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## **GUNUNG TAHAN TRAIL: SOME HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a need for past historical events on trail and mountainous zone of Mount Tahan to be made known to public especially the new modern generation. From the aspect of park and recreation management, such information will assist resource and recreation administrators to efficiently manage the trail, strengthen and enrich the attractions of Gunung Tahan, thus, making it as the most renown adventure tourist destination in Malaysia. Presently, the history of Gunung Tahan and its trail is sparse. Most of the information are buried with the demise of community elders who serve as the repositories of such information. Until recently, there is no serious effort to gather the oral history of Gunung Tahan. This paper is an attempt to gather the history of GTT through a review on records and reports in published journals. From the reviews, oral reports by the locals and information on GTT was made available through exploration's reports recorded by foreign explorers.

### **OVERVIEW OF GUNUNG TAHAN TRAIL**

Gunung Tahan Trail (GTT) located in Taman Negara National Park, Peninsular Malaysia (see Figure 1). Formally, GTT is made up of two main trails; Kuala Tahan Trail (known as old or traditional trail) and Merapoh Trail, also known as alternative trail. Both are popular routes among Gunung Tahan climbers. As reflected by its name, Tahan (which means 'endurance' in English), the old trail is rather challenging and difficult as it promises "wet and wild" trekking experiences. This is because mountain trekkers have to endure the 7 times crossing of Tahan River, climbing 21 hills, conquering 7 mountain tops and plateau ridges before reaching the summit. Among the highest points that denote the trail are Gunung Rajah, Gunung Pankin, Gunung Reskit, Gunung Tangga 15, Gunung Gedung and Bukit Malang (hill complex with 13 hill tops). For normal climber, it takes about seven days to climb up and down from the mountain. The climbing can also be terminated at the Park Ranger's Office of Sungai Relau, Merapoh Pahang (to the west of the TNNP). By the end of 1995, the trail's popularity began to decline when a new trail (Merapoh Trail) at the west of Gunung Tahan and Taman Negara National Park was opened. Besides the two trails, there is another trail to the summit of Mount Tahan, known as Kuala Koh Trail. It is in the State of Kelantan and located to the north of TNNP. It is less popular and rarely used by climbers because of its remote location that promises a long, exhausting and gruelling journey to reach the summit. The whole GTT is located to the north-west of national park administration office, crossing the Tahan Range and ended at Kuala Juram (trail head for Merapoh Trail) at the west of TNNP. Since most of the trail is located within the Taman Negara National Parks, Malaysia, its administration is entirely under the jurisdiction of Department of Wildlife and National Park of Peninsular Malaysia (PERHILITAN). Geographically, 30 percent of GTT is located at the border of Kelantan and Pahang and used as a boundary mark for both states. The history of the trails beginnings and its establishment started 100 years ago, as explained in the next section.



Figure 1. Location of Gunung Tahan Trail, Taman Negara National Park

Based on library research carried out by the authors over two years (2006-2008), not even a single source of reference or literature or document can be found containing complete information on the history of the Gunung Tahan Trail. However, information from old journals dated during the British-Malaya administration, (i.e. Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Journal of the Federated Malay States Museum) contains certain facts regarding the Gunung Tahan Trails. Resources and old artefacts are neatly arranged in the Malaysia National Museum, Kuala Lumpur. Based on the facts stated in the journals, details of Gunung Tahan Trail and relevant historical information was extracted and explained. Although the writers put greater emphasis on historical events of the early explorations around 1800, several other important events were also reported. Among others are the origin of Gunung Tahan name, folklore belief of the mountain, and the proposal made by the British to set up a highland vacation area during the British-Malaya era.

### Origin of Mount Tahan's name

In the past, Gunung Tahan or Mount Tahan had different names according to each local version. In English, Gunung Tahan is known as Mount Tahan. The first European to hear of Gunung Tahan was the Russian explorer, Baron Mikluho Maclay who in 1875 “noticed at some distance a remarkable mountain which was pointed out to me as Gunung Tahan” (Skinner, 1878). Before

conquering the peak of Tahan in 1905, the British explorers preferred calling the mountain by *Great Barrier Mountain* (Skeat, 1908). In the southern area of Pahang, the peak was known as *Gunung Tahan* (Waterstrad, 1902). The name of this peak is known differently by the locals on the western side of the mountain, where they refer to it as *Gunung Rotan* or *Gunung Ulu Tanum* (Scrivenor, 1912). In the northern side of national park, this mountain known as *Gunung Siam*, a nickname given by resident of the State of Kelantan (Skeat, 1908).

### **In the past, Mount Tahan was known as a forbidden area**

In the past, local communities and natives did not dare to climb the peak of Tahan. According to local folklore, it was believed that the peak of the mountain was controlled by cannibal apes the size of a rhinoceros (Robinson, 1908b). It was believed that these giant apes guarded two wells that contained magic stones known as mother veins of all the gold and silver in the country (in Malay it is called “ibu emas” and “ibu perak”), where anyone that owned these stones are able to change things into gold and silver when touching an object (Robinson, 1908b). The old community also believed that the zone around Tahan peak was home for gigantic creatures such as mosquitoes as big as fowls, gigantic serpents and a place for spirits. This strong belief permanently existed in the local community where they believed that the mountain spirits often prevented and made the climber heading towards Mount Tahan lose his way. This was confirmed in an account of 1906 expedition when Penghulu Kakap Husin, a local leader, who was unsatisfied with J.B Scrivenor, a British geologist, because he did not equip himself with firearms as a safety precaution from attacks of the mountain creatures.

### **Proposal for the development of a grand hill station and health centre**

To fulfil the increasing demands amongst the Europeans who wanted to create a home country environment (i.e. England), many Malaya highlands and mountain peaks were developed as hill stations and retreat centres (Aiken, 1987). Hill stations served as health and retreat centres for civil servants, planters, civils, miners and European expatriates. Mount Tahan is not excluded from being chosen as one of those locations. In 1912, Sir Edward Brockman, Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States, and Sir Arthur Young, the High Commissioner of Malaya, led the Mount Tahan Expedition with the purpose of conducting a survey and feasibility study regarding the construction of the hill station (Butcher, 1979). One of the expedition members who arrived at the peak of Mount Tahan expressed his amazement. The view of Mount Tahan reminded one member of the expedition party, “...of the highland scenery in Inverness-shire on the higher rocky grounds where ptarmigans are found...”

The peak of Mount Tahan was first suggested as a health resort by the British in 1906 by a surveyor, J.B. Scrivenor (Scrivenor, 1912). At the moment, hill stations such as Maxwell Hill and Mount Kledang in Perak, Bukit Kutu in Selangor also Mount Angsi in Negeri Sembilan often experience massive crowds and are not able to hold the growing needs of the European community in Malaya. Most of these areas had limited space and extension for future plans such as accommodation and agriculture activities. Besides the hill station in Cameron Highland, the British are constantly searching for new areas with the purpose of agricultural settlement, mainly vegetables and tea plantations.

The peak of Mount Tahan was seen as potentially suitable as a grand hill station because of the plateau area that is level and wide (stretching about 2 square miles) and the abundance of water

sources (Scrivenor, 1912). Today, that area is known as Camp Padang and situated at E 102 15> 20", N 04 35> 51". One construction suggested around Mount Tahan was the construction of a funicular railway up to the summit, beginning at the base and between Bukit Cherual Limestone and the Tahan Range. If it happens, the conditions and facilities would be similar to the facilities in Cairngorm National Park, Aviemore, Scotland. However, the proposal was abandoned due to enormous costs in laying the railway tracks. Furthermore the northern parts of the mountain range lie in the State of Kelantan, which was not part of the Federated Malay States at the time (Butcher, 1979). In the middle of 2001, Mount Tahan once again received the attention of the Malaysian government cabinet. During that time, the Department of Wildlife and National Park, Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP) was asked to identify areas suitable to convert as a highland resort and health centre. Luckily the proposal went silent after considering the implication of infrastructure developments in the environment paper that was presented by the DWNP.

### **The history of mountain explorations at Gunung Tahan Trail**

Even though the purpose of the study focuses more on the physical impact indicator at GTT, things and incidents of the past history of Mount Tahan and GTT will also be investigated more extensively. As a result of study and with reference to selected old articles over 100 years old, the author discovered that the history of mountaineering around Mount Tahan is simply amazing and filled with diverse incidents. Most of this priceless information (published in 1880-1910) was retrieved from documents published by old journals such as the Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and Journal of the Federated Malay States Museum. The author also obtained information on GTT history through written texts from old books regarding British Malaya. Among historical phrases that encouraged the author to unravel more of the early history of Mount Tahan, is this outburst from one of the expedition leaders facing hardship on finding the peak of Mount Tahan 100 years ago.

*..... we decide a dried-up water course; and finding a little water in a hollow, we decided to camp there. There were no large palm leaves to be found thereabout, and so darkness and rain came upon us before we finished our shelter, and we passed a miserable night, wet and shivering with cold, as the rain had put our fires out .....*

(Wasterstrad, 1902: p12)

In the early 1900s, many expeditions were undertaken to Mount Tahan, mainly organized by British and European explorers. The chronology of expeditions is shown in Table 1. Almost all the climbing expeditions that took place before 1905 had the same purpose which was to find a practical route leading to the peak of Mount Tahan. Most of the expeditions begin from the south of the national park which is through the Kuala Tahan Trail. There were many difficulties encountered. Difficulties such as shortage of rations, delivery of rations, thick forest, lost navigation, the weakness of expedition management and continuous monsoon weather were the main factors that lead to failure of most expeditions.

Most purposes of Tahan expeditions in the late 1800s were mainly to identify and find areas of valuable natural resources: for example gold, diamond, silver, copper and valuable plants (i.e. gaharu) and the centre areas for game hunting. At that time, almost every expedition to Mount Tahan was financed by the British Museum in England, even though the success of some of



the expeditions were mainly dependent on the participation of the local communities, especially guides, coolies and local headman. These local community support groups are the backbone for every expedition program and are responsible for ensuring the expeditions logistic runs smoothly. Table 2 and Table 3 are individuals and locals with close connection to the Gunung Tahan exploration history from 1800-1940.

The Tahan Range is considered a sacred area for the local community, but this does not mean that they are prevented from exploring the area completely. There is a high possibility that the area around the peak of Mount Tahan had been visited by a local community. Shamefully, until this very day, proof of local communities conquering the Tahan Summit has not been documented in any Malaysian history. Knowledge of trails to the peak of Mount Tahan could have been long known by the locals especially villagers around Ulu Tembeling areas and a few local explorers that resided in nearby villages, especially in the district of Mount Tahan. The question is; *did the locals or villagers nearby ever make it through to the peak of Mount Tahan before the 1905 Robinson expedition? or did they only step foot on the peak of Tahan during their involvement in a few expeditions sponsored by the British government?* A few incidents and scenarios that occurred in the early 1900s can be considered in questioning the ability and local communities' victory in climbing the peak of Mount Tahan. Among them are:

- i. The Sultan of Pahang had previously sent an expedition to search for the peak of Mount Tahan. Yet, both of the groups failed to complete their climb and were stranded at Teku Goege due to factors such as bad weather (monsoon season) and high water levels. It is believed that the purpose of the expedition was to find treasures such as gold to help develop the State of Pahang after facing a civil war that lasted for 6 years (1857-1863). This war is also known locally as the "War of the Kemaman Men" (Linehan, 1973). There is a possibility that during the time, the guides' knowledge leading towards the Tahan summit was limited to merely Teku Basin (this location is situated on the southwest of Mount Tahan).
- ii. To the rattan collectors, fruit gatherers and local hunters, Tahan Range (this area is located between Teku Basin and Tahan Basin) is a "hidden treasure" and filled with "natural stock". Logically, natural forest zone are rich with various natural resources and are often visited by locals for their food supplies. Usually, entrance and path used are kept secret by these local to avoid rivals for the valuable forest product (i.e. valuable minerals, fruits, latex, rattan and wood) from other groups, especially the foreigners. From information collected through oral history of the locals around TNNP, Tahan Range was known to be the "harvesting areas" since the era of their ancestors. Understandably, even though there is very little written documentation on local people endeavour on Mount Tahan, it is most likely that they have a wide knowledge about mountain trails, and it is almost impossible that they have never been to any peaks in the Tahan Range. In 1912, Scrivenor, a British Geologist produced a profile drawing of the Tahan range during his time at the peak of Cherual Limestone hill, to the west of Mount Tahan. During the time, the process of identifying some peaks was given major assistance by a guide named Yusuf Sulaiman. From the gathered information, another name for Mount Tahan is Mount Rotan, which meant a mountainous area filled with rattan and was often visited by rattan collectors from the western part. In that era, rattan was considered as a valuable and luxurious resource.

- iii. During the 1905 Robinson expedition, a few Malays from Pahang were seen going back and forth from Tahan peak and Kuala Teku (base camp) with great ease to hand in the climbers' progress report to the head of the expedition, H.C Robinson. Among the things reported were the guides latest location and guarantee of them finding the Tahan peak in the near future. They could also recognize the summit closest to Tahan peak, which is Mount Gedong (6,776 feet). It was presumed that during the Robinson expedition, a local group of guides had discovered the real trail leading to the peak of Mount Tahan. There is also a possibility that some of them had been guides during the W.W. Skeat expedition six years ago.
- iv. The willingness of the local guides to show the directions to the Tahan peak in the 1905 Robinson expedition might have been influenced by motivational factors such as luxurious reward/pay (sometimes twice a day) given by the British expedition leader if the guides continued searching for trails and maintained a good relationship with the European explorers and other expedition members. The culture of promising good incentives has been practiced by a few previous expedition leaders such as by W.W. Skeat and H.N. Ridley when the coolies and guides did not want to continue their climb and wanted to go home. From the author's reading, it is clear that guides and coolies often caused problems during the expedition, complaining of tiredness, being disturbed by forest spirits, not wanting to continue their climb and constantly expressing their dissatisfaction with the unreasonable payment (despite in the beginning they agreed with the rate promised). Are these behaviours on purpose or do they have their own agenda? Efforts to stall the expedition is usually recognized by the expedition leaders and dealt by increasing their daily wages. However not all the expedition leaders had the same approach. A different approach comes from J.B Scrivenor, in his 1906 expedition. Besides verifying that there were four Pahang Malay guides who were the first people to arrive at the Tahan peak in the 1905 Robinson expedition (the clause stated in his writing and published in 1912), he also emphasised that ease arrival at the peak of Tahan was enhanced by to co-operation and building a close relationship between expedition members and local people (guides, coolies and local leaders). Among his statements;

*....in 1906, thanks to the timing of the attempt, the lightness of the baggage, the willingness of the Malayans with me....., the ascent of Gunong Tahan was made without serious difficulty being encountered or any hitch occurring with the men. The ascent was in a fact, a picnic...*

(Scrivenor, 1912; p9)

## CONCLUSION

Historical information, myth and local belief presented in this paper is invaluable and can be transformed to recreation and tourism product at Taman Negara National Park Pahang. Interpretation technique implemented through story telling, attractive interpretive panel and wayside may serve as the best options to portray the historical value of GTT. Further studies on the histories of the GTT have to be more aggressive especially if the procedures involve data collection employing oral history method.

Table 1: Chronology of mountain exploration at Gunung Tahan (1875 – 1920)

- 
- 1875 • The first European to hear of Gunung Tahan was the Russian explorer, Baron Mikluho Maclay (one of the earliest Pahang explorers), who *noticed at some distance from Kg Penghulu Gendong, Ulu Kelantan, a remarkable mountain which was pointed out to me as Gunung Tahan* (Skinner, 1878)
  
  - 1880 • The first two expeditions were sent by Sultan Ahmad of Pahang to search for magic stones at the summit. They chose the trail through Tebu Valley and tried to climb the gorge surface, vertically at a height of 1000m. The efforts of these two groups were a failure by towering precipices separating the banks.
  
  - 1884 • Sir F.A. Swettenham, on a visit to Kuala Kangsar in Perak was able to see a new mountain that was situated deep in the north side of Pahang. He reported : *“within a very few minutes of the first sighting of the mountain it was no longer visible, and even the cloud seemed to have merged in the haze of the horizon, making it difficult to believe that we had really seen there a far more imposing height than any I have yet beheld in Peninsular”*
  
  - 1891 • This is a first attempt to climb Gunung Tahan. The expedition was led by the H. N. Ridley with Mr W. Davison, Curator of Raffles Museum and Lt. Kelsall (Australian Army). This botanist expedition never reaches the base of the mountains because of ignorance, poor leadership, short of supplies, inexperienced crews with local condition and bad timing (unfavourable weather and during war in States of Pahang,)
  
  - 1893 • H. M. Becher lost his life on the expedition to the mountain. While escaping from the campsite in the middle of Tahan River, he was stubborn and stood up while steering his boat even though pleaded by the Malays to sit and allow them to handle the rapids. He fell into the rapids when his boat capsized and his body was never found. His colleague (Mr Quin), another European, was able to be saved by the other boat.
  
  - 1899 • W. W. Skeat was the first to get farther than the lowlands in the history of the Mount Tahan exploration and the achievement of his team has become a guide or the opening pathway to following expeditions. This is a part of Cambridge University Expedition to explore the north of Malaya. During the expedition, his porter group buried some durians and rambutan seeds somewhere along the Tahan River (today known as Kuala Tenor) and they also ran into rhinoceroses. In dismay, they went off course to the west of Mount Tahan and got stuck/trapped in between Sg Teku Valley at Teko George. This situation was similar to the expedition sent by Sultan Ahmad, 19 years before. Realizing his mistake, Skeat decided not to return home but made a bold decision to continue the journey and climb the vertical rockface of Teku Goerge and succeeded to arrive at one peak, which was known as Gunung Pankin (1463), which he marked with a flag (“kain batik”). Then they retired back to Sg. Teku and headed out of Kuala Tahan.

1901 Mr. John Waterstrad, was a strong individual and did not easily give up to reach the peak of Mount Tahan and tried to achieve it by going through different routes. First attempts were from south of Sg. Tahan, second expeditions through Ulu Galas, Kelantan and third expeditions from the west of Pahang which was Kg. Pulai. He spent over seven month at the Tahan Range and failed to give a description or proof that he had reached the peak of Mount Tahan. There is a possibility that his climb was merely until the base of Tahan which was between the Tanum river stretch in Pahang and Sg. Relai-Aring in Kelantan. In the first expedition, he constantly got stranded near a waterfall (most probability at Four Steps Waterfall, going far off course to the east of the Tahan peak, or Teku Waterfall at the West of Tahan peak?) and was only able to see two other tall mountain peaks in the north. His climb stopped there because prevented by a deep gully and a rockface mountain plateau that is vertical and wide. The many arguments occurred between him and his coolies and guides were among factors of his expedition failure. Still credit should be given to him for being the first European to try climbing Mount Tahan from the west. Today that trail is known as the Merapoh Trail.

1905 Herbert C. Robinson, Che Nik, Mu'min, Mat Aris and Bulang were the first to reach the summit of Mount Tahan, at 10:15 a.m on July 16, 1905, nearly two months after leaving Kuala Tahan (Robinson, 1908b; Scrivenor, 1912). They ascended by boat along the Tahan River via Berkoh Rapid until Kuala Teku (5<sup>th</sup> camp). A friend of Robinson, Messrs Wray did not make it to the peak of Tahan because was infected with diarrhoea and had to rest at the 6<sup>th</sup> camp (now known as Wray's Camp) and sent out through Kuala Lipis. Total members in the expedition are 65 people. There were 56 Pahang Malays, three Malay servants, four Dayak and two European. With a large number of expedition members and enough food supply, Robinson's guide team succeeded on finding the trail to the peak of Mount Tahan following the signs or flag tied by W. W. Skeat in Mount Pankin 6 years previously (in 1899).

Elevations above sea level were established by means of an aneroid barometer. Although Mr. Robinson had determined the summit elevation to be approximately 7,200 ft, the official figure in 1906 was 7,050 ft. In the following year, Bulang (guide leader in the Robinson expedition) was taken again as a guide in Scrivenor 1906 expedition (Briggs, 1988).

1912 Mount Tahan was rightfully granted its stature at 7,186 ft (Scrivenor, 1912). The figure stands at 7,184 ft today. Survey beacon erected on summit of Mount Tahan.

British High Commissioner, Sir Edward Brockman with Sir Arthur Young climbed Mount Tahan to investigate its potential as a grand hill station and health resort.

Table 2. European explorer and their connection with early history of Mount Tahan exploration.

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Baron von Mikluho-Maclay (1846-1888)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian explorer, naturalist and ethnologist</li> <li>• Active exploring all over Peninsular Malaya. He was the first European to hear and see the Mount of Tahan through binoculars from a far, in the State of Kelantan (northern side).</li> </ul>
Frank Antheistane Swettenham (1850 – 1946)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident General of the Federated Malay States (1896 – 1901)</li> <li>• Among the earliest European to spot Mount Tahan. He was lucky because was able to see Mount Tahan from ‘The Hermitage’, (bungalow in the hill area of Kuala Kangsar in the State of Perak) by using a powerful telescope.</li> </ul>
William Cameron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could see the peak of Mount Tahan from the Main Range, Peninsular Malaysia and estimated height of the “unknown” mountain to be over 8,000 feet.</li> <li>• William Cameron (British Surveyor) and his guide, Kulop Riau discover flat land in the middle of the Main Range in Peninsular Malaysia in 1885, today known as Cameron Highland.</li> </ul>
Ridley, Henry Nicholas (1855 – 1956)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the leader for the first British expedition to the peak of Mount Tahan but met failure.</li> <li>• Botanist and Director of the Botanic Gardens Singapore. He made a collection from a few species of plants growing along the Mount Tahan Trail.</li> </ul>
H. M. Becher (1854 - 1893)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European explorer that died on September 1893 in Sg. Tahan during the Mount Tahan expedition (trying to follow Ridleys path).</li> <li>• Mining engineer and members of the British Geological Society</li> </ul>

Skeat, Walter William  
(1866 – 1953)

- The first British explorer to explore far and nearly to the middle of the peak of Mount Tahan. Yet still going off course to Teku Valley and had to climb up a vertical gorge surface only up to Mount Pankin. One of the names of mountain peak nearby was known as Gunung Reskit, as a sign to remember him. Statement that stated he was missing in 1899 (today the area is known as Mount Reskit) is not true regarding the information found by the author, Skeat died in England 1953.
- His expedition started in the north of Mount Tahan, in the south of Kelantan, moving towards the east of Taman Negara National Park, along to Tembeling River before entering Tahan River and up to Kuala Teku and the climb ended at Mount Pankin. Before the expedition, W. W. Skeat had to return back and forth from Pahang to Kelantan to identify trails and searching for skilled guides and porter. His expedition was exploration of the Malaya forest and mainly sponsored by the University of Cambridge.
- He is an ethnographer and his flag marking (by using a 'kain batik') at the final location of the expedition at the Tahan Range helped to achieve victory in the Robinson expedition six years later

Waterstradt, Johannes (John)  
(1869 – 1944)

- Exploring from the north, east and south of Taman Negara National Park in search of a trail to the peak of Mount Tahan. Claimed to arrived at the peak of Mount Tahan but doubted by H. C. Robinson because some vague information recorded by him at the time. His exploration mostly followed Skeat and referred to wildlife trails (elephant tracks and wild beasts)
- A Danish naturalist. Among the toughest and determined climbers searching for trails to the Mount Tahan peak

Robinson, Herbert  
Christopher  
(1874 – 1929)

- British zoologist, a curator of Selangor State Museum and Director of Federated Malaya State Museum.
- He was a leader to the first group of expedition to reach Mount Tahan in 1905.
- Most of the names of waterfalls in Malaysia is as an honour to him.

Wray (Jr), Leonard  
(1852 – 1942)

- Curator of Perak State Museum.
- A colleague of Robinson during the 1905 Tahan Expedition. He had a case of food poisoning and got stuck at Wray Camp (this campsite was named after him) and had to be brought out immediately to Kuala Lipis (capital city of Pahang during Hugh Clifford administration)

- Scrivenor, John Broke  
born in 1876 and died?
- British Surveyor and geologist. Climbed Mount Tahan, making measurement and determined Mount Tahan height. The information can still be used until today. In dismay, a historical iron eagle (beirut) peak of Mount Tahan built by him in 1912 and be replaced by the national park management with new construction.
  - Exploring many mountain peaks in Peninsular Malaysia to measure the heights and conducting geological research. Until today, still no peaks have been named after him. He was also active in planning and construction of a few hill stations in Malaya.

Table 3. Local people who have relation to the early exploration of Mount Tahan

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|--|---|
| <i>Sultan Ahmad (assumed the title in 1881), also known as Bendahara Wan Ahmad in 1863</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sultan of Pahang who was crowned in 1881, ordered an expedition to the Mount Tahan to find gold and other valuable minerals</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Panglima Garang Yusuf</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penghulu of Kuala Tembeling helped to secure guides, porters and preparation of logistic facility coordinator, for a few British expedition to Mount Tahan especially during the H. N. Ridley expedition in 1891</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Penghulu Bakar</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Penghulu Kg. Pagi in 1899, that help provide logistic facilities and porter during W. W. Skeat journey to Mount Tahan, through the Kelantan – Ulu Tembeling – Kuala Tahan – Kuala Teku route</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Penghulu Kakap Husin</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The famous head villager of Kuala Tembeling – Ulu Tembeling Village in 1905</li> <li>• Assisted the Robinson expedition from aspects of providing skilled guide, porter and base camp preparation in Kuala Teku for conquering the peak of Mount Tahan.</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Dato' To Muntri Idin</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He was in-charge with 10 Malays, preparing the base camp at Kuala Teku and two transit camp on the nearby hills before H. C. Robinson started the Mount Tahan conquering expedition.</li> <li>• Possibly the most reliable/trustworthy person by Penghulu Kuala Tembeling, Penghulu or Panglima Kakap Husin</li> </ul> |

- Dolah and Mat Akib*
- Two Malay men from State of Selangor and became an assistant for W. W. Skeat, starting from to the end of the Mount Tahan exploration expedition in 1899
- Bulang, Mat Aris, Che Nik and Mu'min*
- Guide from a nearby village and the first person to arrive at the peak of Mount Tahan during the 1905 H.C. Robinson expedition. They were the ones who first discovered the connecting pass between Teku Gorge and Upper Tahan towards Mount Gedong- Padang Plateau and next, to the peak of Mount Tahan.  
During the Robinson expedition 1905, many guides and porters gave up the climb and turn back to Kuala Tahan, yet they were still loyal and keep their pace to the Tahan Peak.
- Mat Jeher and Mat Rifin*
- Two guides followed Bulang (head guide) in leading the way for the Scrivenor expedition while doing height surveying works and installing iron triangle at the peak of Mount Tahan in 1906.
- Yusuf bin Sulaiman*
- Guide that brought Scrivenor to Ulu Sg. Tanum and climbed to the peak of Cherual Limestone Hill to see the profile of Tahan Range from the west.
- Dayak People or Borneo Men*
- Remembered to this day for their expertise on tropical rain forest navigation and also popular with nick-named “iban trekkers”. Their services and expertise constantly used in many expeditions in Malayan deep forest by the British government.
  - Assisted on transporting construction material for proposed lodging facilities at Camp Padang, near the peak of Tahan in 1936.
  - Functioned as a guide in the Waterstradt expedition. As plant collectors during the Robinson expedition and worked for the Royal Botanical Garden of Singapore.
- Sakai*
- Natives people and also known as “orang asli” (local name) that live around the national park and played a huge role in assisting the success of a few British expeditions. Consist of Negritos and Batek tribes and familiar with deep forests. Often used as guides or porters.
- Coolies*
- Porters used to lift/carry items and foods during the expedition at the Gunung Tahan Trail in the past. Usually consisted of Malays.



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