

From drug addict to high achiever

◆ Ang Tan Loong shares how he turned his life around

■ BY CINDI LOO
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STOPEST Sdn Bhd founder Ang Tan Loong is a man of many achievements.

He was president of the Federation of Southeast Asia Fumigators and the Pest Control Association of Malaysia and a Selayang municipal councillor.

However, not many know that behind this man of many achievements, lies a sordid past of drugs and cigarettes.

And now, Ang bares it all in his latest book *From a Pest to a Pest Controller*.

He was born in Ipoh in 1957 to a family of seven siblings.

However, on the day he was born, his father lost his job.

Being superstitious, the family consulted a medium and was told Ang was born to bring bad luck and, therefore, had to be given away.

His maternal grandparents stepped in to adopt the boy and gave him the name "Ah Kee", while also retaining his original name.

They operated a coffee shop at Concubine Lane (now known as Lorong Panglima) but it was not the most ideal place to grow up.

Ang picked up smoking and started taking drugs at the age of 15.

He experimented with *ganja*

and also heroin, and was in a downward spiral until he was arrested.

He was found guilty of heroin possession and sentenced to 18 months in jail.

It was in the cell that he found redemption.

As the Sitiawan Methodist Church was just next to the police station, Ang found himself inside the church on a Sunday.

He was drawn to the song *Amazing Grace*, and as he sang it, tears rolled down his cheeks and he vowed to be clean and no longer think about drugs.

He then checked himself into Grace Home, a Christian rehabilitation centre.

He was there for about three years, before he got out.

In 1988, Ang moved to Kuala Lumpur to start a new life.

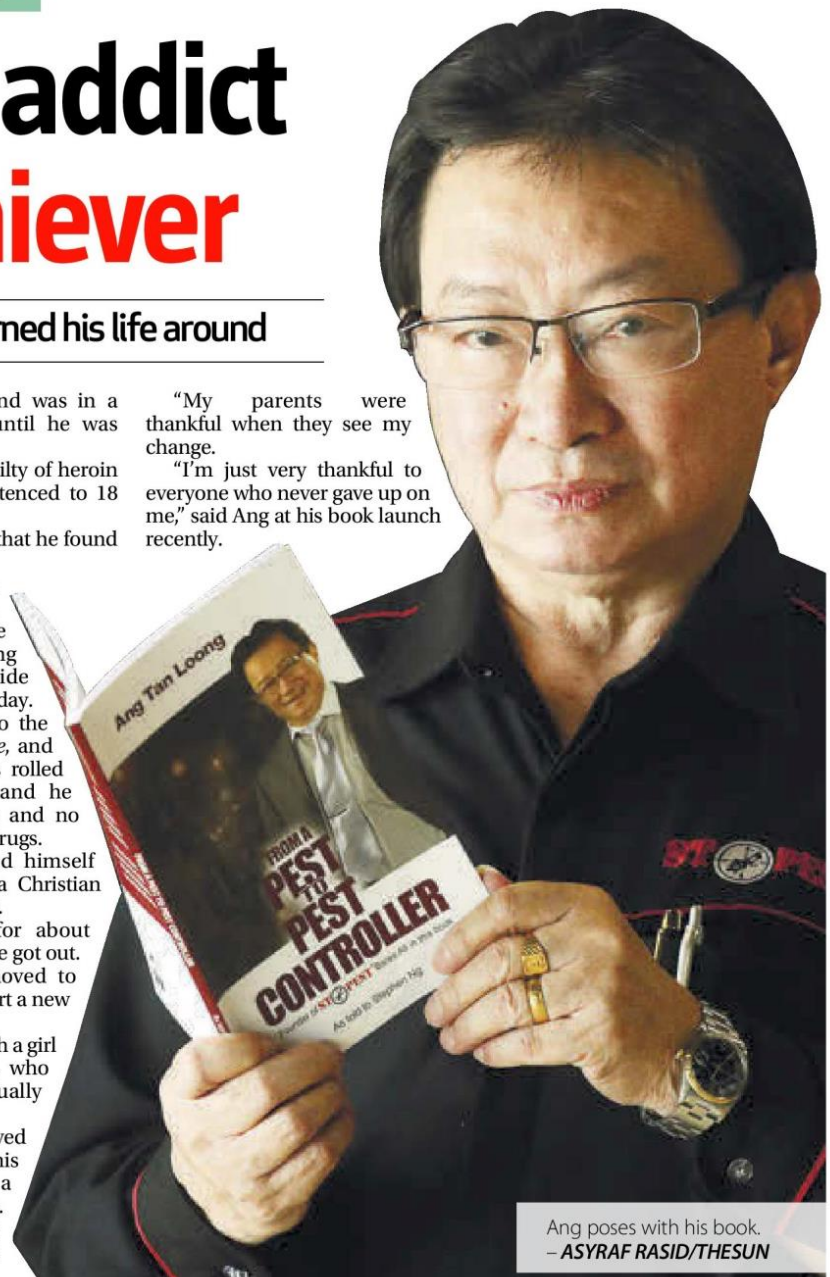
He fell in love with a girl named Rachel Lai, who would eventually become his wife.

He also received blessings from his father-in-law to start a pest control company.

The father-in-law gave him a RM15,000 loan.

"My parents were thankful when they see my change.

"I'm just very thankful to everyone who never gave up on me," said Ang at his book launch recently.



Ang poses with his book.
— ASYRAF RASID/THE SUN

Sharing his journey to inspire positive change in youngsters

By KALAIVANI MURUGASAN
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A FORMER drug addict wants to inspire youngsters to be useful members of society.

Stopest (M) Sdn Bhd founder Ang Tan Loong said he wanted to share his life journey with the public, adding that in life, there was always a second chance.

"This is an opportunity for me to inspire others and tell them to never give up on life.

"I want people to know how I transformed myself from a pest in society to a pest controller.

"From a social reject, God has turned me into someone useful for society," he added.

Tan Loong came up with the idea of coming out with a book about

his journey to motivate youngsters.

He launched the book, titled *From a Pest to Pest Controller*, with his wife Rachel Ang at Dream Centre in Petaling Jaya.

The 55-year-old said he was grateful for the overwhelming support he received from parents who attended the soft launch of the book.

"They (parents) asked me about coping with children who are addicted to drugs.

"My answer is always the same – send them to drug rehabilitation centres and support them throughout the process.

"Parents must intervene when they find out that their children have started to smoke.

"For some youngsters, smoking can be the first step towards

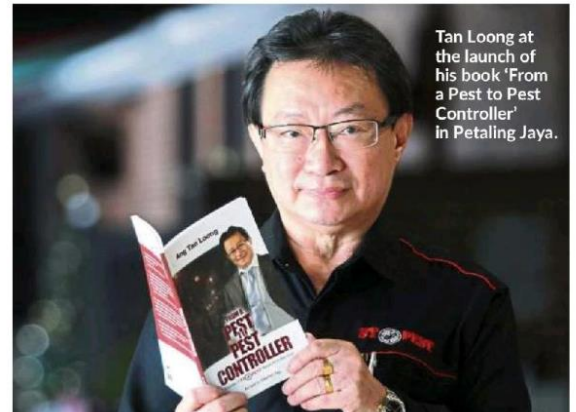
becoming a drug addict," Tan Loong said when met at the book launch.

He thanked guests who attended the event, adding that proceeds from the sale of his book would be donated to two drug rehabilitation centres in Kuala Lumpur, namely Tower of Love and New Creation Centre.

From a Pest to Pest Controller is sold at RM20 at Canaanland Bookshop in Petaling Jaya and Kota Kinabalu.

For information, email info@canaanland.com.my or canaanlandKKstore@gmail.com

The book is also available at Stopest (M) Sdn Bhd in Taman Mega Jaya, Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, and Taman Kota Pendamar in Port Klang, Selangor.



Tan Loong at the launch of his book 'From a Pest to Pest Controller' in Petaling Jaya.

By ROUWEN LIN
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ANG Tan Loong recalls that turning point in his life, when, stuck behind bars, he was moved to tears by the sweet strains of *Amazing Grace* coming from a nearby church.

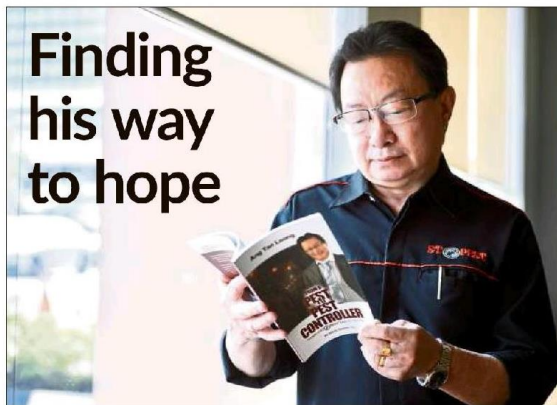
In the book, *From A Pest To Pest Controller*, Stephen Ng tells Ang's story simply.

"It was on a Sunday morning that Tan Loong was awakened by the hymn, *Amazing Grace*... Tears rolled down his cheeks as he sang the song while he was in the lock-up. The hymn... touched Tan Loong's heart and he decided that he wanted to be under God's grace the moment he was released from prison," reads the book.

"Of all that has happened in my life, this encounter in the Sitiawan lockup was the most memorable to me," says Ang.

That's saying a lot, because his life is certainly colourful, to put it mildly. Even his birth was surrounded by drama. His father lost his job as a mechanic when he was born, and a medium advised his parents to give him away to prevent more bad luck.

His maternal grandparents raised him as their own and from a young age, Ang helped out at their coffee shop. His tasks included washing dishes and delivering food and drinks to opium dens.



Ang wants his story of faith and repentance to inspire belief in second chances. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

You don't have to fast forward very far in his life – or indeed, in the book – to find out how he got involved with the wrong crowd and started dabbling in recreational drugs.

In hindsight, it sounds like the Ipon-born Ang sees it as a love-hate relationship, with multiple attempts at quitting cold turkey, only to wander back into those familiar drug-fuelled days and nights.

Hot-headed and quick with his

fists, he was part of the Ngee Heng gang and made quite a name for himself.

But here is a story with an ending that is very different from its beginning, and today, Ang can proudly say that he has been living clean for almost three decades, that he founded a pest control company and is currently helping to raise funds for two rehabilitation centres in Kuala Lumpur, Tower of Love and New Creation Home. Proceeds from sales of *A Pest To*

Pest Controller will go to these centres.

This book is the first time Ang, 55, is telling his story in writing.

"I was previously so busy with my pest control business. When New Creation Home merged with the younger Tower Of Love, I realised that I have been neglecting the drug ministry and decided to tell my story.

"I hope that this book will send a fervent message to youths about the dangers of drugs. To those who are hooked and desire deliverance, there is hope in God, our Creator," he says.

As for Ng, 62, who wrote the book as told to him by Ang, there is no greater joy as a biographer than to put together someone's tale.

He first started writing about his father some 20 years ago, and from there, moved on to the stories of other people, including *Kajang Redemption – The True Story Of Sam Kian Seng*, which was launched last year.

From A Pest To A Pest Controller is Ng's eighth book.

"When the job is done, I feel that I have achieved something. Such books serve to preserve people's legacies. It records part of our nation's history.

"A book will always be in the homes of our children and grandchildren," says Ng.

As for Ang, writing of this book means a lot to him.

It is more than just a telling of his life story, or a cautionary tale. It is also a story of redemption and second chances.

"We are human, we make heinous mistakes in life. We should permit a man a second chance, provided he admits his guilt and accepts the consequences of his crimes.

"For example, if a thief has stolen, the law demands judgement on him. Once he has served his term, we should not stigmatise him but give him a second chance to prove his repentance," he says.

For Ang, this was what made all the difference in the world – it provided a fresh start, a new lease on life and the promise of greater things to come.

From A Pest To Pest Controller will be launched at 11am on Nov 28 at the Dream Centre (No.2, Jalan 13/1, Petaling Jaya). Call 03-4292 2227 (Puan Najwa) for reservations.

From A Pest To Pest Controller is sold at RM20 at Canaanland Bookshop in Petaling Jaya and Kota Kinabalu. For information, email info@canaanland.com.my or canaanlandKKstore@gmail.com. The book is also available from Stopest (M) Sdn Bhd at No.10, Jalan Mega 7, Taman Mega Jaya, Cheras, Kuala Lumpur (03-4292 2227) or 32A-1, Lorong Permai 1B, Taman Kota Pendamar, Port Klang, Selangor (03-3167 1227).