

The Story of Nimalak

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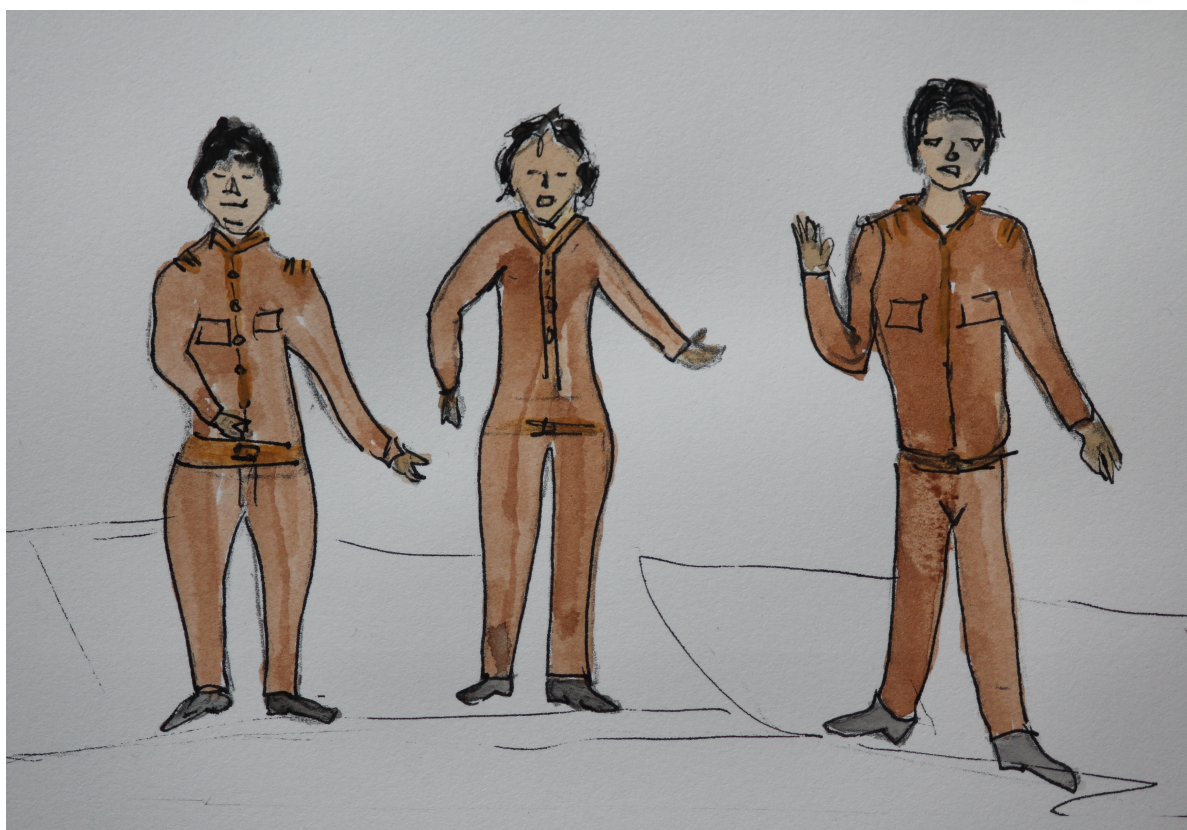
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Nimalak went and camped at his place at Port Keats. These Japanese soldiers had been out hunting Burdekin ducks, and they saw him sitting by his fire.



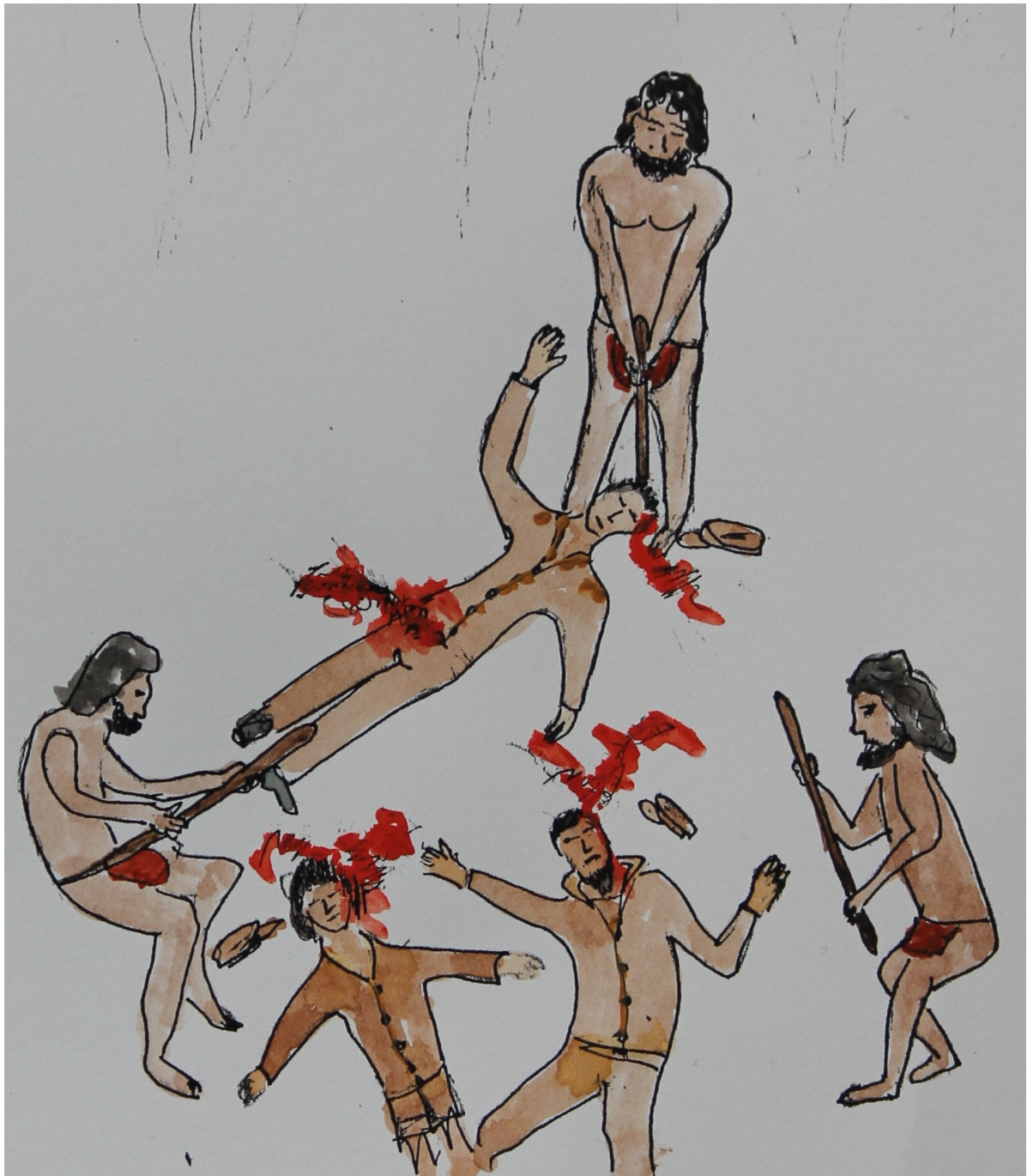
The Japanese said 'Let's go, maybe there's some women there hey!'. They decided to go for the women so they got in that boat of theirs, a big dinghy, and they went over to Nimalak.

They gave him tobacco, sugar, tea, food and rice and they said to him 'We've come for your women'. Then they took three young women by the arm and led them to that big boat and sat them in it. Then when climbed out, each of the men took one woman off, and

they molested them.

Nimalak, was stirred up, getting angry at those Japanese. The women were crying by now. They resisted the Japanese, they stopped them, and got them to take them back in the dingy to where Nimalak was sitting in his camp. Nimalak was really mad now. He said to them 'Let me show you something'. The Japanese asked him 'Show us what?'. 'Let's go hunting for goose!'. 'OK then!' they replied.

And they went, Nimalak and some brothers, together with the Japanese and they caught a lot of geese and they carried them, took them from the billabong and they piled them right up. And Nimalak said to his two brothers, he said to him, 'Each of us takes one of them!'. Then Nimalak picked up a heavy stick and he belted one man across the back of the neck, and each of the brothers did the same.



They hid those three Japanese and Nimalak and the other two brothers went back to camp, to get a knife. They returned to the corpses, and they cut off each one's dick, and shoved it in its mouth. 'It's your fault for coming here and molesting us. If you'd been good, I wouldn't have killed you'. Then they threw the corpses of those Japanese into the billabong. They headed home, but then got back in that big dinghy, and went over to the Japanese's camp. They carried

all their supplies, sugar, rice and rifles back to their own camp.



And those whitefellas back in Darwin, they didn't know what had happened, but they started to wonder about those Japanese. After a month, no-one had turned up. Another month, still no-one. 'Aha, there's something funny going on here' the whitefellas said, they could sense it, 'They might have been killed, perhaps they're dead now'.

Now the local police, they went to check things out, and they found the dinghy. 'Those Japanese must be somewhere around here' they said. 'Right!', they said, 'Let's get in the boat and look around'. They went, and got out onto the bank, and they searched around, and eventually found their camp. 'There's footprints along here', their black tracker said to them, 'footprints of three men, they went this way, they went shooting goose'. Then they got to where they killed them, to where the blood was. The policeman put a blood specimen in a bag and wrapped it up.

The policeman took the blood back to Darwin, and he gave the blood to a forensic doctor. The doctor said to the policeman 'This blood is definitely from a Japanese'.

So they mounted a search party for Nimalak. The Aboriginal men who they questioned at Port Keats all said to them 'Hey it wasn't us!'. But they also said to the policeman 'That man called Nimalak, he's the one who killed the Japanese'. So the policeman from Timber Creek searched for him, together with two other men were working for the police. But Nimalak escaped into the bush. One time they almost caught him but he managed to slip away and elude them. And then the wet season set in, and that brought the search to an end. 'OK, let's leave this for the next dry season' said the policeman.

Next dry season the police resumed the search again and, during this cold season time at the beginning of the dry, Nimalak was careful to always carry bamboo with him, a piece of bamboo, or canegrass. One day the police found him, but Nimalak caught sight of them and took off. The police chased him, but he dived into the river there at Timber Creek, he put the bamboo in his mouth and expelled the water. He moved along underwater, breathing, going along holding the bamboo in his mouth.



The police were waiting along the river bank. The policeman said to the black tracker 'You look for any movement of him'. Nimalak slowly came up a long distance away, he raised himself slowly. 'Ah, I'm far enough away now' he thought, 'I've eluded them. I wonder where those police are now?' After a while the police said 'Lets go back, he's not here. Maybe a crocodile caught Nimalak'.



A while later a man turned up in Timber Creek for tobacco. The police said to him 'So, where have you come from?'. 'I've come from Port Keats'. 'Have you seen Nimalak?'. 'Oh yes I've seen him alive n

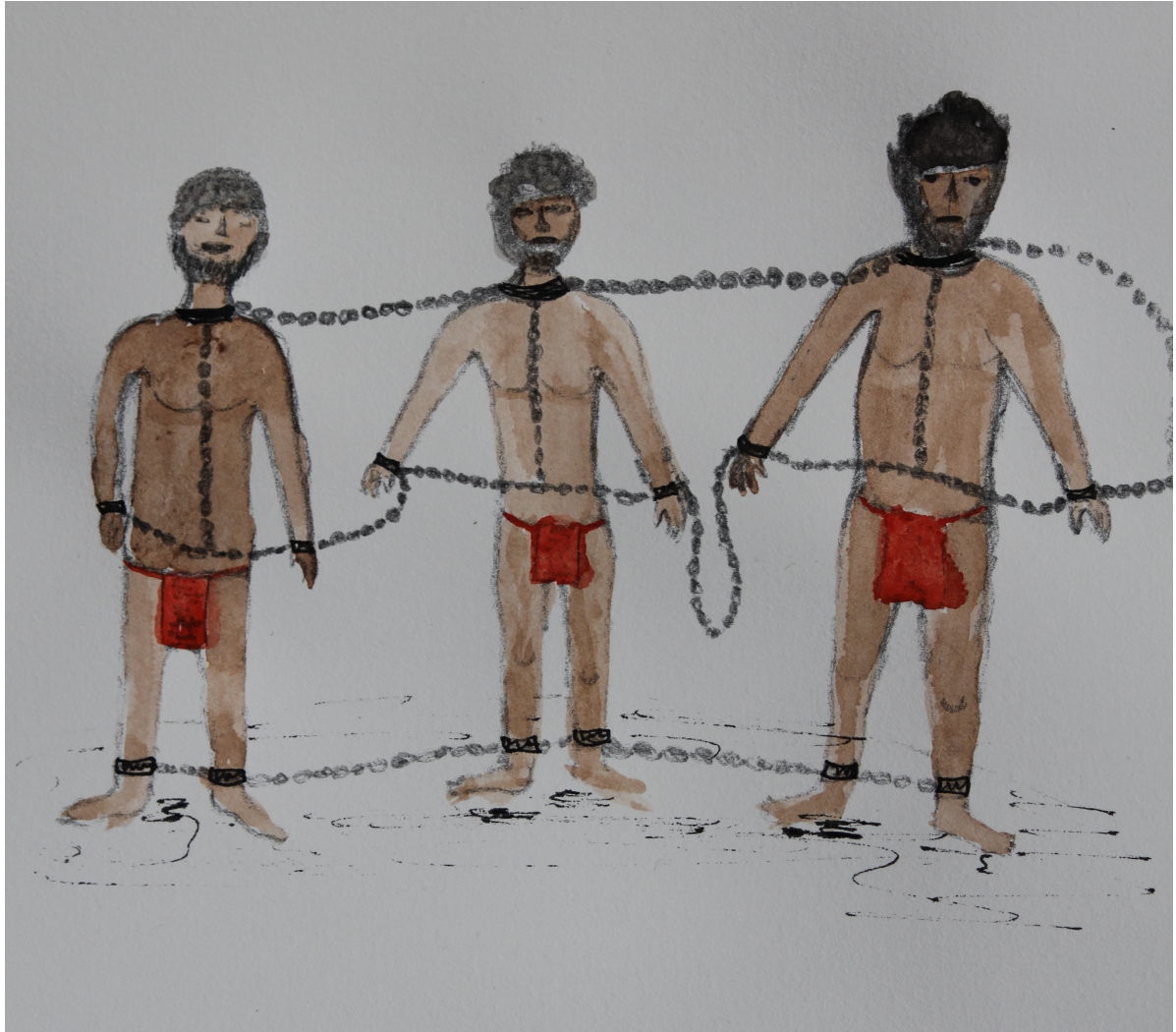
well', he said. So the police said to that man, 'You tell Nimalak that it's all over now. I'm not looking for him anymore, it's OK now'. That man collected his tobacco and food and returned to his camp and he saw Nimalak and said to him 'It's OK now'.

Towards the end of the dry season the police went to Port Keats, to Nimalak's camp, and they said to him, it's finished now. He gave him flour and tea.



In the morning at daybreak, the policeman had chains and handcuffs in his pocket. And in the morning he called out to Nimalak 'Come over here'. Nimalak sat down and the policeman picked up the handcuffs and fastened them to his arms and to his legs. And the

other two policeman went and drove up the horses. And those things, packs, they loaded them on the horses backs. The police picked up long heavy chains and fastened it round his neck. The policeman mounted his horse and started off. He removed their handcuffs and said 'Each of you has to carry this chain'.



They walked in front, the policeman behind. They camped each night. 'How far til Timber Creek?'. 'Up close now'. 'Let's camp here'. They arrived in Timber Creek, at the police camp there. They camped there a night, then he took them off towards Darwin by motorcar. They went to Katherine first, then boarded the train, still in chains. The policeman climbed aboard and he took the chains off.

They eventually arrived in Darwin. They went to the court and the

judge said to him 'You're going to jail, you're going there till you die, you'll never get out!'. He sat there for five years.



Then they had a war with the Japanese. The Japanese dropped bombs on Darwin, and they burned a lot of whitefellas. The police then decided to free all those in jail. The police went to the jail and opened up that thing, his cell, and they said to Nimalak 'It's over now, go back to your camp. And if you see any Japanese, you kill them dead, and we'll give you a medal! Goodbye!' they said to him.