

Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik (President from Sept. 1986 – May 2003)



Tun Ling is an MCA leader noted for his political vision and conviction, a strong believer of moderation and pragmatism. His crisis management capability earned him the reputation of a problem solver of the MCA. Under Tun Ling's leadership, the MCA successfully overcame several crises that truly tested his mettle. He took over the reins in 1986, right after the devastating 20-month leadership crisis sparked off by the existence of phantom membership. The party was at its lowest ebb, morale was low and so were finances. The worst was yet to come. The first test came when 24 deposit-taking co-operatives initiated by the Chinese were frozen by Bank Negara, putting billions of ringgit deposited by their members in jeopardy. The MCA under Tun Ling's leadership fought relentlessly to help the 500,000 depositors in getting a ringgit-to-ringgit refund, bringing a sigh of relief to the Chinese community.

At the end of 1989, another crisis exploded when the bank took action against the MCA over a RM36-million loan. The problem, an aftermath of the 1984-85 leadership crisis, was aggravated by the 1985 recession. To solve the problem once and for all, Tun Ling launched a nation-wide life membership recruitment campaign raising funds and through restructuring of Party assets enabling the Party to resolve its financial problems.

After solving all the crises in the 1980s, Tun Ling concentrated his effort to prepare the MCA for a take off into the 1990s and beyond and joined the government effort in nation building.

To assist Tun Ling's leadership, Insap was set up in 1989 and was given the task to draw up the blueprint for National Unity. The four main thrusts of the master plan were (1) to defuse the differences among the various communities especially among the Bumiputras and non-Bumiputras by ensuring each community is free to practise its culture, tradition and faith to establish a truly Malaysian society; (2) to establish a fair and democratic society which guarantees equal opportunities to all the communities in political, economical, cultural and educational advancement so that none will feel deprived; (3) to create a caring society so that the hardcore poor will get help and assistance; (4) to create a high-tech, progressive and prosperous society which is both vibrant and competitive.

In December 1988, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir set up the National Economic Consultative Council comprising 150 members from various communities. The Council formulated the National Development Policy in place of the New Economic Policy covering the period from 1991 to the year 2000. The NDP laid the ground work for the rapid economic development of Malaysia in the 1990s. The NDP was later replaced by the Third Outline Perspective Plan (2001 – 2010).

Another major contribution by Tun Ling was the launching of the MCA Langkawi Educational Project and the rapid expansion of Tunku Abdul Rahman College. Under the Langkawi Project, the MCA mobilise all its resources in a new commitment to raise the standard of education among the Chinese especially those in the rural areas. Under this massive programme, resources centres with tuition classes and computers were set up to help the needy students. University students were mobilised to help the rural students and parents were encouraged to take extra care in the children's studies.

The Tunku Abdul Rahman College was set up on February 24, 1969 in Kuala Lumpur to cater mainly for Chinese students who did not have the opportunity for tertiary education locally or overseas. In 1991, the Government allocated RM20 million under the Six Malaysia Plan for the college. Under Tun Ling's leadership, a total of RM30 million was raised by the MCA in a series of fund-raising campaigns. This was matched by the Government on a ringgit-to-ringgit basis, bringing the total to RM60 million. Under a massive development plan, the Tunku Abdul Rahman College spreads its campuses to Johor, Penang, Perak and Pahang.

Under Tun Ling's stewardship, the MCA also played a crucial role in the amendments to the Education Act 1961 which guarantees the continued development of Chinese primary schools. Tun Ling's leadership also contributed significantly towards the liberalisation of tertiary education which saw the establishment of the New Era College and the Southern College. Both were initiated by the Chinese community.

The crowning success of Tun Ling's leadership is evident in the outstanding result of the 1995 general elections in which the party won 30 of the 35 allocated parliamentary seats and 70 of the 77 state seats. It is also reflected in the close rapport between MCA and UMNO leadership.

In November 1999, the General Elections' results demonstrated that the MCA under the national stewardship of Tun Ling once again won the support and trust of the Chinese electorate. The people expressed confidence in the BN coalition by voting 28 Parliamentary and 68 State representatives out of the 35 Parliamentary and 77 State seats MCA contested respectively.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1943 | He was born in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. |
| 1966 | He graduated as a medical doctor from University of Singapore. Subsequently, he set up his practice in Penang where he joined MCA as a member. |
| 1974 | He was elected as Member of Parliament for Mata Kuching constituency. He successfully defended his position in 1978 and 1982. |

1986 He was elected MP for Labis. He also subsequently successfully defended his position in the 1990, 1995 and 1999 general elections.

1986 He was appointed Transport Minister. Prior to that, he had held the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government and Federal, Territory, Deputy Information Minister, Deputy Finance Minister and Deputy Education Minister.