

## **Discovery of the remains of TK Kelasau Naan (80) (deceased)**

Thomas Pelutan, the son of TK Pelutan Tiun from Long Sepigen was the one who first discovered the remains of the TK on 17.12.2007.

Thomas (40 yrs old) was on his hunting trip when he discovered the remains of the late TK at the river bank of Sg. Seketa (locally known as Sg Segita) a tributary of Sg. Selungo. The location is close to the river mouth of Sg. Seketa, along the path between the 2 Penan settlements of Long Sepigen and Long Kerong. As it was about half way between the 2 settlements (2 hours walking distance from Long Kerong and about 2 1/2 hours from Long Sepigen), this is where the Penans traveling between the 2 settlements will usually stop to rest before they journey ahead towards the other settlement. It is also a resting place for the Penans from Long Sepigen before they head on for their hunting trip towards Ulu Sg. Seketa. A few farms belonging to the Penans from Long Kerong and Long Sepigen are in the vicinity.

Thomas instantly recognized the “*Talem Ameng*” (traditional Penan necklace of beadwork) which was the hallmark of the late TK Kelasau Naan, amidst a mass of human bone remains.

Almost certain that these are the remains of TK Kelasau Naan as it was known to all the nearby native communities that TK Kelasau Naan was the only Penan who was reportedly missing since 23.10.2007, Thomas quickly went to Long Kerong to inform Udeng Ledem, the late TK’s wife.

5 men from Long Kerong immediately accompanied Udeng Ledem (78 years old) to the site to identify the remains. The late TK’s wife was able to recognize the “*Talem Ameng*”, the sheath (*sarung parang*) belonging to the late TK and his wrist watch. The parang was found missing.

Fearing that the remains may be washed away by the rising river water, they gathered the skull, all the bones remains and the late TK’s belongings and returned to Long Kerong. The Penans from Long Sepigen and Long Sait, and others from nearby Penan settlements were notified and gathered in Long Kerong.

### **The Disappearance of TK**

Nasdie Kelasau (35 years old) said he was told by the mother that she was with the father at their padi farm in Ulu Sg. Seketa prior to the TK’s disappearance. The padi farm was about an hour walking distance upstream from the location where the late TK’s remains were recovered.

“The place where the remains were found was not on the trail to return to Long Kerong,” commented Nasdie.

On 23.10.2007, the parents had completed harvesting their padi and were ready to bring their harvest back to Long Kerong. Then, the late TK told his wife that he would just go and check on the animal traps set at Sg. Pekeket (a tributary in the upstream of Sg. Seketa), the usual hunting ground about an hour's walk from where they have the farm shelter. Leaving the wife to basket the padi, he set out and promised to return immediately after he had checked whether there is any catch to bring back to Long Kerong. Udeng Ledem told the Penan folks that she actually saw the late TK headed towards Sg. Pekeket's way.

That was the last time Udeng Ledem had seen his husband. The late TK did not return that day and the next. Alone in the farm shelter for 2 nights, Udeng decided to return to Long Kerong, on 25.10.2007, to get the others to go and look for TK Kelasau Naan.

Upon hearing that the TK had disappeared, 5 villagers immediately set out to search for the TK, at Sg. Pekeket. (*tempat Jerat*).

Returning a day later and reported that they did not find the TK at the places where they knew the TK usually would set his animal traps, messagers were sent out to inform the other Penan settlements of the TK's disappearance. Almostly immediately, a major search operation was carried out involving a huge party of Penans, from Long Kerong (7), Long Sepigen (7), Long Sait (20) and Long Lamai (5) and they searched for the next 3 weeks. (from the Ulu to the Hilir of Sg Segita and along Sg. Selungo).

During the 3 weeks' search operation, the party had on countless occasions went over the location where the remains were discovered.

"We would have found the late TK's body within 3 days if he had fallen sick and could not walk. The late TK was very familiar with the location and could not have been lost. We are always taught and told, and it was our practice, that if we are bitten by a snake or slipped and broken our leg, we should always get back on to the path where others will be able to find us later. TK also taught and used to remind the younger Penans this before they set out on their hunting trips," said Henry, an elder in Long Kerong.

"Also the smell. We would have found his body if he had died there. But how could it be, suddenly we found only the bone remains," Nasdie Kelasau added, "From the time he disappeared, to the time the remains were discovered, there had been many times the river had flooded. His body or the remains should had been washed away but now we have found most of the bone remains at one place. This is quite unbelievable."

### **Samling had a role in the late TK's Death?**

Martin recalled that for the several months before the TK disappeared, a representative from Samling, Kelabit woman named Sarah (40 years or so) had always visited Long Kerong to talk to the late TK, saying that Samling is offering projects and assistance to the Penan settlement in return for them agreeing with Samling's logging operations and to withdraw their legal action. She had met with TK many times before that. Each time, TK refused to sign the papers she brought.

From June 2007, she did not manage to meet with the TK as the TK had started attending to his padi farm regularly, returning to Long Kerong only during weekends. Sarah was always told that the TK and his wife were at Sg. Seketa farm.

"From September 2007, Sarah had never set foot on Long Kerong again," said Martin.

2 weeks after the TK was reportedly missing, a man Kho Thien Seng (locals called him "Sio") from Long Akah and his relative, known as Siang (also from Long Akah), came to Long Kerong in a helicopter, offered to give RM30,000.00 to Long Kerong community, and strangely they said they do not want anything in return.

### **Police Report**

After the meeting of the Penan from the nearby settlements, Nick Kelasau and Martin were instructed to lodge a police report which they did in Miri on 03.01.2008. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> time the police was notified of the TK's death and the discovery of his remains.

After the report was lodged in Miri, the police officer advised that Nick lodge another report at the Marudi police station which Nick did the following day. Nick had informed the police that he wanted to make the same report as that lodged in Miri. However, he discovered that the police had written that the late TK had died of sudden death (*mati terkejut*). Nick did not check the content of the police report until he was in Mulu, reporting for duties. He said that he will return the police report to Marudi and demanded that another report with the content of the Miri police report recorded.

While at the Miri police station, the police officer asked what Nick and Martin wanted the police to do. Martin said they specifically asked that the death of the TK be investigated.

### **Remains:**

Visibly, the bone (hand) was broken, slanting (picture 10, nick hp, digital)

Henry insisted that the late TK death could not have been resulted from an attack by some animal. He said: “It is impossible that the TK was attacked by an animal and died as a result of it. From what I know, since the time of our ancestors, nobody had died of being bitten by animals. Further, the broken bones cannot be resulted from an animal attack. Why would the animal break the late TK’s wrist watch ?”