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# peranakan MUSEUM

## **Baba Tan Tock Seng's Family Treasures Unveiled at the Peranakan Museum**

**Singapore, 24 July 2008** - The Peranakan Museum today saw the gathering of about 30 descendants of one of Singapore's pioneer philanthropist, Baba Tan Tock Seng. Members of the Tan family gathered from around the world to celebrate the 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. The family unveiled and presented a sixty-two feet long copy of their family tree, detailing the Tans' genealogy. The family has also lent a rare painting of Tan Tock Seng and an old photo portrait of Tan Boo Liat (a great grandson of Tan Tock Seng) to the museum.

Mr. Roney Tan, fifth generation descendant of Tan Tock Seng, commented, "The family tree took us about six years to put together. It contains 1,368 names of family members, and reminds us of our ancestral roots linking back to Baba Tan Tock Seng. Working on our genealogy has also strengthened our family ties, which is evident in our gatherings to commemorate Baba Tan's 210<sup>th</sup> birthday."

Dr. Kenson Kwok, Director, Asian Civilisations Museum (which operates the Peranakan Museum) said, "We are deeply touched by the Tan family's generosity in sharing their family treasures. The Peranakan Museum is not only a repository of artefacts, it also reflects the values of Peranakans who have made their imprint on society. The impact of Tan Tock Seng's contributions to Singapore is still being felt today. In fact, the beginnings of the old Tao Nan School – where Peranakan Museum is currently located – can be linked to the Tan family."

Baba Tan Tock Seng was an influential Chinese leader, and was the first Asian to be made a Justice of Peace by Governor Butterworth. He had a heart for the poor, and was moved to bury the Chinese who could not afford proper burial rites. In 1844, Baba Tan also contributed \$5,000 to the construction of Tan Tock Seng Hospital which was originally located on Pearl's Hill.

Mr. Roney Tan added, "This rare painting of Baba Tan dates back to its 1840s origin and reminds us of his life and work. He came from humble beginnings in Malacca, but rose to become a prominent businessman and philanthropist through diligence and perseverance. We believe that while society progresses, we must carry on the values from our past. We are overjoyed to share our family heirlooms with visitors to the Peranakan Museum."

### **About Peranakan Museum**

The Peranakan Museum is the first to explore Peranakan cultures in the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Malacca and Penang and their links with other communities in Southeast Asia. It is a boutique museum with the finest and most comprehensive Peranakan artefacts in the world. Three floors of permanent galleries illustrate important rituals, practices and material culture of the Peranakans, as well as how this living culture is continually developing.

The Peranakan Museum provides an enjoyable and educational experience for all, from rich displays with innovative interactives to merchandising. Two temporary exhibition galleries will present a programme of special exhibitions throughout the year. The Peranakan Museum was officially opened by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 25 April 2008.

The Peranakan Museum is a National Heritage Board Museum under the Asian Civilisations Museum. For more information, please visit <http://www.peranakanmuseum.sg>.

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