



# A Study on Tan Kah Kee's Critical Friends of the Chinese Communist Party “Primary, Public, True, Loyalty” Four Hearts and Four Dimensional Patriotic Love

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**Abstract.** Tan Kah Kee is a famous patriotic educator, industrialist and social activist in China, an outstanding overseas Chinese leader, and a great national capitalist. In the process of continuous efforts and struggle for the cause of national rejuvenation, Tan Kah Kee gradually developed a sincere friendship with the Chinese Communists. Especially after the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Tan Kah Kee was able to continue to devote himself to the cause of education under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, to make outstanding contributions to the people and the motherland. In order to deeply, completely and comprehensively explore and discuss the friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China, this paper takes Tan Kah Kee's patriotism as the main line, follows the four hearts of “Original intention, Public heart, Sincerity, Loyalty”, reorganizes the historical data, and focuses on his patriotism, learning from abroad and foreign countries. This paper uses the method of document analysis and historical data to analyze the formation process of the deep friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China in the four historical cross-sections, including patriotism and the construction of education, the War of Resistance, opposition to the United States and unification, and the construction of a new China.

**Keywords:** Tan Kah Kee · The Communist Party · Patriotism · Four hearts

## 1 Introduction

The friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China began with strong patriotism. Because Tan Kah Kee grew up in a specific historical stage and social

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environment, he had a new understanding of China's development, and made him devote himself to education and revolutionary struggle activities, paying attention to the development and the rise and fall of the motherland. And Tan Kah Kee's bold loyalty and family and country feelings laid the foundation for the deep friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China in the future. In-depth exploration and analysis of Tan Kah Kee's patriotic feelings can help to have a deeper understanding of the profound friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China, and to accurately understand the "Kah Kee Spirit" that Tan Kah Kee has integrated into education and patriotic activities. At the same time, it can also provide some references for scholars to study and analyze Tan Kah Kee's thoughts and ideas more comprehensively and in more dimensions.

## **2 Original Intention: The Opportunity for Patriotism and Learning to Open Up Revolutionary Friendship**

Tan Kah Kee, a native of Jimei, Xiamen, Fujian Province, is known as a patriotic overseas Chinese leader known as "national glory and banner of overseas Chinese". He is an outstanding patriotic educator, social activist and industrialist in China. In 1891, Tan Kah Kee crossed the South Ocean and settled in Singapore. After taking over the family business, he founded the Pineapple Canning Factory and the Nissin Company. In 1906, Tan Kah Kee successively opened a pineapple factory and a cooked rice factory, making a profit of 130,000 yuan. In 1907, Tan Kah Kee gradually paid off the debt owed by his father, and this became a story in Singapore's business history. Tan Kah Kee once said on this matter: "Chinese people win the trust of the world, and they can't lose their faces abroad." Later, when Tan Kah Kee founded Jimei School, he also listed integrity as the first of the ten commandments for students, and laid a solid belief in "honesty and perseverance" for his later vocational education career. In 1910, under the influence of revolutionary ideas, Tan Kah Kee broke away from the relationship with the Qing court and officially joined the China Alliance. He respected Sun Yat-sen's philosophy and shouldered the mission of "removing the Tartars and restoring China". After officially joining the China Alliance, Tan Kah Kee devoted himself to the revolutionary cause by starting an industry. By 1925, Tan Kah Kee had owned 15,000 acres of rubber plantations and more than 30 factories of various types. In addition to large rubber factories and product factories, Tan Kah Kee also owned a number of rock sugar factories, biscuit factories, pineapple can factories, timber factories, leather factories, Pharmaceutical factories, and soap factories, and their agents are located in major cities in major countries in the world, with total assets of about 12.99 million yuan. However, in the process of starting the business, Tan Kah Kee established the "Singapore Overseas Chinese Donations to the Motherland Refugees and Injured Soldiers Committee", which has received extensive response and support. Then, at the request of the government of the Republic of China, 3,200 overseas Chinese mechanics were recruited to provide rush transportation services for the anti-Japanese war materials in our country. In 1923, Tan Kah Kee vigorously boycotted Japanese products and advocated domestic products through the establishment of "Nanyang Siang Pau", and had a significant impact on the overseas Chinese community. After the Jinan massacre broke out, Tan Kah Kee carried

out disaster relief activities in Southeast Asia and raised a lot of funds, all of which were imported into Jinan. According to relevant literature analysis and investigation, it can be found that Tan Kah Kee has carried out fundraising activities for many times during the revolutionary struggle, and invested nearly half of his family property in the revolutionary cause of the motherland.

Tan Kah Kee is not only a famous industrialist and a great patriot, but also an outstanding educator, who has had a profound impact on the construction and development of modern education in our country. During the heyday of his career, Tan Kah Kee's family fortune was as high as more than 20 million yuan, more than He also has many wealthy entrepreneurs. However, the only one who can rejuvenate the motherland and the nation is Tan Kah Kee who destroys his family and promotes his studies. Huang Yanpei once commented on Chen Kah Kee: "Mr. Chen is the only person who made a fortune, but was able to use it all to run a school." The establishment of a school is an important manifestation of Chen Kah Kee's patriotism. He devoted all his assets to found Jimei School and Xiamen University. For example, in the process of founding Jimei School, Tan Kah Kee's schools involved basic education and various vocational education. The scale and far-reaching influence were unprecedented in China at that time. In addition, Tan Kah Kee also founded and funded six Chinese schools successively, setting off a new trend of overseas Chinese running schools. In 1919, Tan Kah Kee's enterprise achieved further development, with total assets of more than 4 million yuan, but he did not put the company's profits on market expansion and enterprise expansion, but returned to the motherland to organize Xiamen University and pledged "enterprise". All assets earned [1] Promoting education and saving the country is an important motivation for Tan Kah Kee to promote his studies, and it is the realistic representation of his patriotism. At the same time, it has also gradually promoted the healthy development of regional education in China.

### **3 Public Heart: Extending Comfort and Labor to Realize the Conclusion of Friendship During the Anti-Japanese War**

When the Chinese nation is in danger of survival, the key to the Chinese people's resistance to Japan and their national salvation, Tan Kah Kee, who lives in Singapore, led the Nanyang Relief Group to return to China for inspection. Tan Kah Kee was amazed by what he saw and heard in Chongqing when he passed through Chongqing to carry out consolation activities. Tan Kah Kee, who was full of hope, was greatly disappointed, and went to Yan'an with the mood of "How is Yan'an". However, at this time, there were two special situations. The Nationalist government advised Tan Kah Kee not to go to Yan'an, while the CCP wanted Tan Kah Kee to come to Yan'an, and called to invite Tan Kah Kee to visit Yan'an to see the truth. Chen Jiageng is a person who dares to speak, think and act. After being invited by Yan'an, he led a consolation group with Li Tieming, Hou Xifan and others to Yan'an, the seat of the Communist Party of China. [2] As soon as they entered the territory of Yan'an, they were welcomed by the people of Yan'an, commanders and fighters, citizens, workers, students, unit cadres, returned overseas Chinese and others. The vice-chairman of Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia District, the commander of the border region and all political suffragettes also stepped forward to

greet him. During his inspection and consolation period in Yan'an, Tan Kah Kee successively learned about the situation of the Anti-Japanese War in China, as well as the unity of the army and the people in Yan'an. During his visit and condolences in Yan'an, Mao Zedong invited him many times to meet in the cave to discuss issues such as the cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party and the War of Resistance. [3] In terms of cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, Tan Kah Kee has repeatedly hoped that the Communist Party can make concessions, be lenient, and then deal with the friction between the brothers (the Kuomintang and the Communist Party) after the Japanese aggressors are defeated. Mao Zedong expressed that Chen Kah Kee's words were in his heart, and he asked Chen Kah Kee to rest assured that the current purpose of the Communist Party's work is to fight against Japan and save the country, and it attaches great importance to the unity and cooperation of the two parties. Later, Mao Zedong said that the Communist Party has always advocated unity in the war of resistance and will let go of its prejudice against the Kuomintang. Later, accompanied by Kang Keqing and Zhu De, Chen Jiageng came to Yan'an to visit the Women's University, the Military and Political University and other institutions, and explored the situation of students taking classes in the open air. The Communist Party of China expressed emotion about the urgently needed armament situation, and expressed its willingness to contribute to Yan'an and jointly fight against the Japanese aggressors. In addition, Tan Kah Kee was still in Yan'an, had exchanges and contacts with people from all walks of life, and learned about the actual situation in Yan'an. He came to his own conclusion: It was the Kuomintang diehards who harmed the country and the people, corrupted the country, surrendered and betrayed the country, and sabotaged the War of Resistance, while the Communist Party was the one who truly served the public with integrity, maintained unity, and fought against Japan and saved the country. [4] The behavior of Yan'an laid the foundation for the friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China, and laid the foundation for Tan Kah Kee to understand the Communist Party more deeply. But in general, the reason why Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China can forge a deep friendship is that Tan Kah Kee has strong patriotic feelings, and it is his sincere heart to devote himself to the cause of patriotism and revolution. After the visit and inspection to Yan'an, Tan Kah Kee regained the joy of "seeing the sky". In June of the same year, Tan Kah Kee went to other war zones and cities of the "CCP" to continue his inspection tour. Although the trip to Yan'an was relatively short, it was the first contact between the Communists and Tan Kah Kee, and it was the key and medium for the sincere friendship between the two sides. During the period of condolences and inspections, Tan Kah Kee had a deeper understanding and understanding of the truth about the war of resistance in the motherland, and forged a profound friendship with the Communist Party of China. At the same time, it was also an opportunity for Tan Kah Kee to change his political thoughts.

First of all, Tan Kah Kee expressed his disappointment with the KMT's anti-Japanese line. In Chongqing, Chen Kah Kee saw that "men are dressed in Manchu clothing, long coats and jackets; women are cheongsam with high heels, red lips and white teeth", and there is absolutely no shadow of active anti-Japanese war. In Yan'an, Tan Kah Kee saw the determination and confidence of the communists to actively resist the war under difficult conditions, and saw the concept of the communists to save the country and

serve the people. Therefore, during the inspection of the consolation group, Tan Kah Kee's attitude towards the two parties changed dramatically, and he supported and paid more attention to the Communist. Second, when Tan Kah Kee inspected Chongqing, he exposed and criticized the corrupt politics and life of KMT, pointing out that "the Kuomintang people who keep foreign exchange are greedy for profit and disregard the overall situation." "The members of the Kuomintang are all corrupt and fraudulent.

#### **4 Sincerity: The Anti-American Struggle Boosts the Deepening of National Friendship**

The victory of the Anti-Japanese War made China's class contradictions and ethnic contradictions more intense, and the confrontation and differences between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party became more acute. The Nationalist government adhered to the policy of traitorous dictatorship and advocated that it could not "change its course". It also received the support and assistance of US imperialism, and wanted to disintegrate the Chinese Communist Party and restore its dictatorial rule within a few months. The Communist Party of China, on the other hand, is fighting for democracy and peace from the perspective of national justice. In the process of choosing between the two parties, Tan Kah Kee resolutely made a choice, choosing to stand on the democratic front and support the leadership of the Communist Party. And to overthrow the Kuomintang reactionary government, against US imperialism, make efforts. First of all, the Kuomintang launched the Chinese Civil War, which made Tan Kah Kee's hopes for the end of the Anti-Japanese War, the realization of reunification, the establishment of the country, and democracy to be dashed. He gradually realized that it was absolutely impossible for the National Government to be democratic. Therefore, through the establishment and operation of the "Nanqiao Daily", [5] he called on the overseas Chinese to unite and unite, jointly promote the "democracy and peace" of the motherland, and stop the civil war as soon as possible. After the newspaper was published, it was quickly echoed by the people of all ethnic groups in the ruling area, and played a distinct role in public opinion for the Chinese Communist Party to win the war of liberation. In addition, Tan Kah Kee also organized and established the "Singzhou Federation" to support the anti-dictatorship, anti-starvation, and anti-civil war movements in the Kuomintang-controlled areas, followed by exposing the essence of the Kuomintang. After the Anti-Japanese War, Tan Kah Kee returned to Singapore. In response to the thought of "returning power to the people" expected by overseas Chinese, he delivered a speech, proposing that "the Communist Party and the Kuomintang will eventually find it difficult to compromise with each other" and "the building of a country must first recognize right and wrong" and other concepts. And on many important occasions and public occasions, he exposed the nature of the Kuomintang government's "cunning, untrustworthy, corrupt and arbitrary", and pointed out that the Kuomintang's corrupt politics was detrimental to the well-being of the people and the survival of the people. In the process of criticizing the dictatorship of the Kuomintang government, Tan Kah Kee said, "If China continues to follow the line of the Kuomintang, it will surely die and decline." Again, it is the struggle against the American Empire. After the full-scale civil war broke out in China, U.S. imperialism successively armed and aided Chiang, which made Tan Kah Kee very angry. Tan

Kah Kee fully realized that the real purpose of the US imperialist aid to Chiang was to make China gradually become the second Philippines. Therefore, in mid-1946, Tan Kah Kee called Truman in the name of the "Southern Overseas Chinese Fundraising Association", in-depth exposing the nature of "the United States' repeated aid to Chiang Kai-shek and fueling the Chinese civil war", and advised the United States to quickly change its policy toward China and withdraw land, sea and air weapons. Subsequently, the telegram was spread by the international community, and it quickly aroused violent repercussions, which dealt a heavy blow to the arrogance of the U.S. imperialists. Since then, Tan Kah Kee has repeatedly criticized the adverse impact of the United States on the "peace and democratic development of the motherland" in his articles, in order to provide support for the Chinese Communist Party to win the war of liberation. Finally, support the Communist Party. Although Tan Kah Kee lives overseas, he always pays attention to China's development and changes, and publicly concluded that "China's civil war is unavoidable", because "democracy" and "dictatorship", such as "fire" and "water", are incompatible. He also explained the value of the Communist Party's ideas and beliefs in promoting the peaceful development of the Chinese nation, and frankly stated that the Communist Party of China would win the final victory in the Chinese civil war. Some Western media were surprised by Tan Kah Kee's remarks in favor of the Communist Party. A local American journalist in Singapore once interviewed Tan Kah Kee: "Why do you believe in communism?" The subtext is why, as a capitalist, Tan Kah Kee supports the Communist Party, is he not afraid of the impact of the Communist Party on his own industry? In the face of such doubts, Tan Kah Kee said calmly: "Before the October Revolution in Russia, he invested all his assets in education, and let everyone come to 'share' his own products."

It can be seen that Tan Kah Kee is a loyal supporter of communism and is also a supporter of the Communist Party. In the process of opposing the United States and Chiang Kai-shek, the friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Chinese Communist Party has been deeply developed and sublimated, and the sublimation of this friendship is also reflected in Tan Kah Kee's blunt advice. In 1948, after the outbreak of the Chinese Civil War, the following year, Tan Kah Kee suggested that the Communist Party build a coalition government against the Nationalist government headed by Chiang Kai-shek. [6] This quickly attracted the attention of the Chinese Communist Party, and received a response in the same year. On April 30, the "May Day Slogan" was officially released, calling on all people's organizations, democratic parties, and social leaders in my country to hold a consultation meeting to jointly build a coalition government. In 1949, Mao Zedong sent a telegram to Tan Kah Kee, inviting Tan Kah Kee to participate in the meeting. Chen Jiageng quickly called back Mao Zedong and agreed to return to China to participate in the conference the following year. In addition, in the relevant correspondence, Tan Kah Kee also put forward many opinions and suggestions, which were quickly responded to.

## **5 Loyalty: The Founding of the Country is Indeed the Sublimation of Communist Friendship**

When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the Chinese people finally became the masters of the country. The overseas Chinese and people of all ethnic groups

were very happy, and Tan Kah Kee was even more excited, because his lifelong struggle and painstaking pursuit of the wish came true. After the founding of New China, Tan Kah Kee held an important position in the central organs of China. Starting from Tan Kah Kee's patriotic philosophy, he did not want to be a high-ranking official, but just wanted to dedicate his strength to the prosperity and development of the motherland. Although the Government Council and the Party Central Committee have repeatedly retained, Tan Kah Kee still politely declined. When parting, Tan Kah Kee said frankly that education is the root of Anbang, the foundation of rejuvenation of the country, and it is his duty and vocation to revive learning. He also said frankly that he would continue to expand Xiamen University and Jimei School, and that by cultivating the pillars of the country, he would contribute to the prosperity of the motherland. Prosperity contributes. In the ten years before liberation, Tan Kah Kee built a 50,000-square-meter school building for the expansion of Jimei School, including commercial, agriculture and forestry, teachers, navigation, fisheries, middle school, primary school, kindergarten and sinology schools, as well as teaching facilities such as lamp factory, hospital, art museum, library, science museum and so on. After the war of liberation, Tan Kah Kee continued to devote himself to education, and vigorously raised funds to expand the school building, and received funding from the Communist Party of China to expand the original school building to 160,000 square meters, including Thousand People Gymnasium, Fu South Assembly Hall and Nanxun Building. At the same time, primary and secondary schools, finance and economics, navigation, aquatic products and other infrastructure have been expanded. In the southern section, a large pool with a total area of more than 100,000 square meters, such as the outer pool and the dragon boat pool, has been expanded. In the east section, the Ao Garden was expanded, and the Jimei Liberation Monument and the epitaph inscription written by Chen Jiageng were erected in the courtyard. The expansion and construction of these important facilities were planned, prepared and designed by Tan Kah Kee, and they were personally supervised regardless of rain or shine. From 1913 to 2019, Jimei School has trained more than 120,000 students, and has trained many captains, engineers, educators, entrepreneurs, experts and scholars. Outstanding achievements in the field have made great contributions to my country's cultural education and economic construction. Tan Kah Kee is not only keen on running schools in his hometown and Nanyang, but also pays more attention to my country's economic development and industrial construction.

In addition to education and revolution, Tan Kah Kee is most concerned about the two major events of seawall construction and railway construction. After the founding of New China, Tan Kah Kee reported his ideas to the party and the government, and received approval from Xiamen City and Fujian Province. With the active support and recognition of the provincial and regional governments in East China, and then with the help of the military and civilians and the government, Tan Kah Kee finally built a 10-mile long sea-crossing long embankment and a railway with a length of more than 700 miles, which were opened to traffic in 1965 and 1955. In 1956, Tan Kah Kee was over eighty years old, but he still cherished his motherland. He took the lead in proposing the construction of the "Overseas Chinese Museum" and pledged more than 100,000 yuan. Due to the effective work and the implementation of funds, the project has been smoothly promoted and carried out. In 1958, the Overseas Chinese Museum with a construction

area of 4,000 square meters was finally completed. After the founding of New China, Tan Kah Kee repeatedly advised to build “railways”, “school buildings”, “sea walls” and “industrial facilities”, which laid a solid foundation for the prosperity and development of New China, and at the same time deepened Tan Kah Kee’s relationship with China. The friendship of the Communist Party has enabled Tan Kah Kee to promote the healthy development of my country’s socialist cause in the process of promoting the prosperity of the motherland.

## 6 Conclusion

To sum up, from the arduous life of Tan Kah Kee, his four historical cross-sections, including “patriotism, learning from abroad, anti-American reunification, and building a new China”, it is not difficult to see Tan Kah Kee’s strong patriotism and his contribution to the prosperity of the motherland. The efforts and dedications made are interlocking and progressively show Tan Kah Kee’s four sincerity of “beginning, fairness, truth and loyalty”. Tan Kah Kee and the Communist Party of China have walked together on the road of exploring national rejuvenation, and have achieved heart-to-heart bond and forged a bond. Tan Kah Kee’s patriotism and concept of home and country are the opportunity for him to know, intersect and embrace the Communist Party of China, and the friendship between them has a historical inevitability. It is precisely because of Tan Kah Kee’s strong patriotism that he contributed to the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the victory of the War of Liberation, and the new China established by the Communist Party has better repay the motherland, build the motherland, and provide Tan Kah Kee support.

It can be seen that Mr. Tan Kah Kee is not only a great patriotic overseas Chinese leader and educator, but also the most sincere friend and critical friend of the Communist Party of China, and the most staunch supporter and supporter of the party’s cause. Therefore, to a certain extent, the friendship between Tan Kah Kee and the Chinese Communist Party is great and sacred, warm and sincere. As a university worker, we should take advantage of geographical advantages, take history as a mirror, carry forward the spirit of Kah Kee, actively promote the comprehensive reform of “three comprehensive education”, accelerate the construction of a high-quality ideological and political work system, and regard serving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as an important mission of education.

**Authors’ Contributions.** This paper is independently completed by Lili Song.

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