportunity that would forever change the destiny of Kluang—the privatisation and redevelopment of the town centre. At the time, central Kluang consisted of a run-down settlement where some five hundred families lived in makeshift and unauthorised housing. The area suffered from poor infrastructure and an unplanned urban landscape.

Tan Seng Leong accepted what many regarded as an impossible task. He entered into lengthy negotiations with the five hundred affected households, offering them two options: monetary compensation or discounted prices for new homes within the redevelopment project. Through patience, sincerity and careful dialogue, an agreement

was eventually reached. The residents agreed to relocate, allowing the land to be cleared for redevelopment.

BCB then embarked on a comprehensive urban renewal programme. A modern bus terminal, taxi terminal, commercial complexes and a sports complex soon rose across the ninety-acre site. What had once been an overcrowded informal settlement was transformed into the commercial heart of Kluang. To this day, the area remains the town's busiest business district.

The success of this landmark project earned Tan Seng Leong the enduring title of the "Father of Kluang's Development." In 1997, he was honoured within the industry as the "Doctor of Real Estate." In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the local community, the municipal authorities named a street in Kluang's commercial centre **Jalan Dato' Tan Seng Leong** in his honour.

Chapter 4:

Expanding Across Southern Malaysia - From Kluang to Batu Pahat and Johor Bahru

Following his success in Kluang, Tan Seng Leong expanded his vision far beyond a single town. He gradually extended BCB's development footprint to Batu Pahat, Johor Bahru, Pontian, Yong Peng and Parit Raja. Under his leadership, BCB Group developed a diverse portfolio encompassing residential townships, retail centres, hotels and commercial office developments.

In Batu Pahat, he developed numerous residential neighbourhoods. In Johor Bahru, he launched commercial projects such as **U-Mall**, while in Pontian, Yong Peng and other towns, his residential developments provided local communities with high quality housing options. Over time, BCB Group grew into one of the largest property developers in the state of Johor.

Throughout this expansion, Tan Seng Leong remained faithful to a single guiding philosophy: he was not merely building houses, but creating communities. He placed strong emphasis on comprehensive township planning, carefully integrating green spaces, public areas and community facilities into every development. This people-

centred approach became a defining characteristic of BCB Group's projects and earned the company a strong reputation in the marketplace.

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Chapter 5:

Expanding into Greater Kuala Lumpur - A Leap from Southern Malaysia to the Klang Valley

The year 2010 marked another major milestone in Tan Seng Leong's business journey. It was the year BCB Group decided to expand into the Klang Valley, Malaysia's largest and most competitive property market.

In Kuala Lumpur, BCB Group launched **Concerto North Kiara**, a luxury condominium development, while in Kota Kemuning, Selangor, it introduced **Home Tree**, an exclusive gated residential community. The success of these two projects signified BCB Group's transformation from a regional developer rooted in southern Malaysia into a nationwide property development company.

By 2016, BCB Group had developed more than 5,000 acres of land and built over 50,000 residential units. Its business portfolio had expanded far beyond property development to include property management, hotel management, project management, road construction, the manufacture of concrete products, and the trading of construction materials.

Chapter 6:

A Leader of the Chinese Business Community - Service to Commerce and Society

Tan Seng Leong is not only a successful entrepreneur but also a prominent leader within Malaysia's Chinese business community.

He has served as Vice President of the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia, President of the Johor Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and President of the Kluang Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Through these leadership roles, he has worked tirelessly to safeguard the interests of the Chinese business community while promoting trade and economic cooperation between Malaysia and China.

Beyond the business sector, he has also served as Vice President of the Malaysia Young Entrepreneurs Association, a board member of the Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia, and Vice President of the Johor Basketball Association. His contributions extend across education, sports, charitable work and religious organisations, where he has accepted honorary

leadership positions in numerous schools, associations, youth organisations and charitable institutions.

In 2024, Tan Seng Leong received the **Greater ASEAN Entrepreneur Award**, one of the region's most prestigious honours recognising outstanding achievement in business.

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Chapter 7:

Honoured for a Lifetime of Service - From Dato' to Tan Sri

Tan Seng Leong's lifelong spirit of service earned him the highest recognition from both the Malaysian monarchy and the nation.

In 1994, he was conferred the title of **Dato'** by the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan. On 2 July 2016, during the 88th birthday celebrations of Abdul Halim of Kedah, he was awarded the title of **Tan Sri**, one of the nation's highest honours bestowed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

From being recognised as the "Doctor of Real Estate" to earning the title of the "Father of Kluang's Development," and from Dato' to Tan Sri, Tan Seng Leong spent more than four decades shaping the landscape of southern Malaysia. His life's work has become inseparable from Kluang's urban transformation and from the modern evolution of Malaysia's property development industry.

Conclusion:

The Enduring Legacy of the Father of Kluang's Development

Looking back on the life of Tan Seng Leong, his journey spans from a humble Hokkien boy born in Batu Pahat to an architecture student at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia; from launching **Taman Kurnia** in 1978 to building BCB Group into a publicly listed company; from transforming Kluang's town centre through urban redevelopment to developing luxury residential projects in the Klang Valley. Over more than four decades, he devoted himself to turning what was once an unplanned town in southern Malaysia into a modern and highly liveable urban centre.

He often remarked, "Economic cycles come and go, but the development of a city is everlasting." He believed that periods of economic slowdown offered developers the best opportunity to strengthen their foundations and prepare for the future. By carefully studying economic cycles, he was able to maintain a clear and steady vision regardless of market fluctuations.

The legacy Tan Seng Leong leaves behind extends far beyond BCB Group, the road bearing the name **Jalan Dato' Tan Seng Leong**, or the honour of the title **Tan Sri**.

More enduring is the philosophy he championed throughout his career: developing communities with professional excellence while planning cities with long-term vision. Every street, every neighbourhood and every building in Kluang continues to tell, in its own quiet way, the story of the man remembered as the "Father of Kluang's Development."

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