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Oral History Collection

Edward Fung

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: December 21, 1977

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Edward Fung for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on December 21, 1977, in Denton, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Fung in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a prisoner-of-war of the Japanese during World War II. Mr. Fung was a member of the 2nd Battalion, C Battery, of the 131st Field Artillery. This unit is normally known as the "Lost Battalion." The unit was captured virtually intact in Java in March of 1942, very shortly after World War II had begun for the United States.

Now Mr. Fung, to begin this interview, would you just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Fung: Just a brief correction to begin with. I was originally in the 1st Battalion, C Battery, and transferred over to F Battery, 2nd Battalion. I was born on June 20, 1922,

in San Francisco. Educationally, let's see, I quit after my second year of high school to come to Texas to work on a cattle ranch.

Marcello: This sounds like an interesting experience. How did you . . . or why did you decide to go from San Francisco to Texas to work on a cattle ranch?

Fung: Well, it's sort of an involved story. I love horses, for no particular reason except I just like the animals. I wanted to be a jockey, because I was quite small. My mother said, "No, it's sort of a criminal element, and you shouldn't associate with people like that." Besides, I might get hurt. She was always worried about my getting hurt. She was horrified of the things that I did.

So I decided that the only way that I was going to be around horses was to work on a cattle ranch. So the first time I left home, I was twelve years old. They got me back home within . . . let's see, they knew where I was within two days, but they allowed me to work during the summer. So I decided, "Well, if I'm going to make the great escape, I'm going to have to plan this thing," so I waited until I was sixteen when legally I could leave school and hopefully take off far enough away that they wouldn't be able to chase me down at all. But again, I found out later, of course, that they had tracked me down within a week. My father decided, "Well, if he wants to

be on his own, let him be."

So then I just looked around, got a job. As long as you were willing to work, someone was willing to hire you. I started out at ten dollars a month. Even at that, I was over-paid, because I didn't know anything about it. I mean, I didn't know how to saddle a horse or anything. But they were perfectly willing to put up with me as long as I was willing to work.

Marcello: Now where did most of this activity take place?

Fung: Okay, I started out in Midland, and the first ranch I worked at was near Seminole. Well, it's not so small of a town now. Then I worked one winter up in Tucumcari, New Mexico. It was after I had worked at Tucumcari that I come down to Lubbock just to . . . we came down with a load of cattle. I went to eat in a restaurant there, and there happened to be a Chinese owner who asked me would I want to go to work there. I told him, "No, I'm not interested in working in a restaurant."

But then when we got back to the ranch . . . the ranch also raised horses, and the Army came in buying horses. Then I got interested in possibly joining the cavalry. That was another way of being around horses.

So let's see, it was in the spring when we were down in Lubbock, and I went down to the recruiting station, took my test, and they found out I was underage. They said, "Well,

we're going to have to get your parents' consent." So they sent a telegram, and my mother said, "No, definitely not! I will not consent to his joining the service!"

So I found out through a roundabout way that the National Guard was going to be mobilized in November, and practically anyone could join the National Guard, apparently. So I decided that was one way of getting into service without my mother's consent. So that's what I did in May of 1940; I joined C Battery in Lubbock.

Marcello: How old were you at that time then?

Fung: I was under eighteen. That was the reason my mother's consent was required.

Marcello: At that time, how closely were you keeping abreast with current events and world affairs?

Fung: None whatsoever. We had no newspapers and no radio at the ranch . . . no telephone . . . I mean, we were, well, basically isolated. Our nearest neighbor was twenty miles away.

Marcello: When did you say that you enlisted in the National Guard?

Fung: May, 1940.

Marcello: Then it was in November of 1940 that the outfit was sent to Camp Bowie, isn't that correct?

Fung: No, we were mobilized, and we stayed in the Lubbock fairgrounds, I believe, for awhile at the armory. They set up cots and whatnot. I forgot exactly when we got to Camp Bowie . . . some-

where around January.

Marcello: Of 1941.

Fung: That would be '41. I'm not absolutely sure about the date.

Marcello: What did you do during that period between May of 1940 and January of 1941 when you were sent to Camp Bowie? Now again, I'm referring to your activities within the National Guard unit.

Fung: Well, for my own personal living, I started working at the restaurant where this person had offered me a job. I had thought about going to school, but since I was working a night shift, I decided the both was too much. I started training at the armory. I think I became . . . I think number one on the .75-caliber gun crew. That's the one that pulls the lanyard . . . nothing special about it.

Marcello: Now what sort of training did you undergo while you were in this National Guard unit, again, during that period between May of 1940 and January of 1941? Was it simply attending weekly or monthly meetings?

Fung: It was weekly meetings. Let's see, there was, I think, about two weeks in Louisiana during the summer. But after we mobilized, the training was fairly intensive and extensive in the sense that we went through basic training.

Marcello: Where did you undergo the basic training? Is that what occurred at Camp Bowie?

Fung: We started in Lubbock.

Marcello: You started that in Lubbock.

Fung: Yes, right. Well, for instance, we were running around the track with a light pack to get us used to, shall we say, marching.

Marcello: How seriously were the people in the unit taking this training?

Fung: As far as I could tell, not too seriously. I would imagine that they all realized that the mobilization itself had a meaning. But from my own point of view of being fairly naive, I mean, I wasn't sophisticated . . . leaving school and being brought up in a fairly closed society in the sense that I was brought up in a Chinese community, my outlook was fairly provincial--more Chinese than American in a sense.

Marcello: Is it safe to say that the National Guard at that time was more or less as much a social organization as it was a military organization? In other words, it was a way for men to associate with one another and so on and so forth. I don't want to say it was like a lodge.

Fung: It was in a way, and in a way it wasn't. Because I'm thinking specifically of people like Lieutenant Hard, who always wanted to be in the military, who wanted to go to West Point. But since he couldn't get there and had to help out at the farm, why, the closest thing to the military would be the National Guard. He retired as a lieutenant colonel; he stayed in the

service. But you're right in the sense that it was as much a social organization as well as a military organization.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that at that particular time you perhaps considered yourself more Chinese than American. Did the fact that you were Chinese have any repercussions after you joined the unit? In other words, were you accepted as "one of the boys," so to speak? Were there any problems along these lines?

Fung: I never had any problems from the time that I came to Texas in any personal way. I never encountered it; I never even had the feeling. Because you know how it is when many Chinese might . . . maybe no one would take any overt action, but you might have the feeling that something's going on. No, I was always comfortable.

Marcello: This seems to be more or less the same reaction that I got from Frank Fujita, who, of course, was also a member of the unit and was Japanese-American.

Fung: Yes. I knew his father.

Marcello: Is that right?

Fung: I didn't realize who he was, of course, until I met Frank. I mentioned, "Gee, I came across a Fujita in Midland." He said, "That's my father!" (chuckle) But it's one of those things.

Marcello: Now what particular unit was this that you joined there in Lubbock? In other words, identify it. I think we may have

mentioned it earlier.

Fung: Oh, C Battery.

Marcello: It was C Battery?

Fung: It's a firing battery, of course.

Marcello: And it was in the 1st Battalion of the 131st Field Artillery.

Fung: Correct.

Marcello: Then as you mentioned, later on you were transferred.

Fung: Well, we were . . . let's see, we were allowed to volunteer. In other words, all the C Battery officers were transferred to F Battery; that wasn't a voluntary action. But they told the men that if they wanted to go with the officers, they could volunteer, since some of the men from F Battery were eligible for discharge . . . near the top limit of the age or they were married. If they wanted to, why, we could swap back and forth. Since at that time I was in the machine gun crew with Sergeant Miller--and I was quite attached to him--so when he transferred, I transferred.

Marcello: So you went into F Battery then?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Was this also a firing battery?

Fung: Also a firing battery.

Marcello: Did this occur after you got to Camp Bowie?

Fung: This was just before the unit was transferred to going to the port of embarkation in San Francisco.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about your experience at Camp Bowie. What did you do after the unit moved from Lubbock to Camp Bowie?

Fung: Well, I guess as far as I can tell . . . as I say, again my impressions are limited, because I wasn't that interested in the overall operation. Mostly it was training--field exercises, target practice, and maneuvers.

Marcello: Were things being taken any more seriously by this time?

Fung: Not by me, anyway. As far as I could tell, we took our training seriously in the sense that we wanted to be efficient in our work but not in the sense that we were preparing for war. Even when we were scheduled to go overseas, I don't think that most of us were thinking in terms of the imminent world war that was . . . well, actually, it already had begun in Europe. But I don't think . . . this is in no way degrading the men that I was with, but basically most of us were farm hands and cow hands, although the Lubbock group was fairly well-educated. I think the average educational level was like two years of college, which was very high, I would imagine. But I would gather that most people were just of the normal, average rural background. I'm not sure that we were worldly aware. As I said, even when we were going overseas, I don't think that we ever got the feeling that we were being stationed or posted overseas because of any feeling of imminent

danger.

Marcello: Now while you were at Camp Bowie, it was during this period that the unit was detached from the 36th Division. In other words, this was when the Army went from the square divisions to the so-called triangular divisions.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Now was it during this period when the older men and the married men had the option of getting out of the unit? Is this what you were referring to earlier?

Fung: Yes. Yes, right.

Marcello: Also, at this time, didn't the unit receive some draftees?

Fung: I think we had received draftees even long before this, because we're talking about from essentially the beginning of 1941 to . . . let's see, when we shipped out in October probably, somewhere in that time frame. Yes, because we spent Thanksgiving dinner on Angel Island. So there was almost a year that we had been receiving draftees even before that.

Marcello: Okay, so as you mentioned, in October of 1941, you leave Camp Bowie, and your destination is code named PLUM. I'm sure there must have been all sorts of rumors going around as to what PLUM meant or where PLUM was.

Fung: I don't remember that much about it. In the hustle-bustle of getting things ready and packed, why, I personally never gave it much thought. All I knew was that we were headed toward

San Francisco, and I would be home for awhile.

Marcello: I was going to ask you what this would have meant to you, since your point of debarkation would have been San Francisco. Did you get any time to spend at home?

Fung: I managed to get about a couple of days off. As it turned out, I would have been better going AWOL, because no one would have known that I was gone, but I didn't. I regret it because my mother died while I was overseas.

Marcello: By this time, had your mother accepted the fact that you were, in fact, a member of the regular Army?

Fung: Oh, she accepted the fact, but she never liked it.

Marcello: Okay, so you're on your way toward the Philippines, as we now know was the designation of PLUM. You boarded the USS Republic. What sort of a vessel was the Republic?

Fung: As I recall, it was a large ship . . . over 40,000 tons gross weight, I believe. I think there was a plaque on it that indicated that it had originally belonged to the Germans, I believe, and it was part of the compensation of World War I. I remember having a very close feeling when we went below decks. Luckily, I was assigned to a machine gun crew above deck, so I only stayed above decks and didn't have to stay below decks.

Marcello: Did you get seasick?

Fung: Yes, I did. I definitely got seasick.

Marcello: I think just about every Texas boy on the Republic got seasick at one time or another.

Fung: But once I got above decks, well, I was fine.

Marcello: Now you did manage to spend . . . or at least the Republic did stop very briefly at Honolulu on your way toward the Philippines. Did you get a chance to go ashore?

Fung: Yes, I did.

Marcello: How much time did you get ashore?

Fung: I think it was one day.

Marcello: What did you do? Do you recall?

Fung: I remember my first impression of Honolulu was that Coca-Colas was twenty-five cents. I didn't buy one, but that was my first impression, and it has stayed with me until this day.

I had one objective when my mother found out we were going overseas in that direction. My second brother was a merchant seaman, and she said, "Now if you stop in Honolulu, see if you can look him up and say hello to him." That was when I found out the security was fairly tight, because when I inquired after my brother, they wanted to know the reasons why and who I was with. I got no information whatsoever even though I knew the name of the ship he was on. They wouldn't tell me whether it was coming in, if they were coming in, or if it even existed, even though I knew it was coming into Honolulu.

Marcello: I guess then we can interpret this as meaning that the personnel in the Hawaiian Islands were more or less on a wartime footing, so to speak.

Fung: Well, I do remember seeing machine gun emplacements on rooftops. Even then I didn't think anything about it. I didn't place any importance upon it.

Marcello: Okay, so you get back aboard the Republic, and you're again on your way toward the Philippines. In the meantime, Japanese forces, of course, attacked Pearl Harbor and the surrounding military installations. Do you recall what you were doing, what your reaction was when you first got word about the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor?

Fung: I was on machine gun duty. I was coming off duty, and I heard about it. It didn't make any impression at all, because I didn't even know what Pearl Harbor was.

Marcello: How did you receive the news? Was it over a PA system, or was it by word-of-mouth?

Fung: I seem to recall it came over the PA system. Again, as I said, it just didn't make any impression, because I didn't realize what it was, where it was, what it meant, or what significance it might have. All I knew was that everyone was excited because of the fact that we were attacked.

Marcello: What was the talk going around relative to the Japanese?

Fung: Well, the general impression that I can remember was, "Okay,

so we're at war, but we can beat the hell out of 'em in a relatively short time."

Marcello: How long at that time were you foreseeing this war lasting?

Fung: I hadn't given any thoughts about predictions, but I couldn't really see it lasting more than the year. When I heard other men talking about the fact that "Gee, this is going to be a long war, like two years," I thought they were kind of out of their heads.

Marcello: This is kind of a peculiar question to ask you, I guess, but I'll ask it anyway? During that period, that is, around the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, when you thought of a typical Japanese, what sort of a person did you conjure up in your own mind?

Fung: Well, when you ask a Chinese that question, it's like asking an Arab what he thinks of a Jew or vice versa. Traditionally, a Chinese and possibly a Japanese is brought up thinking of each other as antagonists. It's unfortunate, but, you know, that's the prejudice that our parents pass on to us. So ever since I was a little child--since, I guess, the Japanese-Chinese war had been going on since about 1931--why, it was always impressed upon us that the Japanese, of course, are possibly not even of the human race as far as the Chinese were concerned. But as far as seeing a caricature of a Japanese, I never had that impression because I'd been around the Japanese.

So they didn't represent the buck-toothed, horn-rimmed glasses type of thing, because to me they were people except that by my mother's standard, why, we were never supposed to have any feelings, contacts, or friendships with them. Just like we were never supposed to hang around pool halls. After all, you shouldn't even be seen around the outside of a pool hall, much less inside one.

Marcello: Now at this particular point, the ship was obviously diverted and was on its way to Brisbane, Australia. Of course, in the meantime, it did stop off very briefly in the Fiji Islands.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: I assume you didn't have a chance to get off the ship at that time.

Fung: I got off the ship, and I don't remember how. I think it was just the challenge. I think it came over the PA system that no personnel was allowed off the ship. So I decided to just to see whether it was possible to get off the ship or not. I noticed they were loading some vegetables and whatnot on the ship, so I decided, well, if something was coming aboard, there must be a way of getting off. So I think I just went to the dock and waved to the fellows on the ship or something like this.

Marcello: I think they simply stopped in the Fiji Islands very briefly

just to get fresh provisions and so on.

Fung: I think so, but I'm not sure.

Marcello: Incidentally, now after the ship had received word of the Pearl Harbor attack, did its tactics become altered in any way? In other words, how did the routine aboard the ship change?

Fung: It changed, shall we say, to a more war-like manner in the sense that we used to . . . for instance, I noticed the Navy personnel would take the artillery people and show them how to train and track the Navy guns, I guess, in case we were needed. But I remember distinctly that they got out boxes and boxes of .50-caliber ammo, and we were making up gun belts. Then I suddenly realized that "This is live ammo." Then we started learning how to use .50-calibers, which we didn't have. We had the B.A.R.'s. I was thinking to myself that . . . I wasn't thinking in terms of using a weapon in war. I was thinking how it would be to fire a weapon, a live weapon, that is, a weapon with live ammo. I remember they used a tow target on an airplane. I don't believe I even touched it. But just to have the feeling of firing a weapon, that was the thing that impressed me the most.

Marcello: Now I gather at this time, then, since you mentioned the tow target, that the Republic had become part of a convoy, so to speak.

Fung: I'm trying to remember whether it was a convoy right from the beginning or not. I believe it was.

Marcello: Somewhere along the way, you picked up the Pensacola.

Fung: Right, the Pensacola. I remember there was a little sort of a corvette, and we seemed to call it the mail ship. But it was very maneuverable, a very trim-looking vessel. Even though I didn't know anything about ships, I was impressed with the lines of it.

Marcello: Okay, so you ultimately land in Brisbane, Australia. Describe what happens when you get to Brisbane.

Fung: I remember I was loaded down with my gear and almost fell off the gangway. I never even thought about it until later that I would have probably dropped like a rock (chuckle). But someone--I've forgotten who it was now--pulled me back, and I got off the ship safely. We stored our footlockers in a warehouse, marched out to the area where we were going to be bivouacked, the Ascot Racetrack. I went back in 1969 just for the hell of it (chuckle). It hadn't changed. I could walk everywhere that I had walked. We were there for, what, about a week and a half or so? I remember walking around the town quite a bit. So I started from the racetrack when we went back in '69--interesting walking. My recall was pretty good, because I could remember many of the roads that I'd walked. So the town hadn't changed that much.

Marcello: When did you get to Brisbane?

Fung: I know it was before Christmas, because the Australians were very hospitable to us, making us feel at home for Christmas and whatnot. I remember that was the first time that I had come across "Boxing Day"; that's the day after Christmas. For years I've never found out what the tradition was or how it came about, and I'm not sure I know now. But it was a new experience in finding out about different customs of different people.

Marcello: I gather that you did receive a very, very warm welcome from the Australians at this time.

Fung: Yes, the Australians were very hospitable. They haven't changed; they are still the same.

Marcello: I know that a lot of the personnel, or at least a few of the personnel, were invited into the homes of Australians for Christmas dinner. Were you one of those who were so invited?

Fung: No, I was . . . I was invited, but I didn't accept the invitation. I'm not a person with many social graces, especially at that time, and I felt uncomfortable around strangers. But there were some Chinese families there that invited me. Of course, they saw me walking on the road, and they were quite friendly. But again, as I say, I didn't accept the invitation.

Marcello: I've heard a lot of the Texas boys complain about their experiences eating mutton. Was this a problem with you?

Fung: It still is (chuckle). This isn't the impression; this is the recollection. I think it was lunch where the mutton had been cooked in tallow, if you can imagine the combination. Then the whole mess had been cooked ahead of time; or at least by the time we got there, everything had congealed. Even the smell was enough to nauseate me. So to this day, I won't touch lamb. Of course, I'd never touched lamb before that, but this definitely set the whole thing in concrete.

Marcello: In a military sense, what did you do there at Brisbane? Did you do anything?

Fung: I don't recall doing anything, not even marching. I think we had calisthenics and things of that nature, but we were free most of the time. I remember having a lot of free time, walking around.

I remember I got my first Dunhill pipe in Brisbane. I was a pipe smoker at that time; I started a collection of pipes years ago. I'd heard about Dunhills, so I squandered . . . we got a little advancement in pay there. Again, shall we say, my worldly knowledge started up a little bit at a time--the exchange of money and things of this nature. But I remember squandering about two pounds at the time for a Dunhill pipe, which was a pretty goodly sum . . . I guess almost ten dollars. I remember spending a lot of time at what they called the "milk bars" getting milk shakes. I was just generally

having a good time being a tourist.

Marcello: What was your rank at that time? Do you recall?

Fung: PFC.

Marcello: So you would have been making, what, somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty-six dollars a month?

Fung: Thirty-six dollars (chuckle). Let's see, I think it was six dollars for insurance or \$6.50. Then I had an allotment of twenty-odd dollars to my mother; and I had a little spending money. During the Camp Bowie days, why, most of the fellows would go home on weekends, so I made extra money by doing weekend KP for them--substituting or things of that nature.

Marcello: Okay, now from Brisbane--and you didn't stay there very long--you boarded a Dutch transport this time, the Bloemfontein, and you were on your way to Surabaja, Java.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Did they tell you why you were going to Java? First of all, maybe I should ask did they tell you that you were going to Java?

Fung: I don't have the impression of ever knowing or being told; or if I did, I don't remember it. The first place I remember was Port Darwin, and I thought, "Gee, what a town this was!" (chuckle) It was nothing but tin-top shacks and this sort of thing. Even at that time, I didn't know what that was or what relationship that had with the rest of the world. It

was only after we left Darwin, when I got in touch with some of the Chinese crew on the Bloemfontein, that I found out where we were going. Well, they gave me the Chinese name for Surabaya, which is the . . . let's see, literally it's the "Four Seas City." I don't know if four seas intersect that area or not, but that's the Chinese name for it. I didn't know what it meant, but at least I knew it was Java.

Of course, I found out it was handy to be a Chinese in that part of the world, because a lot of the help was Chinese, so you could always get extra meals. I was looking for an extra meal, of course. They were impressed with the fact that there were Americans going to Java, because they thought that with the Americans in the war, why, they should be on the winning side and the war shouldn't last very long. I guess everyone had that idea at the time.

Marcello: Somewhere along the way, you had a submarine scare, did you not?

Fung: Yes. I was on machine gun duty on the top deck, and I heard about it, but I didn't actually see it. I know that we put on a lot of speed; the ship was going very fast.

But my best recollection of Bloemfontein was from the bakery. When you get off of gun duty, you'd go down to the bakery, say, around twelve o'clock, and the bakers would have

hot rolls or bread, and they would slap about a quarter pound of butter in between. That's my best recollection of the Bloemfontein.

Marcello: Were these Chinese cooks, also?

Fung: No, the bakers were Dutch.

Marcello: Okay, so you finally land in Surabaya. I gather you really didn't stay in Surabaya itself very long.

Fung: I don't think so. I think we almost got on the train immediately to go inland.

Marcello: Where'd you go?

Fung: We went to Malang, which was about a hundred miles inland.

Marcello: Now Malang was an old Dutch air base, was it not?

Fung: Singosari was the air base.

Marcello: I see.

Fung: Actually, we went to the air base; it was only later that we went into the town.

Marcello: Singosari was the air base, and Malang was the town.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, so what did you do when you got to Singosari?

Fung: Well, we set up camp. Again, I had machine gun duty, and Steve Miller, my sergeant, was supervising the placement of the machine guns. We had the job of protecting, shall we say, the airfield perimeter. Other than that, why, we didn't have any other duties to speak of.

Marcello: What were your quarters like here at Singosari?

Fung: The quarters were very comfortable, except that in Sergeant Miller's and my case, why, we bivouacked by the gun. Later on, we found a house that was abandoned by the Dutch civilians, and we moved in there. That was after the bombing raid, because I remember shattered glass and whatnot that we had to sweep up.

Marcello: Now after you go to Singosari, in fact, shortly thereafter, some units from the Philippines came in there, did they not? I'm referring to the bomb groups--the 6th, 7th, and 19th Bomb Groups or remnants of those bomb groups.

Fung: Yes. The 19th I remember distinctly, right.

Marcello: Now in what way did the unit cooperate with these Air Corps squadrons that were coming in?

Fung: Well, they came out with the barest equipment and personnel. I believe the mechanics were allowed to bring tools, and that was all. So the field artillery people were helping out with maintenance, gassing up, arming the weapons, and, I guess, in any way that we could help. Some of the people were taken on as gunnery crews.

Marcello: Was this strictly voluntary?

Fung: Yes, strictly voluntary. I requested it, because I was small and I thought maybe I could be used as a tail gunner or belly gunner. But my request was never taken up; I don't know why.

Marcello: Did those air groups come in there with B-17's?

Fung: Yes, they were B-17's, and, as I recall, they were C-models. It was only later they got the D-models, because C-models didn't have tail guns, I don't believe. They got replacement aircraft, and I heard that Colonel Eubank, their commander, was quite put out because the replacement pilots would be coming in to a grass field, and they would wreck some of the airplanes, and he was very perturbed about it. But, of course, we were somewhat elated because we finally got our .50-calibers; we salvaged the .50-caliber machine guns from their wrecked aircrafts and mounted on them. So then we had .50-calibers instead of the B.A.R.'s, which we still used.

Marcello: Now on February 5, 1942, the first Japanese air raid occurred.

Fung: February 3rd.

Marcello: February 3rd?

Fung: It's engraved in my mind (chuckle).

Marcello: Okay, recall what you can of that first air raid.

Fung: Well, I remember I was near the guardhouse, and there was a concrete culvert running around by the side of the road. The first thing I did, I ducked into the culvert.

Marcello: What sort of warning did you get about the raid?

Fung: Oh, there seemed to be plenty of warning; we knew ahead of

time. I didn't begin to get scared until I saw the aircraft. They were fairly high, actually.

Marcello: Were these high-level bombers?

Fung: Well, yes, they were two-engine bombers. I would guess that they were high-level in the sense of, what, 8,000 or 9,000 feet at least. I didn't even see the strafing of the Zeroes, I guess--the aircraft that came in strafing. But when we saw the aircraft coming in to strafe, I ducked down into the culvert.

Marcello: Now did the strafers come in before the two-engine bombers?

Fung: They came in before and during, yes. I guess that was to keep us occupied, not realizing that we didn't have any anti-aircraft weapons at all. But I remember Felepe Rios; he's a fellow in the outfit, and he was an older man. I believe he was about forty, forty-five at the time. He was carrying a Springfield, and he said, "Eddie, get out of there and use your B.A.R.!" He said, "What are you doing hiding under there?" All of a sudden I realized, you know, I had a job to do. So I started using a weapon, but I was still in the culvert. It was only afterwards when I realized that any bullets which were fired from the plane would have been going down there like a bowling alley (chuckle). But at the time, I thought it was the safest place.

Marcello: In other words, you were firing out of one of the open ends

of the culvert.

Fung: Yes. Let's see, the second raid, I believe, was on the 10th, and I was with the machine gun. I'm trying to remember when . . . somewhere along the line, the gun crews had dug in the .75-calibers in deep pits so that they could get a steep firing angle. Now it was either during the first raid when they did fire at extreme range . . . no, they can't . . . okay, during the first raid, I believe the aircraft came in at a fairly low level, because the French .75-calibers could reach them, so they had to be something like 7,000 feet. The second time they came in high--more like 9,000 or 10,000 feet--because the guns could no longer reach them,

But I remember distinctly the second air raid. I was at the machine emplacement, and as soon as I saw the aircraft, I ducked into the foxhole. That was when I learned my first lesson of war from Miller, who was an ex-Marine. He looked down to me, and he said, "What are you doing down there, Eddie?" I said, "Those planes are coming at me!" He said, "How do you know they're after you?" I said, "I don't care!" I said, "They're coming this way!" So he said, "Well, come on up here." He was like a man coaxing a puppy. So when I got there, he said, "Now what's your job?" I said, "I'm a machine gunner," He said, "You can't fire the machine gun from down there. You stay up here." So he said, "You may

as well learn now that this might be a long war." He said, "You've got a job to do; you may as well learn how to do it." So I said, "They're bombing!" I said, "They're going to come in here and bomb us!" He said, "No, they're probably after the airfield." He said, "But the thing is, you've got to be up here to know what's going on." He was looking at the airplanes all the time . . . bomb bays were open. About that time, he said, "Now you can duck in the foxhole," because he had seen the bombs being dropped, and they were after the camp . . . or at least what they thought were the gun emplacements. The first time they came in, they worked over the airstrip and the dummy airplanes and some of the B-17's that they got. The second time, why, they were after some of the guns that had been doing the firing the first time.

Marcello: What did you find worse--the bombing or the strafing?

Fung: Strafing.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fung: The noise. Because with the bombs, they could be far off. Except the second time, I remember, even in the foxhole I could hear and feel the concussions; you could just feel the bombs getting closer and closer. After the bombing raid, why, we found shrapnel sort of all over our area.

That was when I found out you don't get scared until afterwards (chuckle). During the excitement, you don't

think about it, that is, if you're doing your job. That was when I found out that . . . I don't know how to put it. The Japanese took three and a half years out of my life, but the experience that we went through--not with just the Japanese--I profited from it all my life; I mean, I'm still using it. I mean, when Miller taught me that, okay, there are things you have to be afraid of, but then you have to learn what to be afraid of, when to be afraid, and what you can do about it. If you can't do anything about it, relax; I mean, don't get all keyed up. These have been valuable lessons, I mean, not just in war but in just everyday living. I mean, the fact that I've been associated with men like that who have been able to teach me something and that I've been able to learn from them has been probably the most valuable thing in my life. I mean, schooling is valuable in teaching you a trade or profession, but, I mean, people can teach you about life. I think that's the most important thing in the world.

Marcello: Well, I guess, being in a stress situation as you were constantly for three and a half years would force one to "roll with the punch," so to speak, and accept certain things.

Fung: I'm a fairly stubborn person. I wasn't willing to accept many things, but I learned from other people that there had to be "give-and-take."

Marcello: Well, you have to cope with this stress situation, or you can't survive.

Fung: Right. But as I said, it was during that bombing raid when Miller really started teaching me things . . . that soldiering was nothing more or less than a trade; that you learned the trade and did it well; and survival is something that you don't think about. He said, "Don't worry about dying or living or getting hurt. Do your job. What happens during and afterwards, that'll come." He said, "But don't worry about it." He said, "It's probably not as bad as you think even if you get killed." He said, "Thinking about it is not going to help any."

Marcello: Is the reality of war now beginning to sink in as a result of these bombing raids?

Fung: No, not really. Because even then I was thinking in terms of, "Okay, you've got in the first few blows, but surely the U.S. can defeat the Japanese in the matter of a year--no more."

Marcello: How much damage had these air raids done to the base?

Fung: Not very much. I remember some of the living quarters had sustained some damage and whatnot, but no real damage.

My biggest impression of the first bombing raid was a personal catastrophe. I had ingrown toenails; I still do. I remember I had a special pair of nail clippers, and they was in the side pocket of my ditty bag. During my excitement

of running for shelter, they had dropped out of the ditty bag. I retraced my steps, and I could never find them. My biggest concern--my biggest personal worry--was, "My God, how am I going to handle my ingrown toenails!" (chuckle) That's how narrow my views were.

Again, I hate to digress like this, but it's really pertinent--it was because I realized how narrow my views were that I made a determined effort after the war that if information is available and it's open information, you can learn from it; it's there for you to take; there's no need for you to be that way. I mean, that's not to say that I'm that well-informed now, but at least I try to be. Again, it's the things that you learn and profit from and by.

Marcello: In the meantime, what sort of relationship has developed between the Dutch and the Americans here at Singosari?

Fung: I remember a friendly competition we had in setting up . . . no, let's see, it was with the British . . . setting up guns.

Marcello: There were British here at Singosari?

Fung: Yes. I remember they were nearby. I can't remember exactly; it was twenty-pounders . . . they wouldn't say "pounders" . . . but the calibrated equivalent was close to our .75-caliber. They were quite proud of their weapons as any soldier is of his weapon. So they decided to have a little friendly competition of setting up guns. We had the split-trail .75-calibers, and

we could set up in a matter of . . . I think less than a couple of minutes. With their weapons, why, it took them a lot longer.

The only other thing I can remember about the Dutch was that they had some light armored vehicles which they were very proud of (chuckle), and Miller decided, "We're going to show you what kind of armored vehicles you've got." So he told them to park their vehicles out near an open field, and he opened up the .50-calibers, and he just cut a bunch of holes in them (chuckle). He said, "Now that's what the Japanese can do to you, too."

Marcello: Did you ever get used to these air raids?

Fung: Yes, I finally got used to them in the sense that I didn't panic and run.

Marcello: How many occurred altogether?

Fung: As far as I can remember . . . I distinctly remember three. But when you talk about the relationship between the Dutch and the Americans, I remember I heard about a situation that Miller and Sergeant Jones had in town. They were in a restaurant, I guess, having a few drinks and lunch. The incident, as I recall, was the fact that some of the Dutch officers carried swords. I guess it got down to the fact whether the Dutch officer could draw the swords faster than Miller could throw out his .45-caliber sidearm (chuckle).

I remember that the Dutch backed off from that one.

Marcello: Do you recall when the Japanese landed?

Fung: Landed? No. Let's see, I'm trying to remember when we left Singosari and started towards that area toward the western end of the island. It had to be probably around the early part of February; that's my impression.

Marcello: Now I do know that it was on February 27th that the bomb groups left for Australia. Do you recall that incident?

Fung: I heard about it, but that's all. I heard that Colonel Eubank offered Colonel Tharp the opportunity to fly out all the troops. He thought he had the capability of doing that. I believe, as I heard, Colonel Tharp turned it down, because his orders were to stay.

Marcello: I wonder what that did to the morale of the men who were left behind?

Fung: As far as I could tell, nothing, because I don't remember anything being said about it.

Marcello: Okay, now after the Japanese do land in February, I guess, of 1942, the unit is on the move. Is that correct?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: What do you do in this period after the Japanese land?

Fung: Well, as I recall, we were doing a lot of . . . we had a lot of time on the road. To tell you the truth, I don't even remember what directions we were going.

Marcello: Well, evidently, you were going in all directions, were you not?

Fung: That again, as I say, that's my impression. We had no definite objective, it didn't seem.

Marcello: I've heard it said that they wanted the units to march in all directions to give the Japanese the impression that there were a large number of troops on the island when, in fact, there really weren't.

Fung: Maybe it was,

Marcello: Now during this constant marching or moving, did you have any contact with the Japanese at all?

Fung: One. When I went as a machine gunner for Lieutenant Stensland, who was attached to our unit. He got separated from his unit, and he attached himself to our unit. He was a forward artillery observer. We were by a river with an Australian unit, and he was directing fire. Apparently, the Japanese located his position and started mortar fire, and we pulled back a little bit. That was the only time that I can remember. We did not have intimate contact; it was just firing contact.

Marcello: Okay, now on March 9, 1942 . . .

Fung: March 8th, as I recall.

Marcello: On March 8, 1942, the surrender comes down.

Fung: Right.

Marcello: Where were you and what was your reaction when you heard about

the fact that the surrender orders had come down?

Fung: Okay, I can't remember the exact location, but I remember it was around breakfast time when I heard it. I remember all the fellows seemed to be kind of depressed. I don't know but for some reason I just made a little remark about that I was the only one that had a Chinaman's chance of getting through this, and that kind of helped lighten up the atmosphere a little bit. But I guess it was the apprehension of what might happen or how the Japanese might react.

Marcello: Had you heard the rumors that the Japanese did not take any prisoners?

Fung: We had heard the rumors, and, of course, from my own personal background, why, I was anticipating the worst because of the Nanking atrocities and the things that they had done in China.

Marcello: I've heard it said that some of the men were kind of ashamed over the fact that they had to surrender.

Fung: Yes, I guess there was that general feeling, because I guess nobody likes the "short end of the stick." Again, I think we also had the feeling that we hadn't done enough, even though we didn't have anything to do it with. But you still have a feeling that you didn't do a good job. Maybe that hurt as much as anything.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens at this point?

Fung: At this point, we hadn't seen the Japanese yet. We had orders,

and I think later we had orders to move to an area near Bandung--the Garoet Racetrack--and we set up a bivouac area. I think it was quite awhile before we saw any Japanese.

Marcello: Now in the meantime, is the unit still intact?

Fung: Yes. At least F Battery is. I mean, we are speaking of the battery?

Marcello: I was speaking of the entire unit.

Fung: 2nd Battalion?

Marcello: Yes.

Fung: Okay, as I recall now, E Battery was toward the Surabaya direction, so in my terms I'm only speaking of F Battery.

Marcello: After the surrender, you proceeded almost directly then to Bandung.

Fung: Yes, the Bandung area.

Marcello: In other words, you didn't spend any time at the tea plantation. Some troops, I know, spent some time at a tea plantation.

Fung: No. No, we were at several places until we kind of settled down there.

Marcello: But it wasn't until you got to Bandung that you actually had contact with the Japanese?

Fung: As I recall, right.

Marcello: Describe these initial contacts after you get to Bandung.

Fung: I remember that we came by sort of like a staff car. I didn't know the ranks or anything. I don't even know what they did,

but I remember that was the first time I saw them. Since we were kind of camped or bivouacked in an irregular way, why, I didn't know what was going on. But again, I was apprehensive of what might happen or how many more Japanese were coming. As it turned out, it was a relatively small number; I'd say, it was under, what, five or six.

Marcello: What did you do there at Bandung in the meantime?

Fung: Nothing that I can remember. We were just waiting to see what we were supposed to do.

Marcello: By this time, had you discarded your arms or anything of that nature?

Fung: No, we had not. I think part of the orders were that we were not to destroy our weapons. I've forgotten when it was that the Japanese came by to collect our weapons.

Marcello: Well, describe your first contacts with, shall we say, the common Japanese foot soldier. What did they look like? What did they do?

Fung: Well, let's see. My first contact would have to be at . . .

Marcello: Was it here at Bandung?

Fung: No, it was not. My first contact would have been when we were going to Tanjong Priok--our first camp. I had mixed impressions. Some were quite friendly, and some were--shall we say--not friendly. But as I recall, they never tried to take any of our personal effects. The only impression I have was that

they didn't look very soldierly.

Marcello: I understand they were rather scruffy in appearance.

Fung: Yes. The overall impression you get is that they weren't neat. They didn't have the demeanor of a soldier, but on the other hand, they must have done something right.

Marcello: Now at this stage, were they doing a lot of shouting and pushing and hitting and things of that sort? Or did that occur later?

Fung: I guess it's like any soldier performing his duty. He does a lot of gesturing and whatnot, especially when there's no common language or line of communication. But I don't remember any abuse at all.

Marcello: Now as a Chinaman, are you trying to remain as inconspicuous as possible at this time?

Fung: No. No, I never . . . I knew right off the bat that there's no way to remain inconspicuous, so the thing to do was to be as natural as possible.

Marcello: Did they single you out at all during this initial phase?

Fung: There were some inquiring looks at least. I got into trouble very early with the Japanese. Because I could write Chinese, I found out that the Chinese and Japanese use common symbols in both languages. It became increasingly difficult to explain to them how a Chinese who claimed to be an American could write Chinese (chuckle). So I decided early in the

game that the thing to do was not to try to communicate whatsoever unless they made the advances. If they inquired, fine; answer the questions as clearly as possible.

Marcello: Were they kind of curious as to how somebody of Chinese extraction was in the American Army?

Fung: They were. Because again, their soldiers were no more sophisticated than ours. I mean, the average GI is just the average GI. Some of them were very curious; some of them were downright belligerent, because some of them had served in China, and I guess they had been abused (chuckle). Or maybe they had been on the "short end of the stick." But those people would treat me as a Chinese; they didn't care what uniform I was wearing.

Marcello: Now did they identify you or single you out as Chinese almost immediately, or did it take them awhile to discover the fact that you were in fact Chinese?

Fung: No, the . . . it's only when you go out with these small working parties when, say, a Japanese guard made notice all of a sudden, like, "My god! There's a Chinaman!" (chuckle) But when you're with the battery, say, a hundred people, you don't really stand out that much.

Marcello: To use the racial expression, I guess, all Americans looked alike to the Japanese.

Fung: Yes, I would imagine . . . as they seemed to look all alike to

us.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that your first camp was at Tanjong Priok.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Describe what this camp looked like from a physical standpoint.

Fung: Well, of course, to us it seemed very primitive. But they were adequate shelter; they were basically open huts, you might say. Oh, I would guess maybe . . . I know at least a hundred people were in a hut; it seemed very crowded, though it was sanitary. Of course, we had to learn to live in the crowded conditions. I remember that the British were doing the cooking. They had fifty-gallon drums. I guess no one had any experience with cooking rice. It would be burnt on the bottom, pretty well done in the middle, and completely undone on the top. I don't think, at that particular camp, they ever got the knack of cooking rice, so it was a pretty terrible experience at that time of eating rice.

Marcello: How large a camp was Tanjong Priok?

Fung: I don't remember exactly. I would say at least a couple of thousand--something of that nature.

Marcello: From what you've said, I gather that there were several nationalities here.

Fung: I distinctly remember British, Dutch, American; and we had Gurka Indians, because I remember how gutsy they were. They

demanded--they did not request, they demanded--heat flour from the Japanese to make _____, because they would not eat rice. I thought to myself, "My god!" I'd heard stories and I'd read stories of Indian troops, but this was the first time I had ever had any personal experience. I was thinking to myself, you know, I mean, what kind of men these really were. I mean, after all, here most of us were at least apprehensive, and there they are demanding what they felt was right and due to them. And they got it (chuckle).

Marcello: What sort of relationship developed between the various nationalities here at Tanjong Priok? Were you more or less segregated from one another?

Fung: I don't recall that the segregation was formal; I think it was just natural that the Americans stayed together. As I recall, the relationships were very friendly; there was no competition. I think it was just a matter of feeling that you were kind of all in the same boat. There was, as I recall, none of this British superiority or airs of superiority.

My greatest impression of that camp . . . there were two impressions aside from what the Gurkas did. There was a fellow there that spoke--he claimed--twenty-six languages fluently; he was an Indian fellow. To me, of course, that's

incredible. Not knowing any languages, of course, I couldn't tell whether his claim was true or not, but some of the people who knew languages said, "Yes, he is fluent." The other one was that they distributed some cheese that had not been cured just right. But I scrounged all I could get that people didn't want, because as far as I was concerned, why, starting right there, food was going to be food.

Marcello: Was food a problem here in Tanjong Priok?

Fung: It was in a sense that it wasn't prepared properly.

Marcello: Of what did the food consist?

Fung: I can remember rice and . . . it was mostly rice and stew or a thick soup, if you wish.

Marcello: Were you getting enough in terms of quantity?

Fung: I couldn't think . . . I don't remember any meat, but there were plenty of vegetables. In terms of quantity, yes, at that time I got plenty, because a lot of the fellows were not willing or able to eat rice. You could still buy or scrounge other things, I remember distinctly. But since I was raised on a rice diet, I didn't have any problem. So I know distinctly that I had more than enough food there.

Marcello: Aside from the cooking itself, what was the quality of the rice like?

Fung: The quality of the rice was rotten. It was not what we

would call polished rice. It was about half-polished. I knew that it was good for us, because from my own experience, when a Chinese person gets sick, he no longer eats polished rice; he eats brown rice, which has the covering on it where most of the vitamins are. I remember a neighbor of ours had gotten sick, and they had cooked the rice, and the smell was much stronger; it was different. It is not a pleasant smell because of the covering, but we know that it is beneficial in terms of health. So I knew that the half-polished rice was better for us in terms of obtaining more vitamins and roughage, of course.

Marcello: Now did it have any worms or anything like that in it at this stage?

Fung: I don't remember at this time. There were . . . oh, what do you call it . . . little fat grub type of things, but at that time, I was still picking them out. I remember I was still finicky, because that was my first encounter with . . . "protein" in rice (chuckle). But I could never convince the British . . . I tried to teach them how to cook the rice. I cooked a small quantity to show them that it could be done. Of course, with fifty-gallon oil drums, it's quite difficult. I can appreciate their problems.

Marcello: Are you getting fed three times a day?

Fung: I don't remember the times. No, I don't.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do here at Tanjong Priok?

Fung: There were mostly . . . we started out with oil drums. They've got to be around sixty gallons or so. They were different from our usual forty-five or fifty-gallon drums--much larger. We had to load and unload these things off of, oh, two-and-a-half-ton trucks. That was where we found out that it was going to be a lot of muscle work.

Marcello: Was this pretty hard work?

Fung: It was hard work and, in a way, dangerous, because if the drums got away from you, why, they could roll over your toes or crush fingers and whatnot.

Marcello: What were you doing with these drums?

Fung: We were loading and unloading and just shifting them about in warehouses.

Marcello: And this was all non-machine labor, so to speak.

Fung: Yes. The other thing was unloading or loading ships with hundred-kilo bags of sugar and rice and things of this nature?

Marcello: Were you doing any salvage work at all?

Fung: No, not that I can remember. It was mostly loading and unloading ships.

Marcello: Did you have a chance to scrounge or trade or steal any extra rations while you were on these work parties?

Fung: Yes, this was when I found out from the British about

scrounging. Of course, I was kind of apprehensive at the beginning, because I was afraid of being caught by the Japanese, and that would definitely single me out. So I decided I had to learn the craft of scrounging. But there were all sorts of things available. I started learning to scrounge anything that was available regardless of whether you needed it or not, because someone would be able to use it.

Marcello: I guess ultimately every POW became a scavenger, so to speak. You picked up anything that remotely might have been of some value somewhere down the road.

Fung: That's right. Whether it was a piece of string or an old rusty nail or something more valuable, but everything had--you learned--had some use or would be of some use.

Marcello: Did you have any contact with the natives while you were on these work parties?

Fung: Once in awhile, you would . . . I didn't speak any Malayan at all, so everything had to be done with sign language. My contact would be mostly with the Chinese. They were quite sympathetic. They could help you in whatever way they could, but they didn't have much either. At least they could take your money, and they were freer to walk about and go, say, into a native area and buy things for you.

Marcello: In a lot of these areas in Southeast Asia, the Chinese communities are rather prosperous, are they not?

Fung: Oh, yes, they're called the "Jews of the Orient." Well, again, there are some very wealthy Chinese and very poor Chinese, but as a rule they manage. For instance, I know at the Garoet Racetrack, when the Japanese, of course, didn't supply us with food, I used to go into small towns and ask the merchants, you know, to sell us their canned goods. Because at that time, what they were doing, they were hiding their goods so that they wouldn't be confiscated. So we managed to get enough supplies to keep us going without any problems.

Marcello: Now this occurred while you were at the Garoet Racetrack?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Was this prior to going to Tanjong Priok?

Fung: Yes. Right. Because the mess sergeant was getting a little leary of the supplies that were just being used up with no way to replenish them.

Marcello: What sort of relationship did you have with the Japanese on these work details?

Fung: Three ways. One way, they would leave you completely alone, you know, as they treat you like any ordinary American soldier. The other one would be mild curiosity--what are you; who are you; why are you? Then the third one was the one that I came to fear the most. This is the guy that'll come up to you and start beating the hell out of you simply

because you're Chinese.

Marcello: Did this occur here at Tanjong Priok?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Do you want to describe this incident or some of these incidents?

Fung: I didn't realize what was happening. I was just doing my job when all of a sudden I felt a bash on my head.

Marcello: What did he hit you with?

Fung: His fist (chuckle). Luckily it wasn't the butt of a rifle. After it was over, I found out from his friend that they had both been in China and apparently he didn't like the Chinese. This other guy wasn't affected the same way. So you never know how anyone's going to react. But as I said, there was no way to hide yourself, so the thing to do was you had to take your chances.

Marcello: You said that you never knew how these guards were going to react. Am I to assume, therefore, that it was best not to try and to get too close to any of these guards?

Fung: I found out from personal experience that the thing to do was just . . . if they made the advance, fine. If not, just stay away from them.

Marcello: Did you find a lot of physical harassment taking place here in Tanjong Priok?

Fung: Not too much as long as you were doing your work. The

harassment came because of the lack of communication. It's kind of like an American tourist in Europe; you know, you get the feeling that if you talk louder, maybe the natives will understand English. I guess they had the same idea that if they yelled loud enough in Japanese, then you would get the idea. Again, as I said, I became stubborn. I made it a point not to learn any Japanese. What I was afraid of, if I learned any Japanese at all, that I would have to become an interpreter. The middle man is definitely not the place to be. But really, in terms of what we had anticipated and our apprehensions, it wasn't really as bad as it turned out.

Marcello: What were the bathing and the sanitary facilities like here at Tanjong Priok?

Fung: That was a problem, because there wasn't that much water in camp except for drinking. So you had to do your washing, say, after the work party had completed its job or while you were out on a work party if you could find the facilities. But most of the Americans stayed pretty clean.

Marcello: How often would you get a chance to take a bath?

Fung: We tried to get . . . well, since this is a closed interview, we tried to get a "whore's bath" every day at least, because that's usually about the best you could manage.

Marcello: How long were you at Tanjong Priok altogether?

Fung: I'm trying to remember. It had to be . . . let's see,

March . . . maybe three months, because we went into Bicycle Camp. I know we went into Bicycle Camp probably somewhere around June. I know it has to be before July the Fourth, because that's when we signed the papers. So my impression would be like two-and-a-half, three months.

Marcello: That's probably right. I think you went into Bicycle Camp in May of 1942. So that would have been March, April, May-- three months, like you say, that you would have been at Tanjong Priok.

Fung: I can only give you impressions. I'm terrible on dates.

Marcello: Now in May of 1942, you are moved from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp. Is this unsettling? That is, I would assume that during this three-month period, you perhaps had gotten into a certain routine; you know what to expect. Now was it unsettling to move?

Fung: It was. It's amazing how quickly one adapts, because it was "home." It was leaving "home" and not knowing where the new "home" was. I recall the worst thing that happened during that whole move was the fact that we had to walk quite a distance with all our gear.

Marcello: In the meantime, did the Japanese try and humiliate you before the native Japanese during this period as you marched from Tanjong Priok to Bicycle Camp?

Fung: I was not conscious of what they were trying to do. I was

more concerned with my personal efforts in trying to keep up with the march with the load that I had.

Marcello: What sort of gear did you have?

Fung: Well, we're talking about a full duffel bag, and I actually had two; I had that much personal gear. My main concern was to, if possible, get it to the next camp. I don't know why, because actually I had more than I needed. But it was hot, and my main concern was, "Boy, stay on your feet!"

Marcello: How long did this march take altogether?

Fung: I can remember it probably lasted about three hours.

Marcello: Were the Japanese harassing you during the march?

Fung: I don't remember being harassed at all.

Marcello: Okay, you get to Bicycle Camp. What is it like from a physical standpoint?

Fung: Bicycle Camp was a very impressionable area. I guess it must have been a formal military barracks or something. I guess we learned later from the Dutch that they were more like stables or something. But they were well-built barracks in large . . . oh, well, let's see, the huts would be maybe 50 x 150-type dimensions. I remember they were a lot of cubicles, and we had about four men in each cubicle. There was a large concrete veranda, as I recall. There were latrines of the Dutch-type. There was a wide sort of a

separation like a courtyard between buildings.

Marcello: You say the latrines were of the Dutch-type. Could you explain that?

Fung: Well, our first encounter, of course, was in Singosari when we plugged up the plumbing. Because being Westerners, why, we were used to using toilet paper, and the Dutch used water bottles. Of course, the first thing we noticed when we went into a latrine was that there were literally raised footprints made out of ceramic-type things. But they would be . . . if you were standing at a urinal, the footprints would be pointing toe-out, so in other words, you were supposed to squat down. But we didn't know what the footprints were for. Naturally, the sanitation system would be plugged up within an hour. We never did learn to use water bottles. Eventually, why, we always managed to keep the plumbing system going one way or another.

Marcello: Was bathing a problem in this camp? I'm kind of trying to compare or contrast it with Singosari.

Fung: As I recall, I had no problems with bathing or water facilities there at all, and I can't remember exactly how it was set up. We had no bathing schedules, so there must have been a pump or some sort.

Marcello: At this stage, what is the state of discipline within the unit?

Fung: Okay. The first thing I remember about Bicycle Camp is that you had to walk by a guardhouse. So right off the bat, we realized that this was going to be somewhat of a formal camp. Even in Tanjong Priok we went through, but it wasn't a regular encampment. It was just something that they put together or someplace they were using temporarily. Bicycle Camp seemed to be a permanent installation.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had to walk by the guardhouse. What do you mean by that?

Fung: Well, I mean that there were regular guards. I mean that there were, what, three or four guards on duty at all times. For instance, you had to salute and this sort of thing. In other words, there was formal checking in and checking out. I mean, we were searched going in, for instance. You were not supposed to have any scrounged material, so you had to utilize many devices to hide things.

But when you mention camp discipline, why, we were still in formal military units, although people were beginning to split up into little groups. I mean, we weren't kept in batteries or squads or anything like this. We just clumped together more or less in personal preference.

Marcello: Little cliques begin to form, so to speak.

Fung: You might say, yes. You might say that.

Marcello: I'm not referring to antagonistic cliques but certain people

of like interests grouped together and looked out for one another.

Fung: Right. Yes. Because after all, like the Jacksboro boys, which F Battery is composed of. They grew up together; they probably worked together; they socialized together. So it was an easy transition. The Lubbock people probably stayed together.

Marcello: You are still obeying your officers and things of this nature.

Fung: The officers were more or less living in separate . . . well, of course, they always do. I remember there was a storehouse. We still looked to the officers for orders and directions.

Marcello: I guess the officers were acting as the middle men between the Japanese and the enlisted men. Is that correct?

Fung: That's right. They were the buffers.

Marcello: In other words, orders came from the Japanese to the officers and then down to the enlisted men?

Fung: Right. As I said, they were the ones who took the abuse when the Japanese wanted us to sign the loyalty oath.

Marcello: Let's talk about this incident, because this happened very shortly after you got into Bicycle Camp. You're referring to the pledge whereby you promised not to try to escape.

Fung: You might say we were signing up with the Imperial Japanese

Army. We were to be under their direction, obey their rules, and promise not to escape. I know that it happened for several weeks prior to July the Fourth, although I had only heard rumors about it, that the officers were being cooped up, locked up, abused, threatened. The Japanese were probably trying to make the officers sign first, and then naturally the enlisted men would sign. The officers were putting up, apparently, a terrific resistance. They were being led by the Australian colonel. The officers set a very good example for the men.

Marcello: So what ultimately happens to this Japanese attempt to get you to sign this non-escape pledge?

Fung: Well, as I recall, they threatened to start shooting the officers unless we did sign. Of course, this would have been a good way to get rid of all the officers, but we just didn't have that much against them. So it was decided that we were signing under duress and that we'd go ahead and do it. At that, the officers were the last to sign just, I guess, as the last show of defiance to the Japanese.

Marcello: When all this happened, how much were the men actually thinking about escaping?

Fung: I don't think there were any . . . maybe the Dutch, perhaps, who had lived there and knew the conditions. I mean, where do you escape on an island unless you had a ship of some

sort of a sailing vessel? So I think at that time there were practically no thoughts of escape.

Marcello: In other words, you can't get off the island, and you can't really mingle with the local population on the island, either, if you did escape.

Fung: Right. Because I had one opportunity. After the surrender, there was a Chinese family in the Bandung area that offered to take me in.

Marcello: Where was the family located?

Fung: Near the Bandung area when we were at the racetrack area. They said, "We can take you and hide you out, and you can be one of our family. Surely one more Chinese in the community wouldn't be noticeable." But I guess I had the funny feeling that I should stay with the unit. Besides that, I would always know that I was an outsider. I didn't speak Dutch; I didn't speak Malayan. I spoke some Chinese. Besides that, the family would be in jeopardy. So I mean, if I'm going to be in jeopardy, I may as well stay with my own group, you know, with whom I can relate to.

Marcello: Now what sort of treatment are the Japanese giving to the prisoners here at Bicycle Camp?

Fung: It was, as I recall, good for awhile. The work parties were going out, and we were just doing regular work. I remember distinctly the first working party that we went out to from

the Bicycle Camp was down to the docks again in the Batavia area, and Lieutenant Hard was in charge of the work party. We went down and we went lined up on the dockside, and when he found out that we were going to unload ammunition, he told us to stand fast. He was speaking to the Japanese officer, and he said, "According to the Geneva Convention, we cannot work on military projects." The Japanese officer didn't say a word to him--to Lieutenant Hard--but he spoke to his soldiers. They set up machine guns on each end. He looked at his watch; he said, "I'll give you five minutes." Lieutenant Hard, I guess, had to make the decision, and within a couple of minutes he decided.

Marcello: When the Japanese made threats like this, they weren't bluffing, I gather.

Fung: You couldn't take the chance, because, after all, they did have the upper hand at the time. I'm not sure that I would like to even call a bluff like that.

Marcello: It was the same way with escape attempts. I'm sure that they told you what the consequences would be if one did escape and were caught.

Fung: I don't recall at that time. It was up in the jungle that they started putting us together and saying, "Okay, if one man escapes, the other ten will die," and this sort of thing. But this time, I don't recall that they have made any threats.

Marcello: Are they giving out a lot of physical punishment here at Bicycle Camp in terms of hitting and kicking and gun butts and things of that sort?

Fung: No. As I say, in the beginning--the first couple of months--it was pretty good, but all of the sudden they changed Japanese officers. That was when all hell broke loose. But during the first couple of months, it was very good, I would say, because living conditions was good; food was adequate; sanitary conditions were good; work parties were not too strenuous. The work was hard but not overly demanding. You know, once you get used to carrying a hundred kilos and you learn the knack of it, it's not really all that bad. But when they . . . I can't remember the name of the officer that we changed to, but he instituted very regimented camp rules--this business about standing up and saluting any guard who came through anytime of the day or night and this kind of thing. This was when it became uncomfortable.

Marcello: Are they still using Japanese guards? You have not had to encounter Korean guards?

Fung: At least for awhile, yes. I remember it was in the Houston sailors' hut where the five Chinese stewards were bivouacked or billeted. I was talking to them one day when a Japanese guard came through, and we all stood up and bowed. All of a sudden this guard started working me over something

terrible, jabbering away all the time . . . couldn't understand a word he was saying.

Marcello: Was he hitting you?

Fung: He was beating the hell out of me (chuckle)!

Marcello: With his fists?

Fung: With his fists. I couldn't understand why. So after he got through--I guess it took him about ten minutes--he gave me a contemptuous look, and he walked away. Yu Kan, one of the stewards . . . and I was crying, and I was mad, and I couldn't figure out what was going on. I felt humiliated as hell. So finally, Yu Kan told me, he said, "He was trying to be friendly. He was speaking to you in Mandarin," which is a northern dialect, and I only know a southern dialect. He said, "The more he tried to talk to you, the more you just stood there not saying a word. He thought probably that you were trying to snub him. He just got mad and started beating on you, and the more he beat on you, the madder he got."
(chuckle)

Marcello: Did he hurt you very much during this encounter?

Fung: The bruises didn't hurt as much as the feeling of humiliation. In fact, that was the first time I ever missed a meal. I missed supper that night, because I just . . . it just hurt inside to be treated that way.

Marcello: What was the food like here in Bicycle Camp?

- Fung: It was good. I remember the Chinese mess stewards were doing a lot of the cooking, and it was well-prepared.
- Marcello: So the rice became much more palatable here at Bicycle Camp.
- Fung: Oh, yes. No question about that. We're still able to get food supplements. As I recall, there was an area that Wright was in charge of that had canned goods and things. Every opportunity we had, the officers would give us money. Everyone who went out on work parties was given money to buy things with, and then he'd bring it back to camp, and they would put it in the storeroom.
- Marcello: Where was this money coming from? Was it part of the company payroll or what?
- Fung: There's some stories about that, and I've never gotten the straight facts of it, but part of it came from Lieutenant Stensland, who had something like a quarter of a million dollars that he was supposed to have been using to buy supplies with to get to the people in the Philippines. When he got cut off from his unit, why, he turned it over to the senior officers in our outfit.
- Marcello: Well, Stensland, then, was not originally in your unit.
- Fung: No, he was not. I believe he was from a unit someplace in the Midwest somewhere.
- Marcello: How did he get with you guys? Did he come over with the bomb groups?

Fung: No. I don't know exactly how he got with us. He told me later that he was on a secret mission to buy medical supplies and ammunition and try to get us from the Dutch East Indies to the Philippines. When that became impossible, why, he decided to attach himself to an American unit and turn the money over to a senior officer.

Marcello: Now what sort of food are you getting here besides rice?

Fung: Oh, we're getting some . . . we even got canned fruits, canned meats, which they made up into stews. As I said, it was very well-prepared.

Marcello: Are you getting enough in terms of quantity?

Fung: Yes. As I recall, we were getting a goodly quantity. We even have spare time, because the fellows were making up models of ships, and all sorts of hobby crafts were going on.

Marcello: Were the work parties voluntary, or were you assigned to work parties?

Fung: They were more or less assigned, although, I suppose, you could have volunteered. If you didn't mind the work, just being outside, being in contact with other people, seeing other people, and having the opportunity to scrounge was enough incentive for you to want to be on a work party.

Marcello: Now at this stage, I assume that everybody's health is fairly good yet.

Fung: Yes, as I recall. Some of the sailors were in a lot worse

shape than we were, but generally speaking, why . . . there was sick call. I mean, for instance, I remember Lieutenant Burroughs from the Navy and Lieutenant Commander Epstein and, of course, our Captain Lumpkin, they were taking sick calls. They had, I guess, adequate medical supplies at that time.

Marcello: You say you guess they had adequate medical supplies. I assume, therefore, that you never had to attend sick call or anything of that nature here at Bicycle Camp.

Fung: That's right. I was very fortunate. Then the only thing I can remember distinctly was that I was damned glad that I had lugged my two barracks bags full of clothes, because it turns out that the sailors had no clothes to speak of. So what we did, we found people of our size and stature, and we just gave them what we had. That's how friendships more or less started to begin with.

Marcello: You've made reference on several occasions to the sailors. Of course, you are referring to the survivors from the sinking of the USS Houston. Were they already in camp when you arrived there?

Fung: Yes, they were already there.

Marcello: Describe what they looked like when you saw them for the first time.

Fung: Well, of course, to us, we didn't know they were Americans.

Of course, they spoke like Americans, but they looked terrible. They didn't even look like tramps, because they didn't have clothes, to speak of.

Marcello: Were they still covered with oil and things of that nature?

Fung: No, it wasn't anything like that. It was just that they didn't have any clothing, and whatever they had was just pieces or remnants. I guess they were lucky to have those. Most of them were barefooted. Of course, hat coverings was incidental, but in terms of shirts and trousers, they didn't have any. So naturally, the first thing we did was . . . I mean, even before we got settled, I remember that it was almost spontaneous once we found out that they were Americana that we just started grabbing stuff out of our barracks bag and walking across the courtyard to their barracks and just finding someone who fitted our clothes and shoes or whatever we had extra.

Marcello: What could you do for recreation in this camp?

Fung: Oh, I remember there was volleyball, boxing matches--things of this nature.

Marcello: Was there very much time for recreation?

Fung: There must have been, because I remember there were some well put together camp shows. Tex McFarland put on a very good camp show. Let's see, I can't remember this lieutenant that . . . Navy lieutenant . . . he's a captain returned . . .

but he recited "Dan McGrew" from memory. As I said, there were all sorts of show productions put on. Each unit . . . like the Australians might put it on one time, the Americans one time, and the Dutch one time. So they had a good stage area, and they made up props and backdrops.

Marcello: Are you still on rather friendly terms with the British at this stage? I single the British out particularly, because I've learned from my interviews that most of you guys ultimately came to hold the British in quite a bit of contempt.

Fung: I don't remember that there were that many British there. I remember the Australians . . . or maybe it was just because I stayed away from the British. But the reason that we eventually built up a contempt for the British troops was the fact they behaved much differently than the Australians. They didn't try to keep clean as much as the Australians. They seemed to be more unruly, and I don't know if it was because of diverse backgrounds. But the Australians and Texans hit it off immediately because they were almost exactly alike, except one spoke with an Australian accent and one spoke with a Texas accent.

Marcello: I'm sure that everybody becomes hygiene conscious and vitamin conscious, so to speak, by this time.

Fung: Yes. It was in the jungle area when you noticed that the British . . . some of them . . . you can't generalize, but unfortunately we all do. Some of the British troops would have scabies, you know, just because you don't keep your skin clean. They had lice in their hair. You know, when you see this sort of thing, you know, it just puts you off completely. There was no reason for it, because you could always manage a wash before you'd come back from a workday. That was what we couldn't understand about them. That's one reason, aside from the superiority airs put on by the British officers. I guess it's because they came from a different class of people at that time.

Marcello: How hard did the Japanese work you here?

Fung: In terms of hard work, it was hard but the hours were reasonable. Let's see, I weighed about 103 pounds at the time; so a hundred kilos is 220 pounds. For instance, we might be mixing cement--building projects all by hand. But again, as I say, the hours were fairly reasonable. The guards weren't too strict about your scrounging. They would turn an eye now and then as long as you weren't too flagrant about trying to steal a truck and bring it back in. They didn't mind if you stole a battery but not the whole truck.

Marcello: Are you receiving any word from the outside world at this

time?

Fung: Again, I only heard that some of the people were asked to work on radio broadcasts, and there was a great deal of debate about whether they should be working for the enemy. But on the other hand, they could get word out to the outside world even though it was more or less propaganda. So I think in the end it turned out that the latter course was decided upon. In other words, "Sure, go ahead and read the scripts." In fact, they had some latitude in making up the scripts, so they decided this was one way we could get some information out to the outside world, maybe get some names to the families. But I personally was never involved with that part of it.

Marcello: On the other hand, are you receiving any word from the outside?

Fung: No, not that I can recall, except that it just seemed that every news that we got was unfavorable to us. The Japanese were making great progress, and we never heard anything about our progress.

Marcello: On the other hand, how long is the war going to last at this stage? How long are you going to be prisoners-of-war?

Fung: Okay, now at this stage, now that we've had time to settle down and the Japanese haven't cut our heads off, we were still looking . . . let's see, in the beginning, the favorite

date was the Fourth of July. As it turns out, it was a different Fourth of July than we had anticipated. Then the next thing was Thanksgiving and then Christmas, of course.

When all these dates passed, then we got down to some serious thinking. Some of the older people--twenty-five and thirty--who had read the papers and knew something of what was going on in the world, might be saying, "Gee, this war might last a couple of years." "You're out of your mind! Nobody can stand up against the United States for that long!" Some of the people were saying as much as four years. Of course, we thought they were lunatics; we didn't pay any attention to them at all.

So the consensus of opinion was that it shouldn't have lasted more than a year. Of course, when it lasted one year, we decided it couldn't possibly last more than two. Of course, by the time we got to the third year, why, all bets were off. You know, we had given up making predictions.

Marcello: In a stress situation like this, how do you live in terms of time? In other words, do you live from day-to-day, from week-to-week, month-to-month, or how do you do it? How far ahead do you look, I guess, is what I'm trying to say?

Fung: Well, eventually, I learned to live twenty-four hours a day. In the beginning, it was not that way.

Marcello: In other words, when you got up into the jungle and when things really got tough, at the end of the day you say, "Well, I made it through one more day."

Fung: That's right. Yes. As I say, eventually I got to that point, but in the beginning, I was still looking way ahead . . . as most people in a normal day-to-day living, you know, will do. I found out that that's very dangerous, because the future seemed to go on indefinitely. As we used to say, when you thought that things couldn't get worse, they did. So you got to the point where you said, "Okay, there are no more surprises. It can only get worse. So therefore, why anticipate the worst? Take what you can get today." Eventually, it comes about in a very gradual way. Even our understanding of the Japanese would come about in a very gradual way. In other words, in the beginning, you hated their guts--the way they reacted to us. Then gradually, you could see why they behaved the way they did. Because a two-star private could beat a one-star private and so on. Or a one-star private, if he had one day's seniority on a one-star private, could beat the hell out of him.

Marcello: And the Koreans had nobody but the Americans.

Fung: Right. So therefore, once you could see how they were treated, you could see why they behaved the way they did.

Marcello: Corporal punishment was a way of life in the Japanese Army.

Fung: Right. Now it didn't help any, but at least it helped you understand the situation a little better.

Marcello: Would I be safe in assuming that if you had had to stay in Bicycle Camp for the duration, being a prisoner-of-war might not have been too bad.

Fung: From the experiences that we had at that time, no; it would not have been too bad.

Marcello: Now, of course, when I say that, under any circumstances, being a prisoner-of-war is not a good situation. But comparatively speaking, things were obviously not too bad here in Bicycle Camp, had they been able to continue that way up until the end of the war.

Fung: Physically, it would have been easy to take. Being a POW is mostly psychological and emotional. I mean, you know, it's all emotions, really. But physically, a person could have put up with those kinds of conditions probably indefinitely.

Marcello: Were you maintaining your weight here at Bicycle Camp?

Fung: Yes. I was in normal or average health, and I think most people were. There were some sick people, but I think it was because they had undergone much more stressful conditions

prior to getting into Bicycle Camp. I think we had some deaths there, although they were not . . . I don't recall if they were Americans . . . and it didn't really hit me emotionally. I mean, I heard about it, and I was thinking, "Gee, somebody died," but that's it. It's only when, say, the first American died, then it hit me. Up to that time, it had not even touched me yet. Most of the people, even the Australians, were in good health. We were more or less in a cheerful mood.

Marcello: Now in early October of 1942, word comes down that you are going to leave Bicycle Camp and that your ultimate destination is going to be Changi Prison Camp, which is on the Island of Singapore. Describe how you got the word and what your reactions were when you found you were going to be leaving Bicycle Camp.

Fung: Well, again, you know, we'd be leaving a nice settled area for unknown parts. We were, as I recall, just assigned. I was part of the advance party with the Fitzsimmons group. I didn't think about protesting the order, because it was an order.

Marcello: You call this the Fitzsimmons group. What do you mean when you say it was the Fitzsimmons group?

Fung: As I recall, there were approximately 193 of us, and Captain

Fitzsimmons was in charge.

Marcello: Was he an Australian?

Fung: No, he was an American. We're speaking of 193 Americans, right. I've forgotten how many Australians . . . probably a couple thousand maybe. But the American group was fairly small, and the word that we got was that we were part of the advance party that was supposed to go up there and help set up facilities for the groups that would be coming behind us. Of course, the word was that you could bring anything you wanted to, you know, I mean, sporting gear or anything else that you had with you. Of course, at that time, we still believed it. The Japanese were telling us that, "This is a great area you're going to." Some of the people were saying, "Well, how can it possibly be?" Some of us were still optimistic enough to believe that, "Yes, it could be." So we didn't think anything about it except that it was an order to go. So we marched down to the docks and got on the ship.

Marcello: What sort of transportation did you have to go to Changi?

Fung: It was crowded. Oh, I remember we were given a couple of cans of . . . one can of bully beef; I can't remember the other thing. We got a couple of cans of items from the storeroom to use on the trip.

Marcello: Do you, in fact, still have all your belongings or what's left of your belongings when you go aboard the ship?

Fung: Yes. Right. We took what we wanted to or had left at the time. Let's see, I remember I took the mosquito net, blanket, some spare changes of clothes; I think I had a spare pair of shoes and my mess kit, canteen. I was fairly well-equipped still . . . a shelter half.

So the conditions aboard the ship were crowded . . . inadequate water. I managed to scrounge some tea from the Japanese. There was water available if you were very patient. There were leaky steam lines aboard the ship. That was when we found out that sanitation facilities were very inadequate.

Marcello: In what way?

Fung: Well, this is the first time that we had really encountered outdoor plumbing, shall we say. It was inadequate to begin with, maybe like a "two-holer" for the whole ship and that sort of thing. But other than the fact that we were crowded, I think some of the people came down with dysentery--the Americans even. Other than that, I can't remember anything serious.

Marcello: Were you allowed up on deck at all?

Fung: You were not really allowed up on deck, but you could sneak

up on deck. I remember coming across some of the Japanese supply of Bermuda onions--the great big white kind. I remember eating them like apples, even though I wouldn't think of doing it now (chuckle).

Marcello: Boy, between the dysentery and the onion breath, I'll bet the hold of that ship was really rank!

Fung: It wasn't all that bad, because we weren't on there that long.

Marcello: How long did this trip take altogether?

Fung: My impression is about four days or so or something like that.

Marcello: How did you get fed?

Fung: The rice was good. I seem to recall the Japanese did the cooking.

Marcello: Was it lowered down into the hold and then distributed?

Fung: No. No, I think we hand-carried the buckets down or something. But I remember that was the first time I encountered the Japanese rice. It's more glutenous than what we're used to. The rice was not adequate, but it wasn't a starvation diet either. So we did supplement our meals with the canned goods that we did have.

Marcello: But are you really beginning to get some sort of an idea now that being a prisoner-of-war isn't exactly going to be too pleasant?

Fung: Well, it's definitely a deterioration from what we had had.

As far as having a premonition of what it was going to be like, no, I personally did not. I just realized that perhaps this was a temporary thing; maybe it was just hope-against-hope.

Marcello: Okay, so you arrive in Changi Prison on October 11, 1942, or somewhere thereabouts. What happens when you land?

Fung: Okay.

Marcello: Now you were at Changi Prison Camp as opposed to Changi Jail. Is that correct?

Fung: That's correct. In fact, I believe we were at Roberts Barracks.

Marcello: This is an old British Army camp that you're in.

Fung: That's correct.

Marcello: We do have to make that distinction between Changi Jail and Changi Prison Camp, because later on some guys on their way back out of the jungle stopped over, I think, in Changi Jail.

Fung: Well, we passed by the prison, and we were glad (chuckle) we weren't going in there. Because there were these high walls--they must have been twenty-five feet tall--surrounding the whole place. We felt that rather than to be inside a prison, we would be perfectly happy out in the open.

But we were sent to Roberts Barracks area. Of course, as soon as we settled down, we started hearing from the British. We found out that the Sikhs had gone over to the

Japanese, and they were doing guard duty, and they were quite brutal in their treatment of the prisoners. You were also not allowed to transit from one area of Changi to another, because there were guards in all separate areas.

But my most impressionable thing about during our stay in Changi was that "Pack Rat" McCone . . . he's a retired gunnery sergeant, and he doesn't like to be called "Pack Rat," because, after all, gunnery sergeants are like gods in the Marine Corps. But anyway, in the relatively short time of like a day, he had scrounged up enough pipe, a water pump--hand pump--shower heads; and he rigged up a shower in a matter of one day where the British had not done anything. Again, this goes back to, you know, our gradual views of the British, although it's unfair to treat all Britishers alike, but that's the way it was. So other than a few work parties that we had, why, it was just an interim stayover; that's all it was.

Marcello: What did Changi look like from a physical standpoint. Again, I'm asking you to compare or contrast your living quarters and barracks there with what they had been in Bicycle Camp.

Fung: Okay, by comparison to the Bicycle Camp, this was a relatively open area, as I recall, quite vast. It was not really

organized as far as you could tell--just standing on a hill there.

Marcello: This is a huge camp, is it not?

Fung: It's a large area. That's why I say it gives you an impression of vastness and openness and not like the tight, compact area that we were in in Bicycle Camp--a formal military installation. It looked to be very loosely organized. Of course, we had heard from the British that there were work parties going into this city of Singapore working and doing all kinds of reconstruction work. They were telling about all sorts of things that were scroungeable.

I remember the other distinct impression that I have is that they had frozen lamb that had been in cold storage for . . . "donkey" years. I think it was stamped 1931 or something like that, and they were feeding us that.

Marcello: For "donkey" years?

Fung: No, no, well, I mean, for numerable years. But not liking lamb in the first place and seeing a 1931 stamp on it, why, that even makes it worse. Even at this time, I don't recall ever having eaten lamb yet. I can't remember what the rations were like in Changi right now. They were not good.

Marcello: Now did you not have some additional trouble with the British here in that they didn't want you to eat the so-called

"king's coconuts?" Do you remember that incident, or does that occur with a later group that comes through?

Fung: No, no, I don't remember anything about that at all, except that we had one work party cutting grass. I remember the British officer, who showed us the area to be worked over, put it very delicately that the reason we had to keep the grass short was that they didn't want the mosquitos making love in the tall grass. That's really about all I remember about Changi. I don't remember much about the coconut thing.

Marcello: Now as you mentioned, this was mainly a transit station for you?

Fung: As it turns out, yes.

Marcello: How long were you there altogether?

Fung: Again, as I say, my impression is about four or five days.

Marcello: And what happens at that point then?

Fung: We were sent down to another ship in the harbor. This I'll tell you distinctly. We were aboard that ship for one whole day without moving.

Marcello: Down in the hold?

Fung: Down in the hold in the hot sun (chuckle). I don't know what the temperatures got up to, but the humidity had to be 200 per cent! We were in about the third deck. We were below the waterline toward the stern end of the ship. The hold

had hauled horses previously--the last load--because there was horse manure all over. The load before that had to be rice, because there was fermented rice below the horse manure.

It was at that time when the sudden realization came to us, "Look, this is the beginning." (Chuckle) I have never read about Dante's hell, but that came to mind. There we were--damned near 200 of us--stuffed in that hold. The feeling of claustrophobia and the heat was intense. I swore I broke out in a heat rash. I swore to God if I ever got out of there, I would never complain about heat again; as little as I can tolerate heat, I would never complain again. Water, of course, was short; we had no water. So we stayed there, and it wasn't until the following day before we left. Once we got underway, it wasn't too bad.

Marcello: You did get this ship right there at Singapore.

Fung: In Singapore, right.

Marcello: Okay, describe the voyage on your way to your destination.

Fung: We got to Rangoon. Now we weren't the convoy that was bombed; we got through Rangoon without any incident.

Marcello: As you point out, you were in an advance party, so to speak--this Fitzsimmons bunch.

Fung: Right. We got to Rangoon; then we got on barges to go

across to Moulmein. At this point, I was . . . I should say I was scared, because I'd heard stories in Singapore about how they had gotten people . . . you know, tied a bunch of Chinese together with barbed wire, transported them out to open sea on barges, and just literally dumped them overboard. Now I have no way of confirming this, but I had heard it. I was thinking to myself, "My god! They're putting us on barges! What's going to happen next?" As it turned out, nothing happened. The barge had gravel on top of it, and we sat on top of the gravel. It was uncomfortable, but it was manageable. It got us across to Moulmein, and they marched us into the prison.

Marcello: How long did it take to go from Singapore to Rangoon?

Fung: Again, my impression is about four or five days.

Marcello: And this was a rather uneventful trip?

Fung: Uneventful, except that there were more people breaking down with dysentery during that trip than the trip from Batavia to Singapore.

Marcello: What is it like on the hold of a ship where people have dysentery?

Fung: It's indescribable. It's just . . . filthy beyond description. You think you never get used to it, but you finally do.

Marcello: In other words, we're talking about people who have dysentery

so bad that there's no way that they can make it to the head.

Fung: Well, it's about three decks up. You'd never make it up there in the first place, and if you did, you'd have to stand in line to use the outdoor facilities that they had rigged up. So it just got pretty bad. Other than scrounging for water, why, that was the main concern, of course . . . getting enough water.

Marcello: You had to scrounge for water on this vessel, also?

Fung: Yes. The Japanese made no provisions whatsoever for water.

Marcello: I assume you had filled your canteen before you left Singapore.

Fung: Definitely. But it was . . . after the first day, well, we knew the Japanese weren't going to supply us with water; we knew we had to start looking for other ways of doing it.

Marcello: Do you have to ration water very carefully under these tropical conditions?

Fung: You learn to do it. In fact, our captain, Captain "Hud" Wright, during Louisiana maneuvers, had made us go through a week of water discipline. He said, "One of these days, you might need it." I'll never forget it, because it turned out that we did. It wasn't applied to field conditions, but it just turned out that it was very useful.

Marcello: So how bad a problem did water actually become then?

Fung: For me personally not too bad, because by this time I was getting to be a fairly proficient scrounger. I found a private source of leak that would fill up a canteen pretty rapidly.

Marcello: What was your private source of a leak?

Fung: It was a steam line that was leaking. So other than that, my other concern was to scrounge for more food. That was almost an impossibility on this particular ship.

Marcello: So I gather you're glad to get off this vessel.

Fung: We were damn glad to get off of it, right!

Marcello: Okay, you move into Moulmein jail. What was it like?

Fung: Well, here we're talking about a formal prison--all concrete, closed spaces. We later found out we were in the leper ward. For five years I sweated it out; after I found out the incubation of leprosy, I just sweated it out. Because I think all people have fears of leprosy, but especially Chinese.

Marcello: Why is that?

Fung: I don't know. Chinese can take smallpox in their stride, but leprosy is something they just fear--have a literal fear of.

But anyway, we encountered some political prisoners at this time, I think. They were being worked over; you could hear them screaming at all times of the day and night.

Not much happened in that jail. Again, it was a transit period.

Marcello: How long did you stay there?

Fung: Again, my impression is maybe a couple of days or thereabouts.

Marcello: Did they actually house you in the cells themselves?

Fung: We were in the prison, right--in the leper ward.

Marcello: But you didn't know it was the leper ward at that time.

Fung: Not at that time. We found out later.

Marcello: Are you still thinking that the war is going to be relatively short?

Fung: No, by this time we realized that conditions were changing very rapidly and that regardless of how the war ended, I mean, we were going to have a period of difficulty . . . a definite change, you might say.

Marcello: Okay, where do you go from Moulmein?

Fung: From Moulmein, we marched down to the railroad station, and there I encountered an experience of humanity that I'll never forget. The Japanese had occupied Burma; they were the victors; they were winning all the way; and as far as anyone could see, they were going to take it all over. Here the whole population of Moulmein was along the route of our march from the prison to the railroad station tossing out cigarettes, bananas, candy, and all sorts of things.

Marcello: The Japanese made no effort to stop them?

Fung: No. They tried, but it didn't do any good. There just weren't enough Japanese guards, and they weren't willing to shoot or harm the population. I guess they were trying to be on their good side. I had never seen grown men break down and cry. I mean, it was just that kind of an experience.

Marcello: Again, did the Japanese make any effort or attempts to humiliate the prisoners they were marching along?

Fung: They may have, but it didn't make any impression on the population at all, because they were completely sympathetic. They were out there for only one purpose, and that was to try to give us something . . . fruit or cigarettes, candy. So by the time we got down to the station, why, all of us had something that they'd given to us.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens after you get to the train station?

Fung: Well, after we got to the train station, we got on board trains to take us to the so-called base camp at Thanbyuzayat. We were railroaded in all the way. That was when we got our first sight of what we commonly called "jungle camps" of bamboo and atap roots.

Marcello: Which was the first one you encountered? Do you remember offhand?

Fung: That's it--Thanbyuzayat.

Marcello: Oh, I see. That was the base camp.

Fung: Right. That was the beginning of the railroad, as far as the Japanese were concerned, to be built.

Marcello: Okay, so what happens when you get to Thanbyuzayat? Do you get any sort of a lecture or anything of this nature from the Japanese?

Fung: We got a formal lecture. We got together on the parade ground, and I guess Colonel Nagatomo got up on the reviewing stand and gave us a fine speech about what we were going to be doing under supervision of the Japanese.

Marcello: Was he speaking in English or through an interpreter?

Fung: He was speaking through an interpreter, I believe, although we heard rumors that he could speak English. I remember him saying, "Be cheerful in your work," and all this sort of thing; that "Work is good for you," (chuckle) and all that. At that time, why, it didn't seem that comical or cynical either. We thought that, "Okay, he's just giving us his sales pitch."

Marcello: You mentioned this awhile ago, so refresh my memory. How many Americans were there at this time?

Fung: A hundred ninety-three, as I recall, in the Fitzsimmons group.

Marcello: Okay, so you get your pep talk from Colonel Nagatomo. What happens at this point?

Fung: Again, my impression is that we stayed at Thanbyuzayat for

about two or three days. I remember we stayed there for at least overnight, because the following morning we saw some Japanese doing some physical punishment. Four Japanese soldiers would have a small telephone pole, say, about twenty feet long held over their heads, and they were literally going around in circles at a fast jog pace. We thought, "Holy smoke! They must have done something terrible to deserve that kind of physical punishment!" We found out that they had just been drunk. So we're wondering now, "What do they do when you do something bad?" Of course, by this time, we were really beginning to really wonder about the Japanese. But after two or three days, why, they told us, "We're moving up country," and our first camp was going to be 40 Kilo Camp.

Marcello: In other words, some progress had already been made on the railroad, since you went back to the 40 Kilo Camp.

Fung: No, as it turned out, the reason that we were going up to 40 Kilo was that we were going to clear the ground from 40 Kilo backward towards Thanbyuzayat as well as working forward from 40 Kilo. Yes, some progress and some track had been laid, I believe, as far as 25 Kilo.

Marcello: Was the camp already made up for you when you got to 40 Kilo, or did you have to build it yourself?

Fung: The camp had been made up for and by natives, but it had

deteriorated.

Marcello: The jungle reclaims things very, very quickly, does it not?

Fung: Very rapidly. We were told that we would be trucked all the way, and as it turned it out, we were not. So we were carrying our gear, and we got to 40 Kilo.

Marcello: Is there a road alongside the railroad?

Fung: There is a road, right. So when we got to 40 Kilo, why, we got settled in our huts. It was mostly Australians. The first job we had to do was dig a well so we would have an adequate supply of water. We were only there for a matter of two or three weeks, because it turned out that we would not have an adequate water supply. We did go out on some work parties starting to clear the right-of-way. That was when we found out what the work was going to be like--at least a general idea.

Marcello: What did the work consist of?

Fung: At that time, it was relatively easy--about 1.2 meters of dirt to be moved, oh, at that time, about 100 or 200 yards. It was soft dirt; it wasn't rocky or it wasn't muddy or anything like that. It was still the dry season. The rainy season had not really gotten too heavy yet.

Marcello: Well, let's back up here just a minute. When you say approximately 1.2 cubic meters of dirt had to be moved, you're referring to 1.2 cubic meters per man.

Fung: Per man, right, including the officer in charge. It would be paced out, marked out, and you would dig it out and carry it to the places that required the fill.

Marcello: Who would pace it out--a Japanese engineer or soldier?

Fung: Right, the Japanese engineer would pace it out and stake it. At that time, we were not employing any of the tricks of trying to move the pegs or anything like that. We were trying to do a workman-like job.

Marcello: In other words, when you did your job, you were finished for the day. Is that right?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: So what happened?

Fung: What happened? I'm not a competitive person myself, but I realize that most Americans are. So the first few days, we would knock off the 1.2 meters, oh, in a matter of . . . I'm sorry, we started out at about three-quarters of a cubic meter to start with. So the first week or so, we would get out there, say, at four or five o'clock in the morning and be through by noon. The Japanese were very smart; they'd let us do it. On the way back, the Australians would tell us, "Yanks, you're crazy! They're going to move it up!" And sure enough, they moved it up a yard, and then it was up to a yard and then 1.2 yards. We were still doing it with relative ease. But the Australians were telling us,

"Take all day to do it. Don't do it in the shortest time possible, because they'll just keep adding it on," But just the natural competitiveness of the American soldier, I guess, was enough to just be the first one off the job. But as I say, we were in good condition.

Marcello: Now this distance was being measured off in meters rather than yards, I gather.

Fung: Meters, right.

Marcello: The Japanese unit of measure, I believe, is the meter.

Fung: Right. But again, the work wasn't that difficult yet.

Marcello: And you were still in pretty good physical shape at this stage.

Fung: We were in very good physical condition, I would say.

Marcello: Now I assume that since you were removing this dirt, you were making cuts and fills at this stage.

Fung: Yes, right. Of course, that was when we found out that . . . at that time, the shovels were still pretty good; the picks were pretty good. But the carrying away was when we suddenly came face-to-face with the primitiveness of the materials we had to work with. Everyone naturally was looking for wheelbarrows or something like this. What we had was a big rice sack with two poles on it. It was just something you had to learn how to do.

Marcello: Was it a rice sack with two poles or a pole with two rice

sacks?

Fung: No, in the beginning, it was a rice sack with two poles-- like a stretcher and two people, you know, one person on each end. This was how we started. It was awhile before we got to what you're describing like the "yo-ho pole" with the sack on each end.

Marcello: Why are those things called "yo-ho poles?" I've heard so many explanations for that.

Fung: Well, the pole oscillates with the natural rhythm of the jogger. I don't know how the expression came about. It definitely is not a native expression. But once you get the natural rhythm of the pole, it's a very easy way to carry things. But I remember at the racetrack, a lady came by. She had to be sixty years old or at least appeared to be. She had her merchandise on these two baskets on the end of a pole, so she sat it down starting to trade with the soldiers. Miller indicated that he wanted to try to lift the load. So she looked at him and said, "Go ahead." Miller got under this stick, and he tried to lift it up. He would be off-balance, and it would be one way down, one way up; he could never get the hang of it. Once he got it up on his shoulders, he could never really move it any distance. This little old lady was laughing all the time. A bunch of the other fellows wanted to try it, and they tried it and had no more success. When

she got through trading, why, she just shrugged her shoulders a little bit, got the pole under her shoulders, and just jogged off laughing all the way (chuckle). That was when I found out there had to be a trick to everything, just like carrying 100 kilos. You couldn't just carry dead weight; you had to make it live.

Marcello: Had you received your Korean guards yet?

Fung: At this time, I don't remember that we had Korean guards. No, I'm sorry; yes, we had. Because we met "Christian George" at 25 Kilo, so there had to be Korean guards.

Marcello: "Christian George," I assume, was the name of a Korean guard.

Fung: Well, yes.

Marcello: You had nicknames for all of them.

Fung: We hung nicknames on them, right. He was one of the more humorous Koreans.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fung: Well, for instance, one time he was disciplined for having a dirty rifle, and he was told to clean it. So he took it down to the creek and got some soap and water. He just got into more trouble. When he got into trouble, they wouldn't feed him, so he would get in chow line with the prisoners and ask if it was all right if he got some rice from us because they wouldn't feed him in the Japanese kitchen.

Marcello: Why was he called "Christian George?"

- Fung: Well, he said he was a Christian, and he seemed to be.
I mean, in the sense that he never bashed anyone around.
- Marcello: You think of this Korean guard with a certain amount of humor, but what can we say about the general run of the Korean guards?
- Fung: The general run of the Korean guard is not humorous at all. Just as the Chinese are known as the "Jews of the Orient," the Koreans are known as the "Bullies of the Orient." There are reasons for it, probably, because they'd been overrun by the Chinese on the one hand, the Japanese on the other hand. I mean, I can understand it, but I can never feel anything but intense hate for these Koreans.
- Marcello: Compare their treatment of the prisoners with that of the Japanese soldiers that you perhaps encountered back in Bicycle Camp.
- Fung: There's no comparison at all. I had no feelings about the Japanese soldier; I don't hate him; he was doing a job. But the Koreans . . . again, as I say, I understand that, rationally, he was "low man on the totem pole"; he was not even allowed the privilege of being a fighting man; so he took it out on anyone who was available. But dammit, he did it with too much pleasure; that was the thing that I don't forgive him for. The Japanese soldier, he did it emotionally; he did it as a soldier. I can understand one soldier doing

something to another soldier. But for someone to take pleasure in sadistical action, that I can never forget.

Marcello: What were some of the things that the Korean soldiers would do to the prisoners? Can you be specific?

Fung: Well, the sort of thing they would do as commonplace would be hitting you with a rifle butt, which can be very painful. When they'd hit you . . . the Japanese might slap you, which is more of a humiliation than a blow . . . but the Koreans would literally try to hit you with a closed fist. He can't miss, because you have to stand still.

Marcello: Did they ever try to kick you in sensitive areas like your genitals and things of that nature? Did you see any of this?

Fung: No, not too much of that. They took more pleasure in physical abuse, but I don't recall that they actually tried to, shall we say, damage you in that personal way. I mean, for instance, they might have you hold out weights with extended arms out in front of you or kneeling on a bamboo pole and this kind of thing.

Marcello: That was one of their favorite punishments--that kneeling on the bamboo pole.

Fung: Yes. Yes, that's agonizing.

Marcello: Were you ever subjected to that?

Fung: No, I was never subjected to any formal torture at all.

Marcello: Did you ever witness somebody having to kneel on those

bamboo poles?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: What was it like? Describe how this worked.

Fung: Well, this was a Dutchman--a Dutch native--who had been . . . I don't even know what his infraction was. But he had to kneel for two and a half hours with a small bamboo pole about an inch and a half in diameter behind his knees. In other words, he was kneeling on top of it; then his outside kneecap was on top of another bamboo pole. So literally, he was, you know, being broken apart. When he was finally released by the guard, they had to carry him in that position to the medical hut so they could treat him.

Marcello: How long had he been made to kneel like that?

Fung: About two and a half hours. And that was enough. They were just amazed that they could even save his legs.

Marcello: Describe what one of these camps looked like from a physical standpoint. I'm sure if you see one, you've seen them all, so that's why I'm saying in general what did they look like?

Fung: The huts would run, say, roughly fifty meters wide, about 150 meters long. There'd be an aisle-way right down the middle; there'd be wide platforms made of bamboo slats on each side. Total construction would be bamboo. Sometimes they would be put together with wires; but most of the time

it would be jungle vine. The roof would be atap. They would cram in as many men as they could. If you were lucky, you would be off the ground so that during the rainy season, the water wouldn't be running right through the hut. If it did, at least you wouldn't get completely wet.

Marcello: Did the atap roof keep out the rain during the rainy season?

Fung: No, because if there was any wind at all, why, other than the fact that if the atap roof didn't leak, the wind would still drive it in, because they were open-side, open-ended as a rule.

It was difficult to get any restful sleep, because . . . well, aside from the fact that there were bedbugs in the bamboo slats. Just being out in the open was enough to be uncomfortable.

But the camps themselves were maintained as cleanly as possible by the camp personnel. By this time, the Japanese had equipped us with Y-Johns, popularly known nowadays as woks, because everybody knows what a wok is now. But they were large ones. The cooks have learned how to cook rice, so the rice was well-prepared, although there was really not much else other than a very thin vegetable soup.

Marcello: What other buildings are there in the camp besides the actual barracks?

Fung: Well, there would be a hut set aside to be called the hospital.

Marcello: That was kind of a misnomer in a way, was it not?

Fung: It was just another hut except that all the people in there would be sick. One end maybe would be for a treatment room, say, for an orderly in case it was a dysentery hut where he would have to attend the people all through the night. There would be a cook shack, basically an open area where cooks would build mud fireplaces, with a roof over it. All the huts were alike; it just had different names.

Marcello: About how many prisoners might there be in a typical camp?

Fung: Typical camp . . . a small camp might have 4,000; I guess a large camp, a working camp, might be as many as 8,000 or 10,000.

Marcello: A tremendous number of huts and so on in these camps then.

Fung: People, bodies.

Marcello: We're not talking about small camps by any stretch of the imagination.

Fung: No, no, they're not.

Marcello: And the Americans are always in a minority, I guess.

Fung: Well, as I say, our advance group was 193, and even the large group behind us couldn't have been more than, what,

600. We never really met up with them.

But again, the Fitzsimmons group was lucky, I'm sure, in the sense that we got there during the rainy season and got used to it. The second group that came in behind us, we heard, had been bombed and sustained casualties, and they had been in the water. And then they came up sort of during the tail end of the rainy . . . started in the dry season. I guess maybe they were a larger group. I don't know exactly what happened, but the Fitzsimmons group was a very close-knit group.

Marcello: When did you arrive in the jungle, so to speak?

Fung: It was either late in October or early November.

Marcello: Of 1942.

Fung: '42, right. Because Kershner and I decided that we were going to . . . we set aside one can of bully beef--corned beef--for Thanksgiving. That was at 40 Kilo, so probably we got there in early November. From 40 Kilo, we went backwards to 25 Kilo once that we found that there was inadequate water available.

Marcello: I guess as long as you were going back toward Thanbyuzayat, things weren't too bad. It's when you went in the other direction that things really got worse, I guess--the further back in the jungle you got.

Fung: Right. Supply lines were pretty short, and supplies were

adequate. In fact, when we got to 55 Kilo . . . no, it was before 55 Kilo when I found out something else about the Japanese. There was a Sergeant Major Sumojo--and a sergeant major's like God in the Japanese Army--who told the officers, Colonel Black, Australian colonel, and Captain Fitzsimmons, senior American officer, he said, "Look, we've got too many people on the sicklist." He said, "You've got to get me more working party people." The officers told him, "We don't have medical supplies to treat the sick people. That's why they stay sick so long." He said, "If you can provide us with medical supplies, we can probably get more people out on the work party." Sumojo said in words to the effect that, "Okay, I'll get you medical supplies." He said, "In order for me to get you medical supplies, I've got to have more working people." So he said, "If you can get more people out there first, I'll get you more medical supplies." Apparently, he had his battle to fight with the Japanese, too. That was when we found out that he was a man of his word. They scrounged up more people to get out on the working party. Because at that time, when you were sick, you weren't really sick; you may have been depressed more than anything else. Once we got more people out on the working party, we got medical supplies. So we found out that the Japanese--some Japanese--

would keep his word.

Of course, this was the beginning of the time when only working men were issued rations; therefore, it was to the general camp welfare to have more people out on the work party. But it was the beginning when all supplies were shared commonly. In other words, it didn't matter whether you are a working or a non-working man, you ate. None of this business about, "Well, you're not a working man, so therefore you don't get any rations," just as the Japanese attitude would have been.

It was at 25 Kilo when Colonel Black started the Red Cross fund. All the officers were paid according to rank, except that for some strange reason they all wound up with twenty rupees--we were in Burma. The explanation was that, well, the Japanese would say that, "You're being charged so much for room and board, and we're setting aside some money in banks in Japan so that after the war's over, you'll have something to start with." So just by coincidence, all the officers wound up with twenty rupees. Colonel Black decided all officers are going to contribute half of their pay--ten dollars--to set up a common fund so that they could buy Red Cross supplies, you know, soap, toothpaste, fruits and vegetables, bananas for the sick people. Because at that time, we were being paid ten cents a day, fifteen cents a

day for the non-coms. So if you worked thirty days, you'd earn as much as three dollars. So for the officers who didn't really have to work, to have ten dollars was quite a goodly sum. Sugar at that time was two-and-a-half rupees-- for about a kilo of brown sugar; tobacco was at least fifty cents a caddy. So things weren't too expensive yet.

Marcello: Fifty cents a what?

Fung: A caddy is about eight inches square by about half an inch thick. Not much weight, but, I mean, in terms of volume, why, that would be tobacco.

Marcello: How much contact do you have with the natives, and how much black marketeering is going on?

Fung: Not really black marketeering. Formally, we're not allowed to contact the natives at all. But if you happen to come across one, you could buy things from them, and the Japanese would not bother you too much, or the Koreans.

Again, you know, there's a story about "Christian George" when he came across two prisoners-of-war trading with the natives. He knew something was wrong; someone had done something wrong and somebody had to pay for it, because those were the rules. So he gave the bullock who was pulling the cart a kick, and he decided that would square everything. He was one of the few guards that never hit a prisoner, which was very unusual, and he was, you know, greatly appreciated.

Marcello: What did you have that the natives could use in this barter system that developed?

Fung: Well, we learned that they were after anything of material value, like clothing or if you had a watch. Because they were being paid in Japanese occupational money, which was just run off the printing press. So they decided they would trade that kind of paper for anything of material value. So you could sell a shirt, sweater, pants, shoes, socks, or an item of greater value like wristwatches or cameras. I think some people even had guns; some of the Australians guns and what they called "mills bombs," hand grenades (chuckle). There was an amazing accumulation of junk that the prisoners will pick up and retain and keep as long as they can.

Marcello: So you go from the 40 Kilo Camp back to the 25 Kilo Camp.

Fung: Right.

Marcello: Doing the same sort of work at the 25 Kilo Camp?

Fung: Same sort of work except now we had to walk greater distances, because the railroad had progressed up to that area. So work had to be forward up from 25 Kilo.

Marcello: Where did you go from 25 Kilo?

Fung: As I recall, 55 Kilo is the next camp, because that was where I picked up malaria and dysentery. Then from 55 Kilo, I believe we moved up to about the 80 kilometer mark; 80 Kilo to about the 105 Kilo. The 105 Kilo was probably the worst

period, because 105 Kilo was the farthest extent of the railroad from Thanbyuzayat to the supply line. The farther you are from supplies, why, the less you got. Of course, by this time, we're speaking of . . .

Marcello: You're getting into 1943 now.

Fung: The end of '43. Your physical condition has deteriorated. Let's see, by the time I got to 55 Kilo, I was down to sixty pounds.

Marcello: Okay, let's talk about the 55 Kilo Camp, because, as you mentioned, this is where you not only lost weight but contracted malaria and dysentery.

Fung: Right.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the 55 Kilo Camp. What happened here or what were the conditions by this time that put you in the shape that you were in?

Fung: Well, the work was getting harder; there were fewer people able to work, so therefore there was more work to be done. There was also beginning to be a different kind of work. We were building small bridges. The country is changing from level to more hilly. As we get toward the 100 Kilo, it becomes downright mountainous, so that there were more bridges to be built, which was a different kind of work from just digging out dirt and carrying it away or putting it someplace else. I mean, here we're talking about pile-

driving . . . well, sawing down trees and dragging them down to make piling to begin with. We didn't have the good tools to work with; the axes weren't sharp. Just generally speaking, the work was becoming more difficult and harder, and we were getting weaker, and there were fewer of us.

Marcello: I assume that bridge building was just incredible, that is, the way the Japanese did it or the way you had to do it.

Fung: I was intrigued by it, because I was amazed at their ingenuity. Again, we go back to stereotypes, and you think of the Japanese as being what they are. Here we were in intimate contact with them; we're seeing them, sure, as conquerers and prisoners, but also human beings. So we were wondering how in the world they're going to build . . . I mean, on the first big project we had, the bridge had to be 100 yards wide. We were wondering, "How in the devil are you going to do that? This isn't just knocking something together to cross a little ditch." By golly, we learned. They could do it, and they could do it with what was available. I mean, it didn't require any advanced technology, steel, nails, or bolts or anything else. Whatever was available in the jungle was going to do the job.

Marcello: Pile-driving must have been an interesting experience.

Fung: Well, again, we found out that . . . you know, always in our

own mind, you try to figure out, "Now what would you do if you had to do it?" It never turns out that way, because they had a different approach to it. Right off the bat, you cut down the trees to make the piles. Then you cut down enough different kinds of trees for scaffolding. You start to build the scaffold. Then as you get part of the scaffolding built, you stand up on pile and lock it into position. You don't drive it; you just stand it in position. You get literally hundreds of these piles just standing up in this scaffold framework. Then you set up the scaffolding for the pile driver, which is nothing more or less than . . . let's see, it was a 500-kilo block with a hole through it with a bar on which it went up and down. You built the scaffolding so that you could have pulleys on top, have ropes radiating out from the top, and just have twenty men on a rope and just pulling in unison and just letting it drop.

Of course, by this time, we were starting to employ the tricks . . . not just the sabotaging but to cut the workload shorter. So they would dig . . . the piling would start with a hole that was dug maybe about a meter deep, and the Japanese would mark the pole to the depth that they wanted to go. So what we would do, we would saw the pole off. If we had to drive it in, say, ten feet, why, we

would saw off five feet of it (chuckle), never realizing that somebody's going to have to ride over this bridge sometime in the future. But we were employing every trick that we could to make the work . . . to make as if we had fulfilled our work quota. I mean, for instance, we would pile brush on and put dirt on top. Eventually, it would sink, of course, but by that time, we were way past.

Marcello: What other ways would you sabotage the work?

Fung: It wasn't really sabotaging. I mean, that really wasn't the intention.

Marcello: You were taking short cuts.

Fung: We were taking short cuts so that we had, at least from the Japanese point of view, fulfilled our work quota. But it wasn't really an intentional act of sabotage.

Marcello: Aside from the fact that you might be able to lighten your workload by doing this, is there not also a certain psychological satisfaction? In other words, you've put one over on the Japanese.

Fung: Oh, yes.

Marcello: The conquered have put one over on the conquerors.

Fung: Yes, you might look upon it almost like a game. Yes, it was. It's not like "Hogan's Heroes" or anything like that, but it was a game. Of course, the Japanese were always at a disadvantage. There were never a great number of them, so

therefore they could never cover all the ground.

Marcello: There never had to be many Japanese, because you weren't going to escape anywhere, anyway.

Fung: Well, three Australians tried it, and they got a few . . . maybe a hundred miles away. They brought them back, and they shot them. So even as a Chinese, I don't think I would have tried it. I might have blended in a little better.

Marcello: Did you witness the execution of these Australians?

Fung: No. That took place in Thanbyuzayat, and we were already up-country. But we heard about it. Of course, we were very indignant, but there was nothing you could do about it.

Marcello: Describe your physical condition here at 55 Kilo.

Fung: Well, by this time, most of us had lost some weight. Let's see, I'm trying to think what the worst . . . well, there's no such thing as the worst camp. We probably had lost 50 per cent of what we were going to lose.

Marcello: By 55 Kilo?

Fung: Yes. I mean, this is a relatively short time.

Marcello: Are we into the so-called "Speedo" campaign that began in May of 1943?

Fung: You're just getting there, yes--just the beginning of it.

Marcello: And the "Speedo" campaign more or less coincided with the coming of the monsoons, also, did it not?

Fung: Right. Yes. So it was just the general overwork and

exposure to weather. Of course, we're just on short rations, say, roughly a quarter-pound of rice a day and that sort of thing. We're still not skin and bones; we're mostly muscle. But the elements were beginning to get to us, I mean, the mosquitos and the constant harassment of hot and cold, wet and dry. But the mosquitos were the things you couldn't protect yourself against. The cuts and bruises which occurred on the job wouldn't heal anymore; they became ulcerous. We had no way of treating them, except for Dr. Hekking's famous silver spoon where he scraped down through and drew blood. Hopefully, it would scab over without pus being entrapped underneath. We met up with Dr. Hekking at the 25 Kilo.

Marcello: He's a Dutch doctor, of course.

Fung: Right. He's the Dutch doctor that more or less stayed with us most of the way and who understood the use of jungle herbs, because he learned some of that in Indonesia where he was from.

Marcello: Let's describe this "Speedo" campaign, and then we can develop that topic by talking about how it affected the prisoners physically. What did the "Speedo" campaign mean to you in terms of a change in your work schedule or workload?

Fung: Okay, we found out later that Nagatomo had one year to com-

plete his job, and he could see that it was not going to be finished in that time. The word was that he would have to commit hara-kiri, or he would be beheaded if he didn't do his job. I guess he was determined that neither thing was going to happen to him. I guess that was why the "Speedo" period was instituted, although later on he did get, I believe, a two-month extension, and it took us about fourteen months to finish the road. The Japanese and the Koreans started . . . I guess the closest thing you can say is like a reign of terror. I mean, they would start bashing for no apparent reason except they thought that it would help speed up the work. Workloads got up to, I think, about 2.5 meters a day.

Marcello: When did a workday begin?

Fung: That was our favorite expression--"from can't see to can't see" or from four o'clock in the morning to whenever you finish. It didn't matter if you didn't . . . there was no such thing as hoping that you wouldn't finish your job and they would send you home. You stayed out there until it was finished. One time there was a bombing raid; they bombed and hit a cut and it filled in, and we worked five days and five nights to clear that.

Marcello: Continually?

Fung: Continuously. No sleep. That was then we found out that

the Japanese had no intentions of not building that road. So we decided . . . I mean, it wasn't decided by me or any of the officers, but it was just common consensus of opinion that, "They're determined to build this road, so let's get the damn thing built!" I mean, we didn't think of it in terms of helping the war effort or hindering the war effort or anything else. "They want this thing done," and the only way out was to get out the other end; it was as simple as that. It was probably the worst six or eight months of that whole fourteen-month period.

Marcello: What was it like working these long hours during the monsoon season? In other words, what is it like working in the rainy season?

Fung: It's bad enough to carry dirt, but to carry water-logged dirt . . . (chuckle) I mean, you're just adding onto a load. Of course, by this time most people had no shoes, so carrying, say, even fifty pounds on slippery ground is just almost an impossibility. In many cases, it was an impossibility; I mean, you had to take roundabout ways of getting your dirt to an area which might only have formerly taken fifty feet but would now take you several hundred yards. But it was just constant exposure, and then the gradual deterioration of the amount of food just took its toll.

Marcello: Are you ever dry?

Fung: No, even when you get into bed, because, you know, it's just incredible--the amount of rain that comes down at one time. Of course, by this time, a lot of people didn't even have blankets, and they were getting pretty threadbare.

Marcello: I would assume that since everything was so damp or actually wet all the time that clothing and so on just deteriorated.

Fung: Yes, the humidity just chewed everything up. That was one reason that earlier--before this period--a lot of people were beginning to sell their items because they realized that the humidity was going to wreck everything and that they would never be able to realize any benefits out of it. So they may as well get some money out of it.

Marcello: Now you mention that the monsoons also created problems in terms of provisioning these various camps. I assume what you're referring to is the fact that the monsoons washed out the road along the railroad.

Fung: Not necessarily wash it out, but the trucks could not negotiate it, because it would be, you know . . .

Marcello: Like a quagmire.

Fung: You'd just literally sink down. We had to go out and rescue the trucks, because the track had not been laid yet. I mean, we were just making the right-of-ways; there just wasn't enough track laid that even supply trains could get up to the railhead.

Marcello: Now how did this all affect the Japanese? Were they suffering, too?

Fung: The Japanese were suffering but to a lesser degree because there were fewer of them, and, of course, they could take the pick of the litter. But they were hurting, too; I mean, their rations were being cut.

Marcello: How were you being fed during this combination of a "Speedo" campaign and the monsoon season?

Fung: Well, your feeding is always the same regardless of what the conditions are; you were taking food out with you. You leave in the morning, and you didn't come back until you were done. Okay, when you came back, you got your evening meal. The cooks were always good enough to always stay up until work parties were fed. But your noon meal--whatever it was--was taken out with you. You might get a half-hour break for lunch but no more than that.

Marcello: What are you getting to eat besides rice?

Fung: Basically rice--period.

Marcello: Is there anyway that you can supplement your diet? I'm referring now to snakes, dog, cats, or any other animal.

Fung: Not really, because the only thing that we really found in the jungles were scorpions and centipedes . . . gigantic centipedes! Six inches wide, two feet long! I never saw sights like that! You'd be digging and all of the sudden

something would crawl out of a hole, and you couldn't believe your eyes. But in terms of edible things . . .

Marcello: You didn't eat the centipedes.

Fung: No. No dogs and cats. We heard monkeys in the jungles but never could catch any. The only thing I remember, we did catch a python one time, and that was all.

Marcello: Did you have any qualms about eating python meat?

Fung: No, no. It was cooked up in a soup. Everybody got something out of it.

Marcello: Did the prisoners kill it, or did the Japanese guards shoot it for you or what?

Fung: We had to borrow a Japanese rifle to do it (chuckle).

Marcello: The guard gave you the rifle?

Fung: Well, he was going to kill it, but after a few attempts he couldn't hit it, so one of the prisoners suggested that he pass the rifle over, and he shot the snake. But actually, we probably could have choked it to death, because the snake had just finished a meal and was very lethargic. But we decided to play it safe and shoot it, anyway.

But the only place you could scrounge anything was from the Japanese. My favorite target was the Japanese kitchen. Some of the people who worked there--"Slug" was one of the American prisoners who worked for the Japanese kitchen--told me that they started mining the kitchen because there was so

much pilfering from there. So I decided I had to watch to see which way the Japanese went in, because there had to be a safe way in and out. So it didn't slow us down too much, except that we had to be more careful.

Marcello: Again, awhile ago you were mentioning that at 55 Kilo Camp was where you contracted malaria and also dysentery. How were you treated for these?

Fung: The standard treatment for malaria, of course, was quinine.

Marcello: Was it available?

Fung: It was available in small quantities, and it was powdered. I mean, it wasn't in tablets, so it was very difficult to swallow. I had one unfortunate problem; I was allergic to quinine. In my particular case, once I found that out, why, it was just a matter of sweating it out.

Marcello: How were you allergic to quinine? What would it do to you?

Fung: Toxic poisoning to my system. I found that out the first time they dosed me. Luckily, Doc Hekking got me out of it. In fact, it was only about two years ago when I found out how he did it. Now that I was more knowledgeable, I could ask and understand what he was doing. But anyway, he told me, he says, "Eddie, you can't take quinine. It's poisonous to your system." So he said, "So from now on when you get malaria, all you can do is cover up when you get chills." He said, "Sweat it out. I can't help you."

Marcello: Do you alternate between chills and sweat when you have malaria?

Fung: Right. Yes, this has to do with the white blood cells. But anyhow, I got down . . . the first bout lasted about four weeks, and I could shake it off . . . say, a year and half later, I could contract malaria and shake it off in a matter of a couple of weeks, ten days to two weeks.

Marcello: Now what could they do for the dysentery?

Fung: Dysentery, again, was make-shift. Charcoal was the favorite way, you know, getting something in your stomach and intestinal lining.

Marcello: You would just literally eat pieces of charcoal?

Fung: Ground charcoal, yes. Ground or powdered charcoal. But there wasn't anything that the medical people could do. They could sympathize with you.

Marcello: How sick did you have to be to go to the so-called camp hospital?

Fung: By this time, if you went to the hospital, you were really sick. If you had any sense at all, you'd try to stay out of there.

Marcello: Why was that?

Fung: Well, because you knew that that's the place for really sick people. If you're in that condition, the chances are not that good that you can come out of there.

Marcello: They put you in the hospital to die, in other words.

Fung: Well, it wasn't that bad yet at the 55 Kilo, but it gradually got to that point. The farther up you got, the closer the hospital became a death house.

Marcello: The doctors obviously have nothing at all to work with.

Fung: Just their ingenuity, right. They did wonders.

Marcello: By this time, what is your clothing like?

Fung: Clothing is . . . we're getting into the G-string era now. It was one of those things when . . . I think it was Brimhall that first made and put on a G-string. He felt, I guess, kind of silly, because he was the first American. We still hung onto shorts and things like that. Brimhall still had shorts, but he decided that in order to stretch his clothing that he was going to have to make them into G-strings. But it wasn't long after that that we were all wearing G-strings. That was all that was available.

Marcello: What do you do in terms of shaving, brushing your teeth-- the common, ordinary things that we associate with personal hygiene?

Fung: As much as possible, the people hung onto their razors as long as they could, and they would sharpen their razor blades on the beer bottles and things of that nature.

Marcello: In other words, the concave side of a beer bottle.

Fung: That's right. Of course, a prized item would be the

Britishers' . . . I think it's a Rolls type of thing, wood, that comes with a self-sharpening kit of some sort. Anyway, the Americans didn't have it, so they would make their double-edged blades last as long as possible that way. The other thing, of course, was to just grow a beard. Haircuts . . . there had to be a camp barber, and ours was Paul Leatherwood. I scrounged him a straight-edge razor and hair clippers from the Japanese. He had that for years even after the war.

Marcello: I assume that you had to keep your facial hair, as well as the hair on your head, as short as possible because of the lice and bedbugs and any other critters that might be around.

Fung: Well, see, you paid for your haircuts, so I kept my hair long. I didn't have any facial hair to worry about, and I didn't have any problems with lice. I spent my money for soap, and I think one month I even splurged and got some toothpaste. But that didn't help, because my toothbrush was gone.

Marcello: What did you use as a substitute for a toothbrush?

Fung: Well, you'd have to fray the end of a twig or something-- find some kind of bush which had a frayable type of structure and use the end of that. At that, I lost most of my teeth; it didn't help.

Marcello: Where did you get soap and toothpaste and so on?

Fung: You would buy this from the camp canteen.

Marcello: The Japanese had a canteen in camp?

Fung: Well, it was run by the prisoners, but the supplies came from the Japanese. You could buy things like eggs, soap, tobacco, toothpaste.

Marcello: You obviously wouldn't have had very much money to buy these things.

Fung: Well, as I said, if you worked thirty days . . . no, you couldn't work thirty days . . . the Japanese worked on a ten-day basis--ten days work and one day off. So you could earn as much as, say, \$2.50 a month.

Marcello: Another common illness that many prisoners were getting at this time is something that you referred to earlier, and that was the tropical ulcer. Now did you ever have any of these tropical ulcers?

Fung: Many.

Marcello: Okay, describe how you got them, what they did to you, and how you could get rid of them.

Fung: Well, basically, it's an ulcerated area, just a scar . . . well, a cut on part of your skin. Once your skin is open, all sorts of infection can occur. This particular thing, I believe, is like a spirochete. It digs inward. It can be a very small wound, but it's deep. In severe cases, it has eaten clear completely around the shinbone of the leg,

for instance, in the calf area. Now if you're lucky, it doesn't get that far. In the average cases, ulcers . . . say, a good-sized ulcer would, say, be about two to four inches long and about an inch to two inches wide, say, on the leg area. Scars of this size would still have a chance of healing. If it goes beyond that, it almost becomes hopeless. Many times, doctors have to amputate. All you can do is, hopefully, keep it clean and hope that it scabs over without pus underneath. If it scabs over and you see yellow underneath, which is pus, you have to break it open, scrape some more. It's just a matter of being able to withstand the pain. It's either . . . the only reason you can stand the pain is because you know the alternative is to have your damn leg cut off.

Marcello: And very, very, very few people survived amputations.

Fung: Yes, it was the shock, you know; you don't really survive the shock. I think one American--Jones--survived.

Marcello: Did you ever see them using maggots to eat out the dead flesh from the ulcers?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: How did this process work?

Fung: I never did, but I know that some of the fellows did. They would get the wound as clean as possible and put in "X" number of maggots.

Marcello: And maggots were not very hard to come by in these camps.

Fung: Oh, no. All you had to do was walk up to the latrine; they were crawling with maggots. But anyhow, put in, say, ten maggots and let them eat the wound clean and hopefully get ten out. But make sure you get ten out (chuckle)! But the average-sized scar might, as I say, if you're lucky and catch it in time, might be only about an inch in diameter.

Marcello: After you managed to dig out all the dead flesh by the Hekking method, that is, using the sharpened spoon, so to speak . . .

Fung: Oh, his was a silver spoon. His was a special one.

Marcello: . . . then from then on, is it simply a matter of bathing and soaking and nursing these tropical ulcers?

Fung: Right. If you can keep it clean long enough so that it doesn't become reinfected . . . there were two things which were highly prized--one more than the other. One was a so-called sulfanilamide pill, which you could scrape a little powder on, and that would really help. The other one was iodoform, which is kind of like an iodine-type of thing. This was like gold. So your best hope was to keep the wound covered with a clean cloth--you'd just boil the hell out of it to keep it clean--and just hope.

Marcello: Were your ulcers bad enough to keep you off the job?

Fung: No, I was never off the job except for malaria or dysentery.

- Marcello: To be more accurate, obviously all these ulcers are bad, but they weren't bad enough that the Japanese thought you could be off the job.
- Fung: Okay, from my own personal experiences, I could have gone on the job by reporting to sick call. But I never wanted to go on sick call, because . . . two reasons. I was afraid of going on sick call, because it would be admitting to myself that I was sick. Also, I knew that they couldn't do anything for me in the hospital that I couldn't do outside. The other thing was, as long as I could report to work, there was a full ration.
- Marcello: As you mentioned awhile ago, when one did not report to work, one did not get a full ration.
- Fung: Right. In other words, you were not given a rice allotment, so therefore the camp suffered. But it wasn't for that reason; I was deathly afraid of becoming sick. Except for about a week of malaria that I stayed out, why, I more or less worked all the way through.
- Marcello: Now you mentioned that two of the other bad camps were the 80 Kilo Camp and the 105 Kilo Camp.
- Fung: 80 Kilo . . . well, from the time you moved from 55 Kilo, it gradually got worse and worse and worse until 105 Kilo was absolutely the bottom of the pit. Because it was just the accumulation--time and place. It was more mountainous;

it was high in the mountains and was definitely cold at night. You were already in a weakened condition.

Marcello: You're still in the monsoon season, too.

Fung: You're still in the monsoon season. Supplies were short. I even had to go scrounge rice, I mean, for our basic camp supplies, not just for my own use. So that was the worst. I guess once we got over that and going to Thailand, well, we were in good shape.

Marcello: We've talked about the conditions here in the 55 Kilo Camp, and I guess I am to assume that we have the same sort of conditions in 80 and 105 Kilo, only they're worse.

Fung: Yes, they're different only in very minor degrees. The work basically is still cut and fill; you're breaking up rocks for ballast; you're building bridges; you're cutting timber; or you're doing carpentry work. You're doing the usual things like gathering firewood for the camp cook houses. You're boiling water for your own drinking supply.

Marcello: What jobs are good jobs and which jobs are bad jobs in these camps?

Fung: Out on the road or inside the camp?

Marcello: Either, or.

Fung: If you're inside the camp, if you're a cook, that's a pretty good job. Well, another good job would be the cashier officer. For instance, Captain Fitzsimmons went down to the

base camp and got the cash and brought it back. You could be a hospital orderly. I mean, it was a distasteful job, but it wasn't strenuous. Many of the people who couldn't work and contribute in any other way would do things like this . . . voluntarily even. For instance, one Britisher volunteered for smallpox orderly, because he had already had smallpox. There are many people like this who voluntarily did these distasteful things, because they knew it had to be done.

Marcello: Were the cooks a little bit fatter than the general run of the prisoners?

Fung: Not really. I guess maybe they didn't want to take the chance of being fat because it would be so obvious. But there was no question that they ate maybe a little better than the average prisoner.

But the good jobs out on the road would be any job which gave you an opportunity to scrounge something. It didn't matter what the job was as long as there was an opportunity to scrounge. Of course, it had to be from the Japanese.

Marcello: Now when we get up into the 55 and 80 and the 105 Kilo Camps, what sort of a daily death rate are we talking about? You would have to estimate this, of course.

Fung: Stensland had made a bar graph, and it was very graphic.

During the fourteen months of the building of the railroad, it went to a peak just about at the middle of our stay. So starting in October to October to like January . . . so the middle of that fourteen months would be seven months from October, right? The peak would be about April or May.

Marcello: Of 19 . . .

Fung: '43. Again, we're right in the rainy season. I guess, at that time, the highest, that is, American death rate probably was in the neighborhood of fourteen to fifteen per day.

Marcello: Did you ever participate in any of these burial parties?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: What can you do? How do they take place?

Fung: All you can do is . . . at one time, they tried to give a man a decent burial. I remember the first one at 40 Kilo. They made a shroud, tried to make some effort of a coffin. They got contingents from each nationality to have an honor guard, have a decent burial, have a burial service. But, I mean, all that deteriorated to a point where if a man was lucky, he had a rice sack for a shroud, and depending on the weather conditions, if we could dig a hole to cover him, he was lucky. It was the rainy season; the hole would fill in with water. If it was the dry season, many times you were lucky to dig a hole a foot deep.

Marcello: Given the condition that you were in, you didn't have very

much strength to dig a hole, I assume, during the dry season.

Fung: Yes. Well, you did it because it was the decent thing to do, but that was all.

Marcello: Were records being kept of perhaps either the burial sites or . . .

Fung: I can only speak from the American point of view. The burial sites and maps were made for every person, because after the war . . . there are no Americans buried in Kanchanaburi or the Chungkai cemetery. I went over there, and I looked through every one. I was told that all Americans were brought back, because they had accurate information about where everyone was buried. Now again, the Fitzsimmons group lost very few people--like eleven or twelve out of 193.

Marcello: Now by the time we're up to the 55, the 80, and the 105 Kilo Camps, the other Americans have caught up with you?

Fung: No, they never caught up. They were in a different group. We were Group 3; they were Group 5. At one time we were in an adjacent camp, but we were not allowed to contact each other, although we did. But they were either always behind us or in front of us.

Marcello: Do you see cases where men actually give up and die?

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: How could you tell when a man had given up?

Fung: Well, there's several ways. The classical one was . . . I remember distinctly. I didn't believe him at the time. He was a little Dutchman, native Dutch. He said if he wasn't free by a certain date--and this was early in '43 . . . he had made the prediction earlier in '42. He said if he wasn't free by a certain date that he wouldn't live anyway, so he'll kill himself. He did. Now, of course, so he had a self-fulfilling prophesy. But other people give up by . . . I don't know if it's a classical way or not. They start thinking about how depressing the conditions are and what it was like at home and how great it would be to be home again, not realizing they got to get through this period of hell, and how great it was then to get back to the way it could be. Somewhere in between, they just don't make it.

Marcello: Did they stop eating?

Fung: Some of them do. Most of them do, yes. In fact, that's how a lot of people in the hospital, if they had the will to live, can scrounge more rations, because these people literally either don't have the appetite or take it as a way out.

Marcello: Is there any way that you can snap them out of this lethargy, so to speak?

Fung: I know it sounds hard-hearted, but my attitude was that if a

man didn't want to live, there's no way that I could instill it into him. If he wants to live, I'll help him every way I could. But if he gave me the impression or showed me the attitude that he didn't care, I just didn't have enough energy to expend on him.

Marcello: I've heard it from some prisoners that they actually resented it when a man died. Their attitude was, "Well, you sorry son-of-a-bitch, now that's just so much more work that I have to do." Have you ever heard an attitude of this type, you know, "Now I've got to pick up your workload."

Fung: No, I don't think so, because we never resented the fact that men were sick and didn't draw rations on paper. Again, from my own personal point of view, I only hoped that the guys could get out of the hospital. I never resented the fact; no, I was always sorry to hear that people had died, not because of additional workload but just because they died uselessly.

When I heard about cholera and people were dying wholesale, you know, it horrified me. Because I was brought up by a mother who lived in the United States for sixty years, and she never drank a drop of water that was not boiled. When I was a little kid, I used to come home after a hard day's play and just guzzle cold water, and she would be horrified. I asked her why. She said, "Because when I was a little girl, I saw some people die from cholera." It

didn't make any impression on me whatsoever until I saw cholera, and then I knew why it had made such a great impression on her. People literally died before your eyes. I mean, they vomit and they excrete; I mean, they're dying from both ends. You can see a person melt down.

Marcello: Did you actually witness cases of people having cholera?

Fung: Yes. That's why I say you can just literally just see them dying before your very eyes.

Marcello: Where did this occur?

Fung: Up around the . . . between the 80 and 100 Kilo Camps.

Marcello: Now this was at a British camp, wasn't it, or a native camp?

Fung: No, it was a British camp. Even afterwards, you could . . . we . . . even the Japanese gave it a detour. You could smell that camp for miles, I mean. From what we heard, before they left that camp, they were even burning up people that were not really dead yet, but they had to leave, and they couldn't take the chance.

Marcello: I've heard from all the prisoners that cholera just struck a mortal fear into everybody. The ulcers and the malaria and the dysentery were bad enough, but cholera was the ultimate.

Fung: Right. There's only one other time that I lived in literal fear of my life. I ran out of water when I was out on a working party. I came across a running brook. Naturally,

remembering my Boy Scout training, why, this had to be purified water, because it had been running for at least "X" number of miles. I took a drink, and from that minute on, I lived in apprehension for months. I swore from that day on that every drop of water was going to be boiled . . . never again.

Marcello: Now at one time, was there not a hospital camp, so to speak, established at the 80 Kilo Camp?

Fung: Yes. We heard about it. Well, we always knew where the big base hospitals were. Once we moved, Thanbyzayat used to be it; then when that was bombed, I think it moved up to 8 or 10 Kilo. But once I started moving up country, I never went backwards unless it was like 40 to 25 Kilo. I never went into a camp hospital or a base hospital. So I only know from hearsay.

Marcello: Now in the case of the 80 Kilo Camp, I think it is quite accurate to say that the hospital there was a death hospital.

Fung: Right. Again as I say, once I heard about those places, I mean, I knew that the base hospitals were basically death camps and not sickbays.

Marcello: During this period, what thought is constantly on your mind?

Fung: Other than the daily scrounging, you know, being aware of what was scroungable and whether you could scrounge it or not, hell, it's always food. Because even when you're scrounging,

you're scrounging for food . . . except when I needed tools of some sort. For instance, I was sort of like a camp tinsmith. I made buckets for people to boil water with or made frying pans whenever we could scrounge the materials. My scroungings led to a hatchet, pliers, hammers, and chisels. But other than that, it was always food . . . and tobacco.

Marcello: Do you sit around in groups talking about food?

Fung: You not only talk about food that you've had; you talk about food that you're going to have; you talk about how you would prepare it or what you would order.

Marcello: Oh, I bet it must have driven you crazy!

Fung: Well, you usually only talk about these things after you've had a meal, because otherwise it would literally drive you up the wall to even think about it, because your gastric juices would operate without anything else encouraging it.

But I know the first time that my wife came to Texas for a reunion, we got off the airplane at the Midland-Odessa airport. John Owen gave her a great big hug and said, "Did Eddie ever tell you about the time we stole those cigarettes?" I told my wife afterwards that at that time I didn't even smoke. So she looked at me, and she said, "Well, why did you steal the cigarettes?" I said, "Well, because they were scroungable, and you knew that somebody could use them."

But really, when you say, "What do you think about?"

there were times like the emperor's birthday when they would give you a gratis day off, and you would even get paid for it. They would give you extras; they might even give you a whole hog for the camp; they might even give you a little sake. The cooks would put out an extra effort to make it festive, because it is a day off. For instance, even at 25 Kilo, they even organized a, you know, like a race day. Everyone tried to make it a festive day.

But on days like that, if you've had a relatively satisfying meal, then you sit around talking about more food. Then the next thing is family. You would think that a bunch of men would talk about sex, but that's so far down the line that it even . . . it's almost nothing even talked about, because there's so many more important things to talk and feel about. But food and family were definitely the main topics, and especially around Christmastime. I mean, especially with us in the camps, I mean, the feeling of Christmas was a very genuine thing. It had real meaning, not just this business about exchanging gifts or anything like that.

Marcello: Do people become more religious under situations such as you found yourself in?

Fung: I can only speak personally--no. I'm not a Christian, never have been, probably never will be . . . not in that formalized

sense. No, I did not pray to God for strength or anything else.

Marcello: During this period, were you able to write letters, post cards, or anything like that?

Fung: I remember at Singapore, we were given a post card to fill in, you might say: "I am well; I am not well," and so on and so forth. I believe you could write ten words or something of this nature, and they cautioned you to be sure that it was, shall we say, non-controversial, non-committal, and so on. I sent a post card home from that point.

We were given an opportunity farther down the line; I can't remember exactly when. I know it was during the jungle period. I did not utilize that opportunity, because I thought, "Okay, if the first card got home, my mother would know I was alive. But now that I'm in this situation, I'm not going to encourage her anymore, because I might not make it out of here." So I did not utilize that opportunity.

Marcello: I assume that during this period you are not receiving any Red Cross parcels at all.

Fung: No parcels. Let's see, it wasn't until we got to Thailand that we got mail. In terms of sending out word, why, I believe there were two opportunities.

Marcello: When do you finally get out of the jungle?

Fung: Let's see, January of '44.

Marcello: Where did you go when you left the jungle?

Fung: Kanburi.

Marcello: Were you . . . (chuckle) of course, this is a stupid question to ask . . . of course, you were glad to get out of the jungle.

Fung: Well, we saw the other half of the railroad, and we realized that the other half had a more difficult task than we did.

Marcello: Now they were building even more bridges and bigger bridges, I guess, were they not?

Fung: And in rocky conditions. They were dynamiting and blasting to get their work done. But at least we could ride; we rode on the railroad.

Marcello: What'd you think about the idea of riding on that railroad (chuckle)?

Fung: We were a little apprehensive about how good the builders had been or how diligent they had been. But we got down to Kanburi, and by comparison, why, that was like heaven. It was a literal change from hell to heaven.

Marcello: Describe what Kanburi was like.

Fung: Kanburi was just like any other camp, except for the fact that you knew you were out of the jungle; you were in a camp that was very large, broad, flat; it had fairly well-built buildings and structures. There was a canteen, and the camp canteen had supplies. If you had money, you could buy bananas, peanuts,

fried eggs; those were the three things that I was more concerned about than anything else.

Of course, if you didn't have money, you could always manage to earn some money. But for instance, the people in the jungle who had earned, say, two or three dollars a month wouldn't have anyplace to spend it, because for the last several months, why, the canteen had no supplies because even the camp had no supplies. So by the time you came down to Kanburi, you had a chance, then, to buy relatively . . . that is, reasonably priced food. I mean, eggs were ten cents; bananas, I believe, were five cents apiece; eggs you could buy. I've forgotten now how much peanuts were, but I think for a small, say, jigger glass full, why, it'd be a nickel.

Marcello: How could you earn money to buy these things in the canteen?

Fung: Well, by this time, of course, most of your possessions are gone, but if you had any left, you could still sell it because the Thais were, of course, also buying any manner of things. You could still go out to work and earn money. For instance, many people, if they were incapable of going out to work, would take in washing and things of this nature. Or you could patch up other people's clothes . . . you know, be like a tailor. These were some of the ways you could earn some money.

Marcello: Was there very much work to be done while you were in Kanburi?

Fung: There was work to be done. There were internal camp duties to begin with, and there were outside work parties. For instance, the Japanese had headquarters in that area, and there was work to be done there. But in a way, the Japanese were very generous to us for a period of about a month or two; they let us rest up.

Marcello: I guess they realized that they'd probably gotten about as much out of you guys as they possibly could, and they had to ease off for a month or so while you were there at Kanburi before they could put you back to work, so to speak.

Fung: Well, I don't really know. There was a reorganization. We were Group 3, and then we were transferred to Group 5, so we were under another Japanese administrative control. Maybe that may have been the reason for it.

Marcello: And I assume that the other Americans didn't catch up with you here at Kanburi, either.

Fung: No, they . . . well, it was a while later when the Americans began to intermix now. I mean, we're starting to get back together.

Marcello: I'm sure you had all sorts of stories to swap.

Fung: Yes. Because even though the experiences are similar, they're different in various degrees--your own personal reactions and the various guards you encountered.

Marcello: Now when you go to Kanburi, do you still have your Korean guards?

Fung: Well, they're mostly . . . well, the main guards were the Japanese, but the Koreans were still with us.

Marcello: How long did you stay at Kanburi altogether?

Fung: Kanburi was . . . roughly maybe eight months or so.

Marcello: Now during that eight-month period, do you more or less make progress in terms of the dysentery and the ulcers and things of that nature?

Fung: My ulcers healed up within two months of getting to Kanburi, because by this time, even the doctors managed to get some medical supplies. Almost immediately, as soon as we got some iodoform, why, almost everyone started to heal.

Marcello: Kanburi's closer to the civilization, in other words.

Fung: I don't know if it was closer or not, but there were supplies available, right. We know that there was a big Japanese medical supply house, and I even stole a case of quinine out of there once.

Marcello: What did you do with it when you stole it?

Fung: Oh, I gave it to Doc Hekking, because he mentioned one time that he was getting short of quinine. He looked at me, and he said, "I don't want you to take any crazy chances, though," because he knew damn well what I was going to do . . . after he saved my life at 55 Kilo.

So I found out where it was kept and took it over the lunch hour and took it back in with the empty rice baskets.

I decided instead of trying to bring it back one bottle at a time and taking . . . let's see, I believe there were twenty-four bottles . . . taking twenty-four separate chances of being caught (chuckle), well, "I'll bring it back all at one time, and if I'm caught, I'm going to be dead anyway whether it's one or twenty-four." The guards were only searching sporadically, so I decided to take the chance. I took it in, and they didn't even bother to look at us.

Marcello: How did you get into the supply room to begin with?

Fung: Well, it was the Japanese medical officer's hut. I cased the place for about two days, and there was a way in--the back way. It was all matting, you know, not sheet rock or wood or anything. So by untying the matting, I could slip in. There were four cases of quinine, so I took the bottom case and put the three full ones back on top. As far as I know, there was never any big stink about it, so I don't know if they ever discovered it or not.

Marcello: Other than stealing quinine, how did you occupy yourself during this eight-month stay here at Kanburi?

Fung: We worked; we were bombed by the Americans, I would imagine; and I had a big birthday party.

Marcello: Well, let's take these things in order. What sort of work were you doing there at Kanburi?

Fung: We were working down by the river loading and unloading barges;

there were rice and oil--things of this nature. Or we'd go to the Japanese headquarters and work around their camp grounds doing their kind of work.

Marcello: Has the harassment slacked off?

Fung: Generally speaking, it had. It was worse inside the camp than outside. When you were outside, you were working with the Japanese, and they never bothered us too much. I think they were grateful for help.

Marcello: Was the required work reasonable? In other words, was it hard work?

Fung: It wasn't hard work; it was just work. By this time, why, anything that seemed to be a reasonable task, given a reasonable number of hours to work, just was heaven-sent.

Marcello: I guess being on these work parties gave you more opportunity to trade with the natives and so on, also, did it not?

Fung: No, the general rule is that . . . there's established traders in a camp. He's the person who takes the chances of going outside the camp with what you want to sell; he makes contact with the natives; he sells it; he takes a commission.

Marcello: These camps have no fences and so on around them, do they?

Fung: They do, but they're not barbed wire fences or anything in this sense of the word; they're not electrified or they're not patrolled constantly. There's just a guardhouse that people walk . . . have to go through the main gate. But the fences

. . . you could just cut and crawl through any place you wanted.

Marcello: What would happen if somebody were caught going out through the fence?

Fung: You'd probably get a good beating at least, but that would be about the extent of it. Now if you were caught bringing in a newspaper or something like that, that would be a very bad thing from the Japanese point of view. But if you just broke the camp rules of, say, going outside the fence to do some trading . . . yes, you were outside the fence which is not allowed; they might bash you about, and that's about it.

Marcello: Now you talked about experiencing air raids here at Kanburi.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Why don't we pursue this particular topic. I think it's important and interesting.

Fung: And it's terrifying (chuckle)! Because the first time we were bombed . . . let's see, it was in Kanburi. You could see the airplanes coming over; the bomb bays were open. You could literally look up and see, you know, little red, green, blue lights, you know--whatever panels they were. It was near Thanksgiving time . . . no, it was earlier. No, it was near Thanksgiving time--around October, November. They were using a smokestack for some sort of reckoning point. You could just see these B-24's come over. They flew over the

camp, but they were making their run; they were lining up. They weren't bombing the camp, not this first time. They were after the Japanese part.

Marcello: They knew that there were prisoners down there obviously?

Fung: They must have known, or they should have known (chuckle). But anyway, they were bombing the Japanese headquarters area, and you could just see them . . . the bombs were coming out of the bomb bays like a farmer pitching hay. You would say to yourself, "That's got to be it! That's got to be the bomb load!" They would come back around that smokestack and drop it again. You wondered how many bombs they were carrying. They were carrying incendiaries, too. Fellows were foolish enough to even pick them up the following day when they were out on work parties, never realizing how dangerous they were.

But the first time, they never touched the camp. The second time they came over, they were trying to get the bridge at Tamarkan, and the Japanese were foolish enough to open up fire. I'm telling you! You talk about mad! I guess they fired every round of .50-caliber they had on every one of those airplanes. Unfortunately, their bombing was off, too, because some bombs hit the base camp. I don't think they did that intentionally, but there were some POW's killed.

Marcello: How close were you to this actual bombing?

Fung: Tamarkan is about, give or take, I'd say about four miles from

Kanburi, so it's very close. When we heard about some of these POW's getting killed, why, it kind of does something to you. Because you've just gotten out of the jungle period, and now your own people are after you, and you know they are much more efficient than the Japanese.

Marcello: The Japanese evidently have these camps marked in no way at all, that is, by perhaps painting big "POW" signs on the roof or anything of that sort.

Fung: No. No Red Cross markings. I mean, like you probably know that the Thanbyuzayat base camp was completely bombed out. After the first bombing, they asked the Japanese if they could mark it. The Japanese said, "No, it would make the camp too conspicuous." I'm not sure why the Thanbyuzayat base camp got bombed out, because they must have known that there was a big POW base camp, and yet it was literally bombed out.

Marcello: Aside from the terrifying nature of these air raids, what did they do for your morale?

Fung: Well, you realized . . . naturally, you realize that they're your airplanes, whereas during the war, why, you were lucky to see one of your airplanes. If you did see one, it was probably being chased by a Japanese. Here they were, coming over as if they owned the sky.

Marcello: Is this really your first indication that the tide had turned, so to speak?

Fung: Well, of course, you always heard rumors, but you learned not to put your hopes on rumors. I mean, we heard about the Coral Sea battle and all those things of that nature, like Midway, the Battle of Midway. But here you have evidence right before your eyes that, "They are here; they're taking some action." Of course, out on the work parties, you also . . . there were rumors of an OSS team working in the area, and we saw the Thais with these beautiful short Colt .45's that only the officers had. I mean, they were the latest issue. They were carrying them openly in the streets.

Marcello: Thais were carrying these?

Fung: Yes. So we knew that there was definitely a change or shift, and it was very encouraging. But, of course, on the other hand, now you didn't know whether you were going to make it through, because you were being hit from both sides.

Marcello: Now how does the Japanese attitude change as a result of these air raids?

Fung: The Japanese didn't like it a bit simply because . . . of course, their morale was going the other way. In order to boost their morale (chuckle), they would take it out on us. The other thing was that we would curse the Air Force people because they would tear up our handiwork, and we'd have to work overtime to either repair it, or in the case of a bridge,

where you couldn't repair it right away, you would have to carry everything across the bridge or across the river and transship it and put it on another boxcar. It just made a lot of extra work for us.

Marcello: Did you ever have to work on any of these bombed-out bridges and buildings and roads and so on?

Fung: Oh, yes. In fact, we were caught out . . . when we were working from the Tamarkan area, we were caught out. I guess they knew about our work schedules were--that we would usually be in the camp before six o'clock--but this particular night, we were out there at 6:30. These bombers came over, and, I mean, the Nips, the Koreans, and the prisoners-of-war just ducked wherever they could.

Marcello: I was going to say, when one of these raids comes up suddenly, is it more or less every man for himself?

Fung: Every man for himself. Nobody cared about . . .

Marcello: In other words, you may be diving into a hole next to a Japanese guard or whatever.

Fung: I mean, there were many times when we wondered whether this might not become the most dangerous part. Of course, we were beginning to hear rumors, too, because we have to build this large ditch all around the Kanburi camp. We also noticed that the Japanese were putting in machine gun emplacements, which was very unusual, because they had been very casual about

guarding us. We began hearing rumors about possibly that there might be a wholesale slaughter in case they were losing the war. With their attitude of not taking prisoners and not becoming prisoners, some credence could have been put upon it.

Marcello: Just another thing to make you worry.

Fung: Well, yes, just one more thing.

Marcello: You mentioned that you had a birthday here at Kanburi that seems to stand out in your mind.

Fung: (Chuckle) Well, this was in '44, and I was twenty-two at the time. Before I left home, my mother said two things to me. She said, "Take care of yourself." She said, "Remember when you're twenty-one, you become a man." And she said, "It's a very important day in your life." She said, "If you were home, I would have a big party for you." So she said, "If you can, make sure you celebrate." So I couldn't celebrate it when I was twenty-one because we were up-country. But when we came down-country, I think I spent about two hundred dollars. I got together with the Chinese merchant who was supplying the camp. I told him what I wanted.

Marcello: Where'd you get two hundred dollars?

Fung: Well, you've got to remember I was a pretty good scrounger (chuckle). I sold a camera that I bought for twenty dollars that I had carried all the way through the jungles. It was

a camera that I had intended to keep for myself. But then the Japanese started cracking down on searches in other camps, and Captain Fitzsimmons suggested that I get rid of the camera because it was getting too dangerous to try to hide it. So I got the camp trader to sell it for me. I decided, "We're going to have one great big party." We had duck; we had chicken; we had roast pork; we had fish; we had all sorts of food.

Marcello: How many people did you invite to the party?

Fung: All the Americans (chuckle). There was the sailors and the artillerymen; it didn't matter. As long as he was an American, why, he was invited.

Marcello: Did you manage to get hold of any sake or anything of that nature?

Fung: No, I'm a teetotaler myself, so I never thought about spending money on sake. Food was more interesting to me.

Marcello: How long did the party last?

Fung: Oh, it lasted a good half day.

Marcello: Now did the Japanese have no objections to you purchasing this food and so on from the Chinese merchant? Were there any problems here?

Fung: It was a personal transaction between myself and the merchant. As far as the Japanese were concerned, he was just bringing in camp supplies. But he brought it in all cooked. I told

him what it was for, and he said, "Fine." I think we got our money's worth, because being Chinese, he could understand what I was doing.

Marcello: Now where did you go from Kanburi?

Fung: We went over to Tamarkan; then we went to Chungkai for awhile. There was a small camp . . . I can't remember the name exactly . . . something like Tamuang or something like that. I can't be absolutely sure. Then from there we moved to the last camp that we were going to, which was, what, about eighty kilometers northeast of Bangkok. It's two words--Nakom Paton. It's a camp that the officers were subsequently moved to from Kanburi. But it's about eighty kilometers northeast of Bangkok. That was our last work camp.

Marcello: Now in all these other stops, were they all very brief?

Fung: They were fairly brief, right. Because when we got to this last camp, we had to build it from scratch. There was rice paddies, mostly fields around it, and we were supposed to dig caves. We were digging caves and building roads, because this was supposed to be the last . . . Custer's Last Stand, you might say, for the Japanese. They were going to make their last stand right there.

Marcello: Well, it was at this camp where you finally got liberated.

Fung: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, why don't we talk a little bit about the liberation. Describe how the whole process took place. Let's begin when the war was over.

Fung: No, let's don't.

Marcello: Okay.

Fung: Let's go just a few days before the war ended. We have been going out on regular work parties. The last week or so, I was personally with a small group working in the Japanese headquarters kitchen. They were very nice to us. I mean, they shared their rations with us, and they were cordial with us. We didn't think that this was too strange, because, after all, they had plenty of food, and it seemed like a very decent thing that they were doing--sharing with us. There were about six of us.

Then two days before the war ended, we were scheduled to go out on a work party; it was called off. We had been issued our lunch; we had our mess kits with us and everything ready to go to work. It was called off.

Marcello: In the meantime, had you been experiencing more air attacks and so on?

Fung: There weren't too many air attacks in this particular camp, but we saw a lot of B-29's going overhead. But, of course, we saw B-29's going over months before that. But the following day, we were called for a work detail, and again we just

sat around waiting to go out. Again, we didn't go out.

Then they called us together at the parade ground. Then all of a sudden, in the pit of my stomach, I had the feeling, you know, "There's something really big that's going to go on." They had us all lined up. The camp was, I'd say, about 3,000 people. I believe . . . I think there was a British Sergeant Major Redhill, who was in charge of the camp, because there were no officers. He got us all together on the big parade ground. He got up where everyone could see and hear him, and he said, "Gentlemen, I'm here to inform you that the war is over."

Now to an outsider, you probably picture, you know, hats thrown in the air and screams of joy. Everyone was just silent for about . . . I would guess about two minutes, because I think everyone was figuring, you know, "This is almost too much to take in. It's really all over? Okay, what does it mean?" You know, we haven't seen anything. Just like when we capitulated to the Nips, we never saw any Japanese. "Now you're telling that it's all over. We don't know anything yet."

But after a couple of minutes, why, one of the Britishers went with a "hip-hip-hurrah," and that started the whole thing. Not more than one hour later, here we got back to the normal routine. Everyone had built a flag out of anything that was

available; but they built their flag. We build our red, white, and blue; the British built theirs; the Australians built; the Dutch built. Now the competition was to see who would fly it on the highest flagpole. There we were back to normal (chuckle).

Marcello: What were your own feelings when the fact that the war was over began to sink in, so to speak?

Fung: My own feeling was that . . . I always had doubts whether I would make it through. I was just relieved that, "Okay, you're still here. You'll make it through."

I don't know if you can gather from what we've been talking about that I was a fairly wild kid. I mean, by our standards, for a kid to run away from home in a Chinese family is a very disgraceful thing. So I was telling myself that I was going to go back and tell my mother that everything that she and my father had been trying to get through to me that I now finally understand and that I'll try to live up to it. But unfortunately, she had died in May of '45. I also . . . it's a strange thing; I knew when she died. Because May is the beginning of the rainy season, and I had a feeling--no vision, not anything like that. I just had a sudden feeling in May that, "I'm not going to see my mother." But it wasn't depressing, because I knew . . . that was one of my greatest hopes. I was pinning my hopes on telling my mother in person

that "I got the message. You got it through--what you want me to be and why you want me to be that way."

Marcello: Describe your first encounter with Americans.

Fung: Well, let's see, that was to be after they trucked us into Bangkok. We were down by what they called the go-downs, the warehouse area. They issued us uniforms. I remember distinctly there was a place for hot showers.

Marcello: Now when you say "they," are you referring to the Japanese?

Fung: No, the Americans--the first Americans that we encountered.

Marcello: Now where did you encounter these Americans?

Fung: In Bangkok.

Marcello: Okay, but you mentioned that you were trucked from wherever you were down to Bangkok.

Fung: I'm not sure whether it was Japanese or Thais. I think they were natives; I don't believe they were Japanese. Yes, I don't even know what happened to them. But we were trucked into Bangkok, and then we were taken over by Americans. Nothing extraordinary, just a little hot showers and a clothing issue to make sure that we were presentable to get on the airplane. When we got to Rangoon, why, we dropped down into the airfield. I remember they had Red Cross ladies, and they had sandwiches waiting for us.

Personally, it was a very awkward feeling to see civilized people after such a long period of time. Of course, I think

we gave the hospital personnel in Calcutta a lot of trouble, too, because we couldn't get used to sleeping in beds.

Marcello: Also, were you kind of in a position where you had taken orders for so long that you maybe weren't going to take too many more orders from anybody?

Fung: I'm not sure it was that as much as the fact that we felt more comfortable sleeping on the floor. I personally had the feeling that we hadn't done . . . the way they were treating us, they were treating us as if we were something extraordinary. My own personal feeling was that we hadn't really done anything for the war effort, and I felt kind of guilty that we hadn't really contributed anything to winning of the war.

Marcello: Did you have much trouble handling good food again?

Fung: Well, I remember the first night we hit Calcutta . . . macaroni and cheese and a peach half and a glass of milk. This was about eleven o'clock at night. I thought, "This is great for a snack, but tomorrow at breakfast . . ." Of course, that was all we had; it wasn't a chow line or anything; you couldn't get anything extra. But the following morning, I remember distinctly for breakfast there was ham, sausage, bacon, eggs, fruits--oh, half a dozen variety of fruits. I took a little of everything, took about one mouthful of sausage, and I almost gagged. The first time I saw a medical officer, I said, "Look, what the hell's going on here? I can't

eat?" He said, "What do you mean, you can't eat?" I said, "Stuff feels queasy going down to my stomach." "Well," he said, "you've got to give yourself a week or two. You can't just go down to the chow line and expect to eat the way you used to." He said, "Just as you gradually got used to starvation, you have to gradually get used to eating again." And he was right, of course.

Marcello: Did you have any problems adjusting to civilian life after you went through this ordeal?

Fung: No, except that I was a lot more independent. The remark you made about not taking orders . . . I'm pretty independent. I mean, I won't step on another fellow's toes, because I know what that feels like. I don't want anymore stepping on my toes, either. I think that's one of the most valuable things to learn.

Marcello: As you look back upon your experiences as a prisoner-of-war, what do you see as being the key to your survival?

Fung: Key?

Marcello: Why did you make it while a great many others are still over there yet?

Fung: I can't give you an answer to that, because I know there are a lot of men who wanted to live that didn't make it. I mean, the survivors are not all good; we're not all bad. So I don't think that has anything to do with it. A lot of men had more

to live for than I did and didn't make it. I don't know what it is, because . . . I know a half a dozen men who wanted desperately to live for reasons of their own, and they still didn't make it. It wasn't because they didn't try. I can't give you a reason.

Marcello: Well, Mr. Fung, I want to thank you very much for having taken time to speak with me today. You've said a lot of interesting and very important things. I'm sure that scholars are going to find your comments quite valuable when they use them to write about your experiences.

Fung: I hope it's been useful.