

Singapore HeritageFest 2009
“Our Neighbours’ Heroes” Storytelling Competition
Merit Award Winner (Lower Primary School)



Participant's Details

Name: Hani Nadirah Binte Mokhri
Gender: Female
Age: 9-year-old
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Nationality: Singapore
School: Damai Primary School

Tan Chong Tee

The hero I admire most is Tan Chong Tee. He is as strong as a lion and as loyal as a knight. He was given a beautiful car to store money which he smuggled from the Japanese. He told the Japanese that he was a big '*towkay*' which is Chinese for boss. The Japanese doubted him and questioned him, "Are you really a businessman? Let me check your car."

When he heard that, Mr. Tan was scared to death. He knew he would not escape death if he was captured. The Japanese checked the car and was astonished that he had so much money. When Mr. Tan saw the expression on their faces, he immediately knew he was in hot soup. Two stick-wielding soldiers handcuffed him and threw him in a small prison cell that was covered with filth and blood.

Inside the cell, there was a hard wooden mattress and a broken bucket. Mr. Tan was interrogated for being a spy, but he only replied, "No, I am not" every time they questioned him.

One night, he was questioned again. But his answer was the same – No.

"You won't tell me the truth?" yelled the soldier. "Fine! Then starve in here!"

Mr. Tan was an important prisoner as the Japanese needed information from him so, they did not kill him. This is because only through him could they find out the whereabouts of his comrades and put a stop to Force 136, the spy network which had long been sabotaging their operation.

To keep him alive, Mr. Tan was given three or four rotten sweet potatoes. However, he did not eat them. He was willing to give up his life for his comrades. He did not eat for weeks and was tortured every day but he still did not reveal any information about his comrades. Years passed and he still lived under the control of the Japanese.

Finally, the Japanese surrendered and Mr. Tan was released. But, sadly, his family had passed away before him. Mr. Tan cried his heart out when he found out about this. Mr. Tan could not forget the agony he had gone through.

And now, believe it or not, Mr. Tan is still alive and he is already 81 years old.