

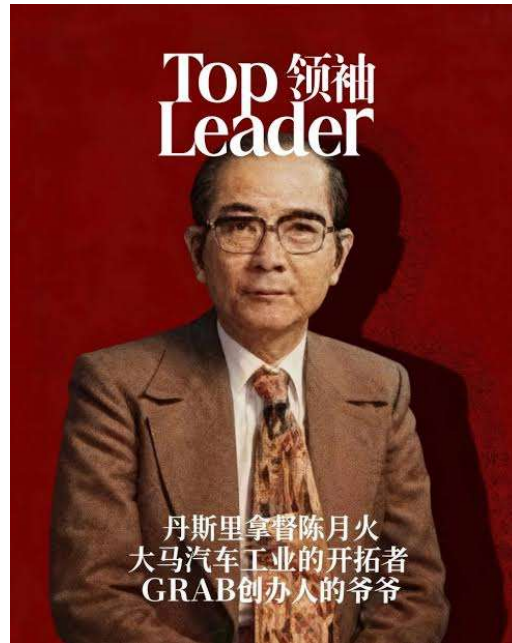
The Story of Tan Kim Hor



The Nissan Legend: Tan Chong International

Chapter 1

Ancestral Roots in Anxi: Tan Chong's Business Legacy in Kepong



Among the Chinese merchants of Kepong, Kuala Lumpur, the name **Tan Chong** was widely respected. A native of Chenzuoqian Village, Zhongshan, Shangqing Township, Anxi County, Fujian Province, Tan Chong left China for Malaya at a young age in search of a livelihood. Through remarkable business acumen and unwavering diligence, he established a strong foothold in Kepong and became one of the area's most prominent businessmen.

In 1922, **Tan Kim Hor** was born into this prosperous business family in Kepong, Kuala Lumpur, as the eldest son of Tan Chong. He also had a younger brother, **Tan Guek Hor**, who would later become his lifelong business partner. Tan Chong's enterprise centred on government food supply contracts, providing provisions to military and police hospitals throughout the country while maintaining close ties with government agencies. In mid twentieth century Malaya, securing and sustaining such government supply contracts demanded exceptional credibility and an extensive network of connections. Growing up in this environment, the Tan brothers absorbed valuable business knowledge from an early age, laying a solid foundation for the commercial empire they would one day build.

Chapter 2

From Taxi Driver to Nissan Pioneer: Tan Guek Hor's Decade of Perseverance

In his early years, **Tan Guek Hor** worked as a taxi driver. That experience forged his lifelong connection with transportation and quietly paved the way for his future in the automobile industry. At the time, the roads of Malaya were dominated by European and American cars, while Japanese vehicles had yet to enter the public consciousness.

In 1957, Malaya gained its independence. That same year, Tan Guek Hor learned that the president of **Datsun**, the predecessor of Nissan, would be visiting the newly established Embassy of Japan in Malaya. He immediately made a bold decision. Without an appointment or personal connections, he simply waited outside the embassy for the president to arrive, relying solely on the courage and determination of a young man.

In the end, he got his chance. Faced with an unfamiliar taxi driver, the president of Datsun did not turn him away but listened patiently to his request. Tan Guek Hor said, "Just give me the opportunity to sell a few cars, and I will prove that we can do it." Moved by his sincerity, the

president granted the Datsun dealership to the former taxi driver, despite his complete lack of experience in automobile sales.

Tan Guek Hor then approached his elder brother, **Tan Kim Hor**, and together they founded **Tan Chong & Sons Motor Company**. Operating from a modest shop on Ipoh Road in Kuala Lumpur, the brothers began building their business. In their first year, they sold 39 cars. By today's standards, 39 vehicles may seem insignificant, but in the Malaya of 1957, that figure marked the true arrival of Japanese automobiles in the country.

Chapter 3

Tan Chong Motors Goes Public: The Capital Market Breakthrough of 1974

Between 1957 and 1963, the Tan brothers also secured food supply contracts for the Federal Military Forces, the Ministry of Defence, and the Police Field Force, enabling the group to accumulate substantial cash reserves. With both the food supply business and automobile trade expanding in tandem, Tan Chong's business flourished.

On 14 October 1972, **Tan Chong Motor Holdings Berhad** was officially incorporated. In 1974, the company was listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange in a landmark public offering. The capital raised was subsequently invested in the construction of an automobile assembly plant at Segambut, Kuala Lumpur, which commenced operations in 1976. The new assembly line enabled Datsun, later renamed Nissan, to deliver vehicles much faster than its competitors, allowing it to overtake Western brands such as Ford and Holden and become the best selling automobile brand in Malaysia.

From a single shop to a publicly listed corporation, **Tan Kim Hor** and **Tan Guek Hor** had achieved a remarkable transformation. The commissioning of the Segambut assembly plant marked Tan Chong Motors' evolution from a trading company into a true automobile manufacturer.

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Chapter 4

Justice of the Peace and Dato': A Life of Leadership in Business and the Community

Tan Kim Hor was not only a successful businessman but also a respected leader within the Malaysian Chinese community who was deeply committed to public service. Beyond his business interests, he was actively involved in numerous organisations. He served as Chairman of the Kepong Branch and Kepong Division of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), as Treasurer of the MCA Federal Territory Liaison Committee, Honorary Adviser to the Kepong Hokkien Association, Director and Honorary President of the Selangor Anxi Association, Chairman of the Kepong Tan Clan Association, Director of Tung Shin Hospital in Kuala Lumpur, and Chairman or Honorary Adviser of the boards of several Chinese primary schools, including Kepong Chinese National Type Primary School, Desa Jaya Chinese Primary School, and Kai Chi Chinese Primary School.

In 1977, he was awarded the title of **Justice of the Peace (JP)** by the Sultan of Selangor. In 1978, he received the **Kesatria Mangku Negara (KMN)** from the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. In 1981, he was further honoured by the Sultan of Selangor with the title of **Dato'** through the **Darjah Kebesaran Dato' Paduka Mahkota Selangor (DPMS)**.

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Chapter 5

Kim Hor Secondary School: Nurturing Future Generations in His Ancestral Home of Anxi

Although **Tan Kim Hor** was born in Malaya, he never forgot that his roots were in Anxi, Fujian. During the 1990s, he made several visits to his ancestral hometown and witnessed the shortage of educational resources there. In November 1998, upon learning that Anxi County was planning to establish a new secondary school, he immediately decided to finance the entire construction of its school buildings.

The school was built on a 35 mu site beside Lanxi River in Tongmei Village, on the western outskirts of Anxi County. Tan Kim Hor funded the construction of two teaching blocks and a multi purpose building, with a total floor area of more than 7,000 square metres. The school admitted its first intake of students in September 1999. In recognition of his generosity and contribution, the local government named the institution **Kim Hor Secondary School**. He was also awarded the "**Le Yu Ying Cai**" plaque and a gold medal by the People's Government of Fujian Province.

Chapter 6

Tan Chong International: An Automotive Empire Spanning Ten Countries

During the 1960s, **Tan Kim Hor** and his younger brother, **Tan Guek Hor**, expanded their business from Malaysia into Singapore by establishing **Tan Chong & Sons Motor Company**, introducing Nissan vehicles to the Singapore market. On 7 July 1998, **Tan Chong International Limited** was simultaneously listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and the Singapore Exchange, marking the Tan family's formal entry into the international capital markets.

Tan Chong International's operations eventually expanded across ten countries, including Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines, making it one of the largest Nissan dealership networks in Southeast Asia.

Chapter 7

The 2020s: New Challenges and an Unfinished Legacy

Entering the 2020s, **Tan Chong Motor** faced the challenges brought about by the global transformation of the automotive industry. As the wave of new energy vehicles swept across the world, Nissan's competitiveness came under increasing pressure. According to *The Edge* in 2025, Nissan's declining market position, coupled with Tan Chong Motor's regional expansion falling short of expectations, placed the once dominant automotive group in a difficult position on two fronts.

In 2025, Tan Chong Motor introduced the new **Nissan KICKS e-POWER IMPUL Edition** and the **Nissan Navara X-Tremer** in Malaysia, hoping to regain market momentum through the launch of new models.

Conclusion

A Century of Legacy from Kepong to Anxi

Tan Kim Hor's story began in 1922 in a business family in Kepong, Kuala Lumpur, and took shape in 1957 through the moment when he and his younger brother, **Tan Guek Hor**, seized an extraordinary opportunity that began with a wait outside the Japanese embassy. When the young Tan Guek Hor waited outside the embassy for the president of Datsun in 1957, he was setting in motion far more than a business deal. It marked the beginning of a century long story in which a family enterprise grew alongside a newly independent nation. From a single shop to a publicly listed corporation, from Ipoh Road to a dealership network spanning ten countries, and from Segambut in Selangor to **Kim Hor Secondary School** on the banks of Lanxi River in Anxi, the Tan family spent three generations building one of Southeast Asia's leading automotive groups from the foundations of an Overseas Chinese immigrant family.

Today, Tan Kim Hor is more than a century old, yet the legacy that he and **Tan Guek Hor** built together through **Tan Chong Motor** continues to drive forward as an enduring force in Malaysia's automotive landscape.