

= Ee Hoe Hean Club =

The Ee Hoe Hean Club ( simplified Chinese : 新加坡新加坡 ; traditional Chinese : 新加坡 ; pinyin : Yīhéxu?n jùlèbù ) , founded in 1895 and located at Bukit Pasoh Road in Chinatown , was a millionaires ' club in Singapore . Besides functioning as a social and business club , members of the club were actively involved in the political development of China in the early 20th century . The club supported the 1911 Xinhai Revolution which overthrew the Qing Dynasty , and later the establishment of the Republic of China . During World War II , it was the headquarters of the anti @-@ Japanese China Salvation Movement in Southeast Asia from 1937 ? 1942 . On 18 October 1995 , the club was gazetted as a Heritage Site by the National Heritage Board of Singapore .

= = History = =

Co @-@ founded in 1895 by Lim Nee Soon , Gan Eng Seng and Lim Boon Keng , the three @-@ storey high Ee Hoe Hean Club was originally located on Duxton Hill but moved to Bukit Pasoh Road in 1925 . The club was a social @-@ cum @-@ business club where like @-@ minded Chinese businessmen could mingle and exchange ideas . Members such as Teo Eng Hock , Tan Chor Nam and Lim Nee Soon were actively involved in the Xinhai Revolution and later the establishment of the Republic of China . Among the more famous visitors to its clubhouse included Sun Yat @-@ sen and Jawaharlal Nehru . In 1923 , when Chinese businessman , community leader and philanthropist Tan Kah Kee , known as the Rubber King of Singapore and Malaya , assumed chairmanship of the club , its focus shifted from being a purely social and business club to one that was politically active .

= = = Tan Kah Kee = = =

Born in 1874 in Fujian , China , Tan came to Singapore at the age of 16 to join his father 's business . In 1904 , Tan struck out on his own , selling pineapples and rice and manufacturing rubber tyres and shoes . Tan 's rubber business flourished and , with growing wealth , he altruistically donated money to many schools and established Amoy University ( now Xiamen University ) . However , Tan 's loyalty still lay with his motherland and he ardently supported opponents of the Qing rulers during the Xinhai Revolution . By this time , Tan 's philanthropic work and political inclinations had made him a popular figure amongst the Chinese in Singapore and China .

Tan brought to the club his political awareness of Chinese matters . In 1928 , following a public outrage over a massacre at Jinan ( known as the Jinan Incident ) in Shandong in which more than 5 @,@ 000 Chinese soldiers and civilians were slaughtered by the Japanese , the club set up the Shandong Relief Fund . Its purpose was to raise funds for China , to create awareness amongst the Chinese about the Japanese invasion of China , and to encourage the Chinese to boycott Japanese goods and services . The Chinese community contributed a total of S \$ 1 @.@ 34 million within a year of its inception .

Seeing that the Chinese military was weaker than the superior Japanese forces , Tan stepped up his anti @-@ Japanese campaign . In 1936 , he raised enough money for the Chinese Air Force to purchase 13 fighter planes . In 1937 , the Chinese Relief Fund Committee was set up with Tan chosen by over 800 representatives of the Chinese community as its chairman . In response to the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 , the China Salvation Movement was born , with its Southeast Asian headquarters located at the club until 1942 , when the Japanese invaded Singapore . Tan fled to Indonesia just a few days before the fall of Singapore as he knew he would likely face persecution by the Japanese should he choose to remain . He returned to Singapore after the war and continued to play an active role in community services and charity work before returning to China in 1950 . He died at the age of 87 in Beijing on 12 August 1961 and was accorded a national funeral by the People 's Republic of China government for his various contributions to society .

= = = Recruitment of drivers and mechanics = = =

During the Second Sino @-@ Japanese War , many Chinese seaports were either captured or blockaded by the Japanese , in an attempt to prevent supplies from entering China . As a result , an alternative overland road named Burma Road , became China 's most important supply route . Completed in 1938 , supplies were sent by sea to the port in Rangoon , Burma , transported overland by rail to Lashio and through the Burma Road to Kunming in China . Due to lack of experienced drivers and mechanics in China , the Chinese government requested Tan Kah Kee , the Chairman of the China Relief Fund , to recruit volunteers from Nanyang ( a term used by the Chinese when referring to Southeast Asia ) . Following the request , the China Relief Fund published the first recruitment notice on 7 February 1939 .

As the road condition required extremely good driving skills , the China Relief Fund decided to test drivers and established a driving institute on a vacant piece of accessible land behind the Siong Lim Temple . Venerable Pu Liang , the monastery 's 10th abbot , supported the China Relief Fund . Qualified volunteers from Nanyang converged in Singapore to form a batch . In 1939 , about 3 @,@ 200 volunteers left in nine batches that included only Chinese men but also Indians , Malays , and four Chinese women . About 1 @,@ 000 of them died in service , 1 @,@ 000 settled in China and others returned to Nanyang after the war . The Venerable and two of his disciples were later arrested and executed during the Sook Ching Massacre in 1942 .

= = = Recruitment of militia = = =

Located just a stone 's throw away lies another historic site , the Chin Kang Huay Kuan , a Chinese clan association that was established in 1918 by Chinese immigrants from Jinjiang County in southern Fujian , China . The present building on Bukit Pasoh Road was built in 1928 and its wartime history was intricately linked to Ee Hoe Hean Club . During the Japanese invasion of Singapore , the clan association 's premises served as an extension of the club 's anti @-@ Japanese activities and were used by the Overseas Chinese General Mobilisation Council . Headed by Tan Kah Kee , the council was instrumental in helping the British to maintain law and order and in supplying labourers and volunteers for the defence of Singapore . As a result , it became the recruiting centre and headquarters of the Singapore Overseas Chinese Volunteer Army or Dalforce after its British chief commander , Colonel John Dalley . A surviving volunteer named Hu Tiejun recounted his experience :

I came across an article in the papers in which Mr Tan Kah Kee called for a convention of overseas Chinese on behalf of the Governor of Singapore . The purpose of the convention was to set up a Singapore Overseas Chinese Mobilisation Association composed of a defence squad , local militia and labour team . The same day after reading it , I set off to Singapore . On 2 February 1942 , I led some members of the local militia to the Volunteer Army headquarters . During this time , many patriotic young men who were untrained in military skills , streamed into Singapore .

Although ill @-@ equipped and having received little training , Dalforce was sent to the northwestern front where they fought against Japanese landing parties during the battles of Sarimbun Beach and Kranji . Despite their efforts , Singapore fell to the Japanese a few days after the invasion , and the Japanese army moved in to occupy the Chin Kang Huay Kuan . After the Japanese surrender on September 1945 , Chin Kang Huay Kuan resumed its normal activities of running welfare programmes for needy clan members and organising cultural events .

= = Post @-@ war years = =

After the Japanese occupation of Singapore , the club 's anti @-@ Japanese agenda became redundant and it reverted being a club for social and business interaction once again . Its members were later active in the struggle for citizenship , voters ' registration campaign and other philanthropic activities . After Singapore 's independence in 1965 , it became a focal point where local Chinese businessmen socialised and forged ties , and it continued to play an active role in

community services such as charity work and giving public talks . Among its 200 @-@ odd members today are luminaries of the Chinese business community such as the founder of the Overseas Union Bank , Lien Ying Chow , and United Overseas Bank chairman Wee Cho Yaw . It is still an all men 's club ? the youngest members are mainly in their 50s and membership is by invitation only .

= = = Re @-@ opening = = =

In 2006 , in collaboration with the Tan Kah Kee Foundation , the club underwent a S \$ 2 @.@ 5 million ( US \$ 1 @.@ 85 million ) reconstruction works in order to preserve the century @-@ old historic building . On 9 November 2008 , the club was officially reopened by Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam with a new 2 @,@ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 190 m2 ) memorial hall to honour Tan Kah Kee and other early Chinese community leaders . The new hall is named Xian Xian Guan ( The Pioneers ' Memorial Hall ) and is located on the club 's ground floor . It contains exhibits such as a wax figure of Tan Kah Kee , old photographs , and interactive multimedia facilities . The second floor is used for social functions , and the third floor continues to house the social club . The memorial hall is open by appointment to the public , in particular to schools and tourist groups from China and Taiwan . The club house and other places related to Tan are included as part of the heritage trails and guided tours around Singapore .