

CHAIM NUSSBAUM

Experiences as a Prisoner-of-War in the Far East, 1942-1945

Interviewed by  
Charles G. Roland, M.D.

31 January 1986

Oral History Archives  
Hannah Chair for the History of Medicine  
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Rabbi Chaim Nussbaum, Willowdale, Ontario: HCM 2-86

Charles G. Roland, MD:

Could we begin, then, by your telling me your full name, where you were born -- just that bit of background that we spoke about?

Chaim Nussbaum:

I'm Chaim Nussbaum. Born close to Auschwitz, where I lived up to my fifth year. Then we moved to Holland where I got my education.

C.G.R.:

Your birth date, may I just interrupt.

C.N.:

Yes, my education at . I was born the 13th of September 1909. And they set....Oh the details you don't mind. In Holland I got my elementary, of course, and high school education and University -- light? in university. After my high school time I went to Lithuania, to a world known Yeshiva, which was a Talmud College in Telsai?. There I did time only one year. I concentrated on Talmudic studies, which I did before, before that in Holland. I returned then to Leyden University.

In 1937 I went to Pek , Lithuania. At that time, having a teacher's college and further doing postgraduate work in in an studies.

Now, what I did study was theoretical physics, and atomical physics in the light. Although my specialties were on some other lines besides mathematics. There was psychology -- I'm very much philosophy. I lectured also, later. I was then

in Lithuania, and in 1940 Holland was occupied in the meantime. I mean occupied by the Germans. We left via Moscow and Siberia to Japan, on our way to Curacao, one of the islands here. But in Japan I changed the route. We went to Java. I was encouraged by the Netherlands consulate to do that, and my old love for Java, for Indonesia, which I had from school time -- tremendously. So I went there. I would be in the war, anyway, a bit more.

I taught there. I was acting rabbi, honorary rabbi. I didn't want to accept a full-time, a real rabbinical job. I was teaching again in the teacher's college. This time it was a general college -- mathematics, physics, math conception. Then the war came.

C.G.R.:

Were you were married at this time?

C.N.:

Oh yes, I'm sorry. The main thing I forgot to tell you. I was married, already, in 1936 in Holland. From there, this is where we went to Russia. We had, at that time, already two children, one born in Holland, one born in Lithuania, and one we had lost in Japan -- medical problems. Quinine, apparently, too much of it. Anyway, we lost that baby after the fourth day, fifth day. Then in Java, we went to Java then, to sit, where I taught, and the war broke out. I decided to join the war, although as a rabbi I didn't have to. I and a second man. I would be a chaplain. Although there were no Jewish chaplains there. No need for them because there were no, only Christians in the army. But I didn't mind as long as I can do something. So I was acting chaplain really, only, not a real full chaplain.

This is the story of how I arrived into the Japs.

C.G.R.:

Now was this in the Netherlands Far East?

C.N.:

Java -- Netherlands East Indies. Yes. It was really the Colonial Curacao's in Indonesia? I was then in Bandung. I was then, in the end, in the prisoner-of-war camp. Again, because I wanted to remain with the army. I didn't have to go there. I thought this would be the best thing how I could make....I also had a chance to go to Australia the last month [before the surrender]. My wife didn't want to go, only with me. I thought, again, running away from the affair in which we are very much involved as Jews wouldn't be the right thing. I was the only really spiritual leader there. Then we were in -- you want further? --in Java. I mean we went first to Bandung camp for about four or five months. There we had a good time lecturing etc. We went from there down to Tjilitjap.

C.G.R.:

Yes.

C.N.:

Oh, you know that already.

C.G.R.:

Oh yes.

C.N.:

It's a port out of the Indian Ocean -- south. There we had the first time -- we knew what a concentration camp is. The first camp, and the second camp was even worse. We suffered a

lot always. But you don't want to hear these things because you can read it in the book [Rabbi Nussbaum had a book, eventually published as Chaplain on the River Kwai, 1987]. We came then back from there, at the end we got a different commandant who was very nice -- "Opa" we called him -- father or grandfather. He was really preparing us for going to work for the railway, the railroad; he told us we could help very much, be very helpful for the army, for the nations, if we helped there.

We went then to Java, to Batavia back. Batavia is now Jakarta. From there to Singapore -- a hard trip. But we arrived in Singapore well. There was a lot of freedom in the sense that the Japanese did not mix into our things -- only starvation, hunger. The alternative was go to Siam, and there "you would have lots to eat." You did when you arrived there. The first place, lots to eat. So much so that it was hard later to walk behind the people. You know the gases which came out all night from all these eggs, 13, 14 eggs that we'd eaten! All that much -- this is medical already. [laughter] And people all of a sudden....So we had there, again, interesting difficult, interesting trips where we arrived in Siam, Thailand. I said the first camp was eating your full, more than you're full. But this was the end.

The next day you had to march. Others marched nine days, fifteen nights. We were lucky we came very late, the last phase. We came there in May of '43, which was already the late date. So we came to finish, help to finish the job. Was an officers' group, so we had it easier. They made the officers work -- another story there on the Bridge of the River Kwai.

This was a real problem. But then Colonel Humphries was fighting very hard to get privileges. So therefore our group was at least not beaten much at the beginning. So we went then up.

We came into the cholera season. The Japanese gave us a lot of injections. Many of our men thought, of course, that they wanted to poison us and tried to do everything to avoid getting it. Apparently these three that died from cholera were just those who hadn't, who were smart enough in racing back and running forth in avoiding to get these injections. So we got the injections and we didn't suffer from cholera, pretty well nothing. In camps around they lost 130 people in one day -- the British group there across the way. But they were starved and exhausted and yellow-skin-looking, had given up. I said they weren't even any more British. British always say, "too bad," bad luck. But they were apparently already beyond...I've never seen British be beyond saying, "it's bad luck" -- they had faith. They had lost all the hope as the Dutch would have done. You know, the British are so different in this.

Now, this is also an interesting aspect which I think has been discussed already, you know by others.

C.G.R.:

The difference between.....

C.N.:

The attitude. the attitude of taking it and therefore dying more and faster because they weren't fighting. Their doctors weren't fighting. The doctors would not, the Dutch doctor, would try to get one of his men out of the duties if he's sick or weak.

They would say, "Listen, we can't do it. If you won't go someone else will have to go." They were almost half dead already. But as long as the Japanese demanded it they sent them out. I was saved, as a matter of fact, because I had skin trouble, so believe that?, and dysentery. The doctor, he was a colonel, an Indian, British Indian colonel, and he had often this attitude, proud, independent and you can't break them. When the Japanese said I had to go out from the sick bay, we have to join, I would never have survived it. This was one of the days when they did 48 hours and 70 hours working. But anyway, this colonel said, "No. He's a sick man, he will dirty up -- dysentery." The place that sent them he said, "Ohhhhh, you gooda, gooda, gooda." He did put a real, only British officer can do, he said, "Attention to us, to fall? a quick march. [laughter] Go to your bay." The Japanese were so surprised. They are surprised that you're really the boss. An interesting fact -- right. Anyway, this pretty well saved my life. There's no question that this was a time when I had dysentery a long time and skin trouble. I did not have malaria. This was another....You don't mind that I go from one point to the other?

C.G.R.:

This is just what I'm interested in.

C.N.:

What you want. Malaria, if we had malaria, this is at least our experience, anyone with both who was unfortunate enough to have malaria and dysentery, didn't survive. At least I don't know of such a case. There's no scientific proof -- right. But

I don't know of a case -- my people knew a lot of them going around. That one because these two things together was too much. Blood was, you know, the malaria first your blood, and then you your health?. So I was lucky that the mosquitoes didn't love me -- they never loved me in my life. Only very few times. They would have, most of them, and this [malaria] came back, like menstruation of a woman. They knew already, like a woman talks of [having a menstrual period] -- "Oh, next Tuesday, I'll be out." It was tragic to have such things we have so plain. You feel bad about it. The resignation: then we will be out. Not that being out but having resigned to the situation and accepting everything as it goes. It must go this way.

Now when I came, my first dysentery trouble, you've my sickness more to , was already in Changi. This means in Singapore Island. I got, and I didn't realize even that I got it. You see it so much around you. This is after, psychologically interesting. I heard I was running every five minutes, ten minutes, to the toilet, to the washroom at the big building. And painful, pain and troublesome. Finally I saw blood. I did discover blood. So the next morning the doctors came. Only a doctor came. My friends called him doctor, and I went to the hospital. It doesn't matter all these details I had. I had a South African doctor, Dr. Blum. He was a German Jew, interestingly. He sat down by me. Nussbaum is also German sound. In Dutch it's -- in Holland, if I would have been born there it wouldn't have been Nussbaum. So Nussbaum, he saw most like , so he sat down. He made you a very nice

man?. He gave me M & B [May & Baker sulfa drug] tablets. We had this still in Singapore. They had this still from the beginning of the war apparently. They had quite much in their hospital at camp there -- quite much. So he gave me, he warned me not to vomit it out because he had a few only. He had to be very careful. I laid down and my friends around, "Oh, don't vomit." [laughter]. And I didn't. It was hard, in our situation, our condition. So after three days things became better. Then I went back to the....In the meantime my groups, the Dutch groups had already left for this island.

C.G.R.:

For the railway.

C.N.:

Yes, for this island. I came then with the last, real last group. This officers' group of "H" Force. We went up, and the trip was very, the conditions were hard on the train, the rice train. But through this you had a door open, the door of the cattle wagon. You know, there were...when you have to use it as if this was your latrine also. You had a beam over, wide, you go under the beam or over the beam and then you turn around, and you did what you had to do to relieve yourself. But it was at least fresh air and the train didn't go too fast.

I don't know of any sicknesses on the trip. On the trip down we did have. Back, when we went back because the sick people came into the train sick. It was very hard. Now this was at 28? People in that wagon, you may have heard already about this...no?

C.G.R.:

Yes, but please go ahead.

C.N.:

Then I can skip it. So when I arrived there, we arrived after five days, we had more stations, and there we got good food to eat. You could buy anything there. They gave you the stations on the way up. I had personally quite many stories there. You know, people, because this isn't medically interesting. And we arrived there. Their first black marketeers who wanted, like old Dutch people who wanted to empty us out. That we should give them away everything we had, because everything would be taken away from us anyway by the people of the roads. With nine nights we would get so tired that you would throw it away anyway. There wasn't much liar? in it. "Anyway, you shouldn't sell anything here, it's dangerous." Which wasn't true at all. The children came, "How much, how much?" [laughter] So anyway, from there we were lucky. We didn't have to go the nine nights or fifteen nights. If you have been there, you know the trip, you can see it on your map. We had the first night, we could have , we could have gone by the first two night, we could have gone by truck. I did because I got new shoes. We had to have boots, we got from the...which the British had still there from before. Only they killed me on the way. So the next night they put me on the truck, the doctor put me on the truck, which was very nice. So I had only one night.

C.G.R.:

To save your feet.

C.N.:

Yes. My feet couldn't walk. They were rubbed off. You know the shoes fit very badly. You could survive it, but it was a very hard walk. So he said, "Don't walk on these feet." That's the only reason that he did it. Not only me. There was quite a group -- two truckloads went riding. Now, when we came to the other camp, the Kanburi Camp, maybe you've heard the word Kanburi there? Now this camp was a very nice camp. We had a first accident, a sergeant had come the night before. He had slept there over the day in the sun. Sunstroke, and he didn't wake up any more. Because the sun, in the meantime, moved; we didn't have any tents but you moved under something like a roof or so. But the sun had moved, and he was sleeping through from the all-night's walk. He had walked. So he was dead. This was the first accident on the road we had.

Now, further injections and soon a few day and we got now the train. The train [railroad] was already finished up to Tasao. Tasao was a, they called it that very, I would say it was a great exaggeration, a hospital camp. Very exaggerated to say that this is the hospital camp. But they got at least there aspirin. There we found, not we, it was . Oh yes, we come from Tasao; it was a beautiful trip and we found that we met people who came on the train who were from a camp, also from Bandung and they were in the medical field -- which means this was official transportation. They made transports. So they were transporting all the medical supplies as far as they could. It was interesting to meet them -- old friends from Bandung. So they helped here and there. At their camp (this I heard later, on my way back), they didn't have one casualty. And wouldn't

most like them, we went back it was already the bad time. They didn't have...because they were, of course, all the time on the way on the road. They had medical supplies and food. So you see, it wasn't Thailand, it wasn't the railroad -- of course it was the conditions. Although the railroad and the conditions, there were very bad. So we went on from Tasao, there I came up this already a tragic trip. Not for me. Yes, we had a stick and so are my friends -- but tragically we met the people coming down. There was a narrow path and it was all the time rain and was muddy. So when the people start to come down they came down, there wasn't much place, and they were thinking, where to go. And we went up, and we mixed. In other words it was all intermingled. You didn't really know who is up and who is down. There I saw what I called "death mask" people. "Death mask" -- really still living but skeletons, -- dead persons, right. You call them....

C.G.R.:

Corpses?

C.N.:

Yes, walking corpses. That's really . It's interesting, so there's no life there. This, I mean to give you the picture as you see it. Really dead people they looked. It was also a bit foggy -- OK, that's my imagination, healthy imagination. But you could take them for being corpses, walking; there was something inside, apparently alive that you didn't see that they were alive. And they fell, just happened before me one fell, an officer, and then the men thereafter fell on top of him.

Then it came nice it was, people who were three-quarters, also skeletons, skeletons and corpses, they still direct, put up the men, the officer and the other men and they are bringing them down. They had it at least easier to go down to the so-called Tasao camp.

I spoke to one of them. I'm not happy that you come down. I saw already what had happened there that you will be in the hospital. No, he's not happy he just as well could have died up there. I would get a few, they knew already a few aspirins. He'll be here a week or so and then we'll be declared again fit to go up and there will definitely die. This time there won't be any more come down. This was the mood. So we had heard already the rumors in Singapore, also, that things were not as good because their people had come . Even the Japanese soldiers had sent. So, but, people like to believe that things were that good because you were officially told that they were.

Now, when we came, this was then my first experience with what it meant, what we had up there. We went on and I came, not long, no days and no nights. I thought it would be a very tragic thing. I hadn't told you that we slept over there in Tasao. We had hot tea in the camp, which was very empty. So we had gone then in the morning up. So we were already [at that time] healthy and strong. But when we arrived at around 2 o'clock and the first time stopped in this rain and mud, and climbing all the time the road going up, then we finally were told by the Japanese we can go into this camp. We saw a lot of people there. The first thing we saw was the river, and we ran to the river -- so thirsty! --and we started to drink from the

water. Immediately a noise behind us -- tremendous noise -- "Stop, stop, stop!" Cholera, it's cholera-infested, the water was. Now, I thought at the moment, cholera-infested, but I drank it already. I took one or two more handfuls of water, and I cursed myself immediately. A rabbi and scientist, how can you do such a thing? But you know what it was, of course, a justification. I had it already anyway. I drank already....

C.G.R.:

A little more wouldn't hurt.

C.N.:

Wouldn't if you had enough. I mean really, it's true, if the water was, it wouldn't hurt that badly, but it definitely doesn't help, right, for the body fighting it. So here, this was the next thing. But at camp was, yes, and we were told we don't have to go any further. So we had only two-thirds of a day walking -- tremendous! We were really lucky, otherwise I wouldn't have been here to tell you the story.

C.G.R.:

Now which camp was this? Was this Tonchan did you say?

C.N.:

This is not yet, but this is close to Tonchan. This was really Tonchan. I don't know which, but it wasn't our camp itself, but the area, right -- Tonchan. This is how far we got. This was the northernmost point. It was after Tasao. I couldn't say much, maybe 30 miles or so. You'll find that....here it looks farther.

So anyway, when we arrived there we had, of course,

interesting stories. We were building our huts. When we were finished, the Japanese came laughing, [saying] how it wasn't for you, it was meant for the Tamils. You know, the Indian forced laborers. Oh they were . The Tamils didn't have any doctors. We had doctors, we had medical service. So we were lucky. Tamils didn't have. They were the so-called free people. They got a full tenko from a quarter of a dollar a day or a tenth of a dollar, and they gambled with it. They were talkative people, talkative. And gambled. But they died. The road when we went up already we saw, on the road you could see the death of four? persons.

Then they came from time to time, there came sometimes doctors, Japanese doctors. So one or two doctors. There were very few around. They had them, of course, for the [Japanese] army, and they were guiding, sometimes, a group of people with shovels, wooden shovels that you wouldn't touch. They'd throw over these dead bodies, and gathered them there at the river, side of the river. Maybe who knows, maybe . In the side of the river, and then came another in the night, you see, there came another corvee -- work group -- which burned these bodies. The Japanese came along to see that they would be burned. But they didn't touch them -- the work people, our POWs, had to turn them over and to transport them. So this was already the beginning, I would say, the beginning or maybe it was already further than the beginning, of the situation there. Now, when we came into this camp, at the beginning, our group was quite healthy.

C.G.R.:

Did you say this was all officers?

C.N.:

Officers, only I was no officer. I told you I was a non, what do you call it, non -- out of ranks, . But they had saved about 20, they need, the officers need boys, they call it officers'....

C.G.R.:

Batmen?

C.N.:

Yes, their batmen. So there were maybe 30, 40 out of the 200 who were non-officers. Now, this group was quite healthy. They are those who, before, they didn't suffer so much. Also, we had more food and more things. So in the beginning we didn't suffer, but when I came there into this camp, when we came there, first I told you already, we had to give away our huts and we were, I'm going something too much, and we were walking on to another, I said a different camp, another 10 minutes walk in a very nice meadow, would you say. It wasn't quite so high there. The climate wasn't too bad anyway.

There, we could put up not a hut, but I had still my, the other, , it's the mosquito net with four sticks and covered over. So I started to put up my mosquito net. I didn't have it for long after that. It was still these sticks that we didn't have to carry, but the net itself. I put it up and the sun was shining beautifully, and the sunset -- that was a long story.

Then, when we were there, I walked out the next day to see

what's what. I met there a British Sergeant in the British army. They were only there for six months. I think I told you, he looked like a death mask. He looked, already, a skeleton, yellow, a real living death, not a mask death. He was the one I told you [about] who was already, not just pessimistic, I told him we have only four or five weeks. It was the last finishing touch of the railway. He said, "It's true." He knew of here and there bridges, here and there only gaps to fill, things that collapsed, you know. But for us it's too late. Nothing will help us any more. Even next week or two weeks from now we won't live. That's what I said -- the British usually didn't talk this way. They said, "Yes it's too bad. We may die, you know -- to give a chance, you know, you never know." You're a different style. They don't speak as fast as I do now -- their resigned way. But he had, and another one came and joined him, and this just cut right into your heart, that you feel death in life in a different way -- living beings that could die might cancel the patients? but in a much worse way because they're not looked after; they lost all faith. All faith in man, in health, in most likely God, they are very religious, usually, the British. So when he said that, and it was true, and we went up, yes, that day they marched down to their camp.

I saw there a very interesting sight. I don't know whether it was sickness or not. The Tamils, I told you already about the Tamils, they walked in groups noisily, and just speculating?. There's no good reason to be happy, we weren't happy . I saw, all of a sudden I see there that an elderly, one of the elderly Tamils sits down next to a tree, or rather was it his

son, I don't know, who put him there down, so it makes him feel respect, against a hollow of the tree there a bit, and he gives him some food. This man looks and accepts it. The other people talk, and they are marching away, they are calling him to follow. So he still does something there and he follows, he leaves him. The old man looks, he sits apparently, the idea was of course he's going to die. Whether he was sick or not or just weak, I couldn't make out and I didn't even study the humanity of the human tragedy of the whole thing. Again, we know that people die in hospitals but it's a different situation. It looked to me that he was maybe a son of this man. That's what he could do, that's all he could do, let him die there. He had limited food -- of course, he'd die anyway.

So then we came back in the camp and I got again dysentery after two days or so. It came back from Singapore. Singapore was not even a year before. I didn't have amebic [dysentery], so I was lucky, even the doctor told me. M & B wouldn't have helped for amebic, sulfa. This helped me, but it doesn't help me apparently -- no guarantee -- forever, so I got it again. Now, in a way this, no more than in a way, I felt, of course, bad. It wasn't so painful that time. But I didn't, maybe I did realize, I don't think I did realize that it really was my saving. Oh no I didn't. I thought I would die. Now, I remember another time dysentery. You know the body is going -- not from this. I thought it may be fatal for me. One doesn't remember so well. But anyway, it was not because I couldn't go to work and we worked in these tents. The tents had holes.

We couldn't drink water. I forgot to tell you that was only the tragedies. We were not allowed to drink water from the river, but you had quite a number of these corpses. So what we did was, people had as their duty, boiling water as much as they can. This water was given out to everyone, and it happened that everyone got a mugfull, not a tinfull but a mug -- just a mugfull for water. Once in the morning and once before sleep. This you had to use for washing yourself, for cleaning yourself or for drinking. Now, you would say, this we would, and what promptly came now is the skin disease. I had next to me, not that I blame him, it could have come from me, I was seeing next to me one of the professional Indonesian soldiers, and he was really -- what could I do -- the sleeping space you had was so that not all of us could, at the same time, simultaneously sleep on your back. So you turned on your side, and then the other one would....

I didn't speak about Tjilitjap and the maltreatments. As I say, again, I don't see that there was any medical point. So let's come back to where I am now.

I promptly didn't get , but I got also little boils, you know, these things on my body, which was very unpleasant. But, the always a fortunate, but always, most of the time you had the fortunate aspect. The fortunate being that it was the rains, the rains came down. So we had no rain-type tents. So it got through the holes, the rain came through. So we put down the tin, the only thing we had was the mess-tin. The mess-tin under this hole, everyone looked?, and it filled up. It took an hour or so but filled up. So we had water. Then one

helped the other one with washing your body off, and then you could use the mug of water for drinking. So this was really what saved us in the sense of that was fortunate for us. But not for all, because for the workers this was a tragedy. They came home from the work, from the railway, then they came in. First of all they came in tired out from a whole day's work. They started to count them. Maybe you've heard, counting, counting, counting -- whether they were missing or not.

C.G.R.:

Tenko?

C.N.:

Yes. Counting. They were getting angry. And again, and again, and again. And they were counting never, as I do sometimes here -- I can't find out how I can get this -- where this belongs. So there was no end. So when you came home and you almost did already collapse, another hour there standing, and standing, and standing. When they finished, and then they got then fast to eat and they didn't really take the time to eat because they were trying to lay down, because half an hour later, an hour later, two hours later, the rains came promptly. There are holes in the tents, roofs, meant rain and water. So while they slept the water came under. They woke up and I remember this is one of the most tragic sights. You couldn't believe that something could be most tragic in such a situation. When I saw these poor men ("poor men" -- I was the sick man and they were the healthy!) pulling over their rain sheets. From the war, which you have, most of the people have still from the army...?

C.G.R.:

A groundsheet?

C.N.:

A groundsheet, yes, which also was used for rain, like a rain cape with these holes. So they took this and put it over their heads and sat there, and sleeping, not dozing, and not dozing, and the rain was coming so they couldn't sleep either. I tell you. Then at six o'clock in the morning, you saw them, they got them up again. Even now, my heart cries out for these. Remember this, these poor, these people, persons become such pitiful animals is no word. Animals are much better treated. Resigned and taking it and having to take it and just sitting there, and then stretching out and the rain comes. And again getting up. At 6 o'clock they have maybe slept a half an hour. Maybe the rain had stopped and they had to get out. Gourda?, gourda, you know. "Out" means again a little bit of rice, rice, and with something yellow, a kind of soup from potatoes, a yellow sweet-potato soup. Just a little bit of coloring on top of the rice and all it maybe a handful this was. When you ate that, and then the cup, the mug, drinking. Then they went out and there how one survived it. You had to bring?, if you know the story already then I will make it short, how they worked there.

C.G.R.:

Please go ahead.

C.N.:

The holes, they had to dig holes one meter by one meter, one cubic meter. You dig up the earth, or the earth comes up and the earth is what you use for the damn for the train, you know, for

the tracks to build up. Now, so, beginning, OK, you just dig, but when you come deeper, you have to go down a ladder. The ladder was an old ladder of bamboo sticks bound together. So one went down and two people had to make a full cubic meter, this they had to finish. When they went down, the one was down digging, and the other one was taking it up. So all they had there -- we had, you could say, but I didn't work there, so I can't say that it was "we" -- was these coolie hats. You know the bamboo hats. They spread it out, well made it like a tray, and you put the sand on it, and the earth on it, and you carried it up on the ladder. Then, when you were up, you had to go on a second ladder on the damn around for the track, up to the track. Now, this in itself isn't an easy job. For a little bit of sand they would have to wheel some tools it would have been worth it, going ten times as fast. But if you bring each time a little bit....But, the tragedy again was that you never, when you started to go up the ladder, you didn't know whether you had arrived there because the Japanese came with his stick, bamboo sticks and "gouda, gouda." They loved to get it over your head or your shoulder. Then you fell down. If you didn't fall down the earth fell down, definitely, and you had to go down again. So while you went up, this I've been told in many words, in many words. I've seen also but by one who told me this fear when you hear this one, two steps and he knows. You never know he may come. You get it over your head, and you get headaches after that. Not usually not a brain concussion because I had once or twice in Java. They gave it to you in their practice. But

again, you work and you work, and then you get "gouda" and you get thrown down again, and you come up again; you become dehumanized. I can't say I don't want to make no new literature?. Right, you would come dehumanized. That's the real word to enough, I think, to say this. Not an automaton, because an automaton doesn't feel. This was different, it wasn't an automaton, which it looked that time I told you the death masks. They were not automaton. These people, while they worked with feeling people -- resigned, reduced sensitivity -- no question about it -- reduced sensitivity. But they were living beings and not being an automaton, but taking on the life of an automaton -- go up and down, up and down. And suffer...I think if ever one could say you shouldn't forgive -- God shouldn't forgive, if you can say, for this kind of thing for more than everything. It shouldn't be forgiven. It's good they were, say this, of course, you could mostly Japanese, you know. Maybe you've heard already this.

C.G.R.:

I've heard that, yes.

C.N.:

Yes, they used the Koreans not so much in the army, because they were afraid of them. They might not be good, so they used them for this kind of....Koreans were even, what we could see, worse, more cruel, than the Japanese. At the end they tried to be, to make up to us and make themselves so good and so nice. Again, more than the Japanese. But this was the tragedy, I would say, of these people. Now, dying under these circumstances, you brought in a man, and he already has full diarrhea, the outside

dysentery. He's brought in sometime. Most of the time he, the cup came up, and they died in a day or two days. Now in our camp, in our camp itself the dysentery patients were more, more because these people brought in the, getting more and more dysentery patients. So you had to run every five minutes, beginning in the first stage you know, 20 minutes, every half hours. Suddenly you have to run. So the workers had to  
[End of side 1.]

Yes, so they were digging these big latrines and put a beam on top, the middle supported so that when you have to sit there you sat on that beam, am I clear?

C.G.R.:

Yes.

C.N.:

Between that beams. Now, there was so many of us that you had to wait. Then the whole area around was messed after. You made most of them in the first day. I did not do that -- only for a half an hour, an hour. Most of them didn't even want to go back anymore. You go back and you come back, and you go back and you return. So they made there, like they camped there around the latrines -- they camped there around which was a very....The walking was also hard -- for the first two nights especially I found it very hard. The moon was shining. You knew where you went but it was rocky and you had tree trunks sticking out. So when I walked, as much as you saw the moon you often bumped into something, and then you felt it in your stomach and it hurt so you had to walk. I got a stick again, walking but carefully.

Therefore each time a walk was, well the walk of five or ten minutes, and you walk by the Tamil camp. You heard their noise in the middle of the night. They were talking, talking, playing, gambling all the time. And there there was a lot of cholera there. We'll speak about this also. So, first I want to finish that.

We had the flies. I didn't tell you about the flies. Of course they liked this stuff there deep in the latrines. Such fat flies! They were very fat and shiny. So some Dutch people, they were good on food because there were many from Indonesia. Even the Europeans who had worked there their lives, we were their executives?, -- doctors, one doctor also did a great thing. He constructed a pump for water, an injector from bamboo. Oh, this hurt like damn! to get such a bamboo in, but at least he got water and he pumped it in. He saved most of our patients.

C.G.R.:

Who was that? Do you remember his name?

C.N.:

A Dutch doctor. No. I would have because these are the things which I didn't remember anymore. He was Dutch, Dutch-Indonesian. I don't know whether he was in the army or was a civilian doctor that came up. You could find this out because this is a fact that they will know. I'm sure this will be described. If I wouldn't have been that busy all the 40 years until I retired, I would have found these things later. But this you can find out. This might interest you, as a doctor in the history of medicine, to know which doctor did that. I have a picture, not a picture, a drawing, an artist made of how it was.

C.G.R.:

I'd like to see that, if I may, afterwards.

C.N.:

Yes, yes. You can remember that we said this, this pump, your water pump. I'm jumping from one thing to the other. But anyway, the flies enjoyed it. Again, a Dutchman, I think also a doctor, because they were [used to] the tropical conditions, he got a tremendous idea. He said, "Let us take all these flies and boil them up and make tremendously good and high quality proteins." Now, sure, but the idea was horrible. Imagine take flies full of any sickness, and it came out of the bodies of these sick bodies. This added, of course, emotionally to the feeling. But our Dutch people, most of the Dutch they were really practical. The British wouldn't easily touch it. They had some aristocratic feelings still, the feelings, but the Dutch are very practical people. Maybe you don't know.

C.G.R.:

I've heard that.

C.N.:

Yes, very good people, town? people, intellectuals, very irrational in their....You know the many Dutch people got in their line in the sciences?, and also in astronomy, Professor of , or will go. Anyway, my Professor he wasn't really originally a Dutchman. But anyway, let's not go into this. So he said, they said, and they made, there was again a work group. You had to go out to bring and you got kind of shovels and they filled up, they took off the big layer and left a bit over, of

course, for further production. They took it and they washed it out.

C.G.R.:

This is from the maggots?

C.N.:

The maggots, yes, the flies.

C.G.R.:

But not the flies themselves.

C.N.:

Oh no, the flies.

C.G.R.:

Oh, the flies!

C.N.:

No, they didn't look at maggots or not maggots, oh no. Anything went into the pot. I wasn't there but I can assure you no one was very selective. Everything went in there and they cooked that. The Dutch were almost fighting for it, and they were right. It saved their lives. It did. It immediately showed, after a few days. And it came the next duty, they came again, and they again took some -- they did this at least, I think, twice a day, because they were coming back and taking more and more and more.

I had a man, an interesting sick man, sick; he is one of my heroes in the book. He was not a Scots man, maybe a Scots man, but he was non-Jewish, I'm now talking, I mean this one was not Jewish. The other souls? weren't. So he came from, I think from Scotland, but he was a Post Office official in Singapore. But a real....I don't know, he was from Cambridge or so had studied.

But anyway, it doesn't matter. He came down and he had gotten ulcers all over his body. The pus was running. He had taken any piece of cloth of an old uniform and cut it up and made it as a bandage. But the pus went through this and you could see it so fatty. The flies made him crazy. The flies came to enjoy that, to feed on it. He was the real, my hero there. Then, I don't remember why, but he was really badly bent, like a screw. Most likely the ulcers, bad ulcers. So this is how he walked, as I say, as a screw with a question mark.

C.G.R.:

Twisted over, yes.

C.N.:

Twisted over. Then this untasty, and these, we call it Yiddish smutist?, -- means, real dirty, disorderly life. But he was saying, he was the man who wouldn't say this style, "Ah, bad luck." He is really bad luck. He said, "How long did I think the war would last? How would I know?" You know the camps, Rabbi and so? you immediately are a prophet. I sometimes gave in to that -- would you believe it? I sometimes gave in and did give blessings and so on, if people believed that they got them and it helped them. Not that I shouldn't have given them anyway, but I started already -- slightly -- to believe that it may help, that I may have certain -- would you believe that.

C.G.R.:

Yes.

C.N.:

Now, [I'm a] rational scientist; no, no, I knew, I saw that

it wasn't. I have many stories I had on this. This is also why many non-Jews came to me. I got a reputation, "This rabbi." But anyway, yes, so he said, "How long will it take -- six weeks?" I said, "Yes." I didn't believe it, of course, but I wasn't that cruel. I had been before, once or twice, trying to be honest and I have seen what kind of devastating effects this had. So I said, "Oh yes, it is quite possible." He said, "Now, six weeks." Six weeks, he thinks -- he knows -- he would be able to survive that. In the meantime, all these flies. They, what did he say, they have no manners, they are uncivilized, why do they bother him just him now. You recognize the type.

C.G.R.:

Yes.

C.N.:

Great , because he wasn't just, he was an intellectual already a bit, and he knew very well, he was very much aware. Much more than those who were in these pits. He was extremely aware of his very sad state of health and of hope. This six weeks, this was six weeks. About six weeks or was it twelve weeks, I forgot. Anyway, I wrote it up. I saw him, by the way, back in Tama camp, bridge camp. Maybe you heard of the bridge, Tamacan bridge, the bridge over the River Kwai.

C.G.R.:

Yes.

C.N.:

They think that this is the automant? that break, is when they came there down, and we had already gotten, in the meantime, sulfa and etc., I saw him young, strong, tall man, jumping into

the river. He said, "Now the six weeks wasn't really over. It didn't work did it? But it won't take long any more." Again, he had a year or six months. But this time he was a different person. He said he knew I would go back to Singapore.

I won't get a job back. He didn't believe he would, because the Malayans, he felt that already we wouldn't come back even if we went such masters as we have been before. But any place, he said, in the British Empire, will do for me. Now, this is my hero, one of my heroes -- that you agree, I see, appealing? you.

C.G.R.:

Oh yes.

C.N.:

Anyway, so this dare was from there I went, this was before, but it doesn't matter the sequence.

C.G.R.:

Oh no.

C.N.:

No, the sequence will not be right. I had something with the Tamils also, because when I did, I didn't have to work, officer or not, chaplain or not, but because I was quite weak also from the [dysentery]. I was a semi-patient still, so my work consisted, they didn't me to out there, so my work....I wouldn't say that an officer may not have done it out of personally feeling that I am a spiritual man, but I don't think so, because these feelings had gone. The sensitivity all had been lost. All of them had to go. But be that as it be, I was a B or C rating in my health, so I still had to work. I wanted to

work, so I went out and I was better already. I went out to the jungle and got pieces of wood, carrying the wood back and for the water kettle, for the water....

C.G.R.:

Oh yes, to boil the water.

C.N.:

To boil the water. You needed all the, there were about 10 people worked for this. These were the people who couldn't do hard work, so we did this work, which was very useful. You felt good that you do it. But it wasn't happy, these few pieces. Now, there I saw something which was tremendous but this is not for here. This is generally the oriental man. When you saw our Indonesians there, they didn't carry it on their shoulders, they had, they immediately made a kind of a carriage. They had the they'd tie it up in two minutes. They'd have a kind of a, what do you call it what you have?

C.G.R.:

A pass or...?

C.N.:

Yes, for carrying water, two sides.

C.G.R.:

Ah, a yoke.

C.N.:

A yoke. I knew the word but I couldn't find the word. They'd make a yoke, one stick and two of these strings, these are strings out of the bamboos. These strings they fill up the yoke and they have three times as much as we have -- still not heavy.



I jumped out. I had already stepped over the first man. I had to step over because he....Now these five people were just dying. One was dead most likely and they had four more. This is against psychology, I'm not criticizing the Tamils, it sounds as if I hate them or I despise them, it's remarkable. They were busy talking, talking, talking, they couldn't look. Now when I went back to camp, came to my camp, our camp, and I saw they were already building a big bamboo fence around, what is your first feeling? That's your graveyard. The truth was, they made it so that we won't be able to go out and the Tamils not come in. But anyway, they built it there. The first thing I did, of course, was I felt bad. I said we had four or five doctors and now we can't do amongst the 200 people -- officers you have doctors also. So I asked one of my friends, the Dutch doctor, whether he would go out there, ask permission to go out because it's not fair that these people have no medical help. Now he said, not that he was a very nice man, and was not the doctor who made the water, but the other one who bought the food. He said, "No, we can't afford it because if we show the Japanese this one time they will take away all the doctors." Cheap for them, right, to put the doctors there by them and we will remain without any medical help. "I don't think I would be able, ever be able to answer for that." He wouldn't, am I right. His job is here assigned so he's a doctor for everyone, which I felt right, also felt. But he had no right, and he was so right. There wouldn't have remained one doctor in our camp if we would have offered. They would have already the DVR? excuse. So, anyway, I will only

say and this man, but we took both, he went with me looking already f . The bamboos went up so fast. To look and what we saw was no good. On that day, also, this was really the first day that there was a real, it had come down to our area, we knew the river would bring it down, but we apparently when we drank the water the week before, the 5 days before, apparently the contamination hadn't come down yet. But at that time it had come down. So this camp where I had my friend, the British man, my friend, the British man who had given up already, resigned....  
C.G.R.:

The Sergeant?

C.N.:

The Sergeant. There were 130 dead that day. He was also dead, of course. A 130 dead in one day. But us in our camp were after two. Most of them were already sick but as I say the doctors, especially the Dutchman, he worked all day injecting water. This is the main thing about cholera, right, the dehydration. So this, again, this man had said a truth. He wouldn't come back.

Now, after this went over and the bridges, the last bridges, there was one bridge, I told you about the 7 people, our bridge was not maybe mine?, I may have mine in next to our camp, I may have mixed this up also. There was one camp where they had wanted to finish up a bridge, a gap there. A very, the unfinished bridge, I call it, and this was the 72 hours. I don't think it was our camp. I'm not sure. It doesn't matter, it has happened there. So they took the people, they didn't send them back to sleep for almost 3 full days. So they were walk-sleeping

or rather sleep-walking, and I said they were "sleep-working" I think I mentioned this "sleep-working." I'm not so sure. You know they mix it up. You think what you found out a good term and later don't find it back anymore. I think I said, "sleep-working" instead of "sleep-walking" because it was so. And each time "bruda, bruda." They woke them, they tried to wake them up by hitting, just by hitting. Now when they came back many of them died quite soon then after, of course. Many of them, already in the three days, they did bring back a few sick people who were completely sick through the camp. This is how we found out what happened.

Now, after this it was supposed, at least our part of the railroad, I think it was still on the Burmese border, still something. But this wasn't our job at all. The trains were starting going up past our camp, past our camp, they came already up the trains. So after that, all of a sudden the situation became so good. The rains had also stopped. So it came, we had a good time. Now, there was also, since cholera was the very important reason why the situation improved so much. Since cholera season was over, they entered the cholera season each year, except that they don't almost fight it -- maybe now most likely they do. So the cholera season over meant that the Siamese, the Thailand people, boat people, came up to the boats along the river. They were allowed now up -- but allowed and maybe they dared it. They were, of course, selling anything they could. So in our camp they bought four or six cows from them. They brought up cows, and they built a fence around them --

that's interesting. There's always bad things, things.  
So built a fence around and we got to eat meat every day, and  
milk even I think they had for the camp. So it was a very good  
time these few weeks, and almost no work at all. Then we were  
told we would be able, we were especially those from Java and  
Singapore would go back. We were borrowed from the Singapore  
command so they had to give us back to the Java command. They  
borrowed for the railway. So we...Now there were boys who  
thought they'd rather stay on. They didn't want to go down  
because this they felt they wouldn't get any...The money we had,  
of course, they sold to these -- a ring and there's a watch --  
there was always something, especially officers, [who] always had  
more things with them and on them, and money they had taken along  
much more. So we good-bye. As we go by, the attitude had so  
changed, of the officers. They were never bad, but this time  
they just went out of their way also in the next camp when we  
came to Tonchan, out of their way to help from their money for  
the canteen to make things cheaper, to be able to buy. I think  
because officers don't always get compliments, you know. They  
are not always the best element also -- very spoiled. I would  
say we had, first of all they were always good officers, and no  
question about it. One , one of the patients.  
He was one and just there, when we said we were going down they  
said no. But then we saw, I definitely wanted to go down. I'm  
not going to stay on, you never know. Why stay on? Come back to  
your people. But we had immediately the answer, because all of  
sudden, before we are going tomorrow away, they need 40 people  
again for spring camp, the camp for far away. Why it was --

things were broken, things were broken, things didn't work. We had to come and repair. This went on quite often. So I also told a man, "Listen, you never know what will happen." When these 40 people had been sudden asked to go back to a camp, no one anymore wanted to stay. They did remain, those who didn't from the other camps. So we would go back. But there was one Captain Von der Vecht, he was a sport. He was really an architect. He had worked in Indonesia in one of the corporations from the first. This man was a real sport. Now, I don't want to tell only dirty stories. This Von der Vecht, this captain, he was, I told you I think.....

Sugar, I am on the special privileged people don't eat sugar. You know, one of the privileges which you get sometimes when you get old. Some have it when they are young. You know, Dr. here, Dr. Best and Banting here. Toronto.

C.G.R.:

Yes. Banting and Best.

C.N.:

Best, yes. When they started, people came and flew in here [to Toronto] and came in here from the world as much of money to buy, buy life. They were decent. You know the story, yes.

C.G.R.:

Yes, oh yes. Very well.

C.N.:

He didn't sell it but everyone knows it. Oh, you're a historian. I forget, a historian [laughter]. They quarreled with each other, of course. I mean these things have so long or

so. But they are still there, they could have become very rich. Even when they would do it clandestine, the modest way.

OK, so where were we now? Yes, so this Captain, he was sick already, he was not good. He had, in Singapore, when we left Singapore was the last group, at that time it had leaked already, that things in the highland were no good with cholera and so. But not everyone had heard it. They didn't want, of course, because otherwise people wouldn't go -- would refuse it. Anyway, therefore, that time was very hard to get the people. Everyone looked for a reason not to have to be to go up. Before it was the other way around. We were pushing, they wanted to go. So now they kept their word for Dutch Officers. Even for the last group. I shouldn't tell this, you know. Anyway, he just wanted fact? when there were no officers to take over, one officer, he and his friend volunteered and came up. He was a tremendous sport -- healthy. Oh he was a sport in all ways and also in Canada. When it came to there, Dutch in this camp they asked always percentage, percentually, how many Dutch must....Oh, you know. He said, "He's not sending anyone in our camp. He's not telling anyone to volunteer. Those who volunteer, OK, but he won't tell them. He showed me the example -- he volunteered. No, but he wasn't healthy. And when we later on, I can go on -- skip it, and we later on came to a very bad....Oh no, this wasn't a bad camp, not very bad camp. But we came to a bad camp and he came then from spring camp back sick. He was so sick, ulcerated and skin disease. But mainly the ulcers. We had a great doctor, Kevin Fagan.

C.G.R.:

I know that name, yes.

C.N.:

Yes. The book, have you seen the book, Naked Island?

C.G.R.:

Yes.

C.N.:

Oh you saw that. He said about him that they never honored him when it came to a stand. He's a nasty person himself. Unbelievable. It doesn't bother the people who read it.

C.G.R.:

Braddon?

C.N.:

Braddon. He says nasty things there. I shouldn't, it's not nice of me, but he enjoyed, they enjoyed...remember that these Indonesians had been, that he saw how blue and yellow and they had done nothing. To say such a thing and to write this out that I enjoy it and I'm happy. It's not nice, he says, to say so but I do because they had eaten, they had gotten everything. Oh you remember the story. So it did hit you.

C.G.R.:

Uh-huh.

C.N.:

And more things there. That Elze, the Dutch Lieutenant, the hypnosis. He tells there was someone who hypnotized the patients.

C.G.R.:

I remember that, yes.

C.N.:

I didn't speak, I have to hurry if I want to tell you these things. Now, he came back and there was a sad story again which I didn't, I took it out. I don't want any scandals, especially since you never have proven that and they were rumors. There was a doctor who was a, what do you call it who hypnot...not hypnotize but . You put someone out.

C.G.R.:

An anesthetist?

C.N.:

An anesthetist. I forget the words when you need a word, you know. anesthetist. He wasn't a good friend of this doctor. I've kept him from the facts?. When he was put on the stretcher and then the operation went well, this was Captain Fagan, the operation went well, everything was good. And that patients, you know, operation , and to it, and the patient died. The operation was successful but the patient died. So he was dead. Apparently he had too much of the....

C.G.R.:

Of the anesthetic?

C.N.:

Of the anesthetic. There was an immediate rumor in the camp, not that he wanted murder him, as he disliked him, you know what everything happened, and you were maybe consciously, unconsciously, semi-unconsciously.....

C.G.R.:

He wasn't as careful as he might have been.

C.N.:

Might have been. But they were worst, they were saying it differently to people. Oh, but he was so much the than not. I saw the last days, I brought him food and some extra the Dutch had to have . So I gave it to him also because he was a wonderful man. So I can't just say only Dutch and only Jews, right. Jews, are British Jews are so....but it they found a fact he was a....Oh no, he was a Dutchman. So he was really on the list -- a non-Jew but a Dutch. So this man was one of the the things where they....Also the problem because it come later in the main point which you might have already found and discussed, "shall we" and this is all over the world, "shall we give the last eggs, and M & B or something to those who die anyway, or almost die, or shall we let them die and have...." You know about this.

C.G.R.:

That's one of the decisions I'm very interested in is, how does one choose?

C.N.:

That was a heavy discussion, this on in the next camp. First we had one more good camp. We went back into that Bridge, called the River Kwai Camp, Kamma Camp, was a good camp -- great officer. Then Colonel Toosey -- man of authority, authority. Japanese just, whoever respected, you have persons who have this. It's not just charisma. It's something like charisma. But he was the leader and a very sincere man. Fighting for his men. He had a camp, this was where we went to swim. Imagine I almost

drowned there the first time. The river was going....We went out every day another group to swim in the river under the bridge. I was safe because the bridge had all these wooden piles and beams. I fell into the beam [laughter]. I hurt myself but this was it. I would have again swam away. I'm a poor swimmer anyway, and the river was so tremendously strong.

C.G.R.:

I need to ask one thing if you would tell me because we are running out of time. As a chaplain, can you just tell me the kinds of things that you would have seen as being your job so to speak. Do you understand what I'm saying?

C.N.:

This is the main part of my book. There was one critic who said, "It's your diary, not a POW book." It is my diary, it's no one else but. I was in different groups. My work was consisting of visiting the sick, listening to their problems, they had off problems with the past dreams, heavy and I had very interesting cases, not just Jewish. Then, of course, Jewish services. And this is a definitely, I mean, services and lessons, lectures. This is specifically Jewish that I'm talking about. Getting the last things which they have. And the burials. One of them the story you would leave out has been printed here in the Toronto Star, they printed it. It was tremendous. Oh, no, no, to understand not to

execution. They will print maybe more now -- if I have time. So that this was my work. It was very much food, for instance, this Captain, the assistant of that one who died, he had a special money fund for the Dutch, so I took this whole

thing, this fund, and I went around to all the Dutch every day. We had also there this Elze. Do you remember the one he mentions, "they hate him so much," and speaks so....He was a saintly man. Would you believe one extreme to the other. He was a bit silly and acting up, but as a saintly man he died really because he had given too much out. He makes him, again, he's glad that he died even managed, if you remember, he didn't even manage to survive he said. Anyway, this Elze did another job I said what he came and did in getting the ulcers out with the spoons. You know these stories.

C.G.R.:

The tropical ulcers, yes.

C.N.:

Yes, but that he had spoon, a spoon, nothing else. With a spoon he had scraped it out and most of these Australians were strong. They let him do it, you know. Scratching off so that Elze did a very, he admits that in the book, he did very nice....He doesn't know how he could, he says, the Dutch are so that he scraped them for that. Under hypnosis if they couldn't sleep, or also operations when there was no anesthetics then they did hypnotize. It was very interesting. You will be able to see most of this in the book. So these things have to do with the sicknesses there.

The other sickness I didn't talk about yet. The running....what I told you already -- that is running the empty of life forces, of life. They just to very passively no pain -- that's remarkable. You are recording? No pain. At least no

pain that they complained of -- different from the normal dysentery. It was a kind of a flowing, and flowing, and flow. There was also not cholera. You ran out and there were hundreds with this. And that in the camp we did not know what it was. I heard it afterwards. There were theories, and they know already what the sickness was. You could, of course, find out this. But they didn't have. This dying away so peaceful is a remarkable thing.

Then you had this dying -- we had them on the trains. They put them there on the trains, platforms, back, when you came back down. They laid there down. You walked from one station to the other. A few miles later there was a stations. The train stopped again -- three, four, were thrown off the train. You know that already.

When it came to my camp, when we came after Tamma Camp, I had this , Tamacan, again at Kanburi, one of the Kanburi camps. This was a hole we had dug out with the earth next to the train. There was a time of rains when I came in and I volunteered for medical orderly. In the night you half of the rear entered was all under water. You had these bamboos, they called it their shoes. What do you call it -- a shoe. The bamboo for urinals. We brought this. Well, it came dirty. Then I had to take it out and I came outside in the rain, and you sank in. And the bamboo shoots, and the bamboo fell and I felt bad because of all this sick stuff. Although the rains were so, going so...this whole situation and people.....

One interesting thing which I have forgotten to put in was out. We sat in a hut. That time the officers made it their job.

We did it as chaplains but the officers made it their job to make riddles, you know, and quizzes and so to keep the people enjoying. Now I remember once I came in and I went to visit someone and I hear their officer did it very well. All of a sudden you hear one of our men gargling the last gargle. And he stopped. Everyone was quiet. Say 15 feet away on the bamboo platform. Then he was thinking a few seconds, you could see him thinking. He'd be silent -- three seconds, two seconds, he was silent. I liked his courage. I doubted his wisdom. Even when we die we should show respect for our friend dying in their own tent. But it was so ambiguous, you know what I mean. Again, like the other problem. What shall you do, and you can't give a real answer. He meant, of course, the mood amongst the people. But it is also the question you can break the mood, the self image of the people by showing that when you die no one will even stop a minute. His game, his quiz -- they won't even stop the quiz when you die. In other words my death is very cheap. They knew they, most of them knew they were going to die.

There's another point. The man Alf, when you read his story later, that Alf, this will be interesting for you now also. There was a rule that someone who had no dysentery would not be helped off his bamboo platform to the latrines. Now, this Alf had given up already two weeks, and he couldn't move, he couldn't talk. Each time that he went down to the washroom was a torture. When he dirtied himself up, it was more torture. But I spoke to the man that was a chaplain there in charge of the hut, a very big hut, a horrible 120 sick people, very sick people, he said,

"no." British in a profession. I had twice problems three times. These sergeant majors, these Britishers -- hard as the....But they do their work. Steel hard. The fact was, he died this way. When he died he just got off. When he got off he fell and died. This rule against, I can't say against humanity, but yes, in a way yes, in a way yes. So we had these, what else you want these more points to bring out which are important, right. You have found the resilience that you also (inaudible).

After -- this I wrote, I rewrote now -- after they came back and we got the soya beans in Singapore, in the Sime Road Camp, they were hard on your stomach. You had 36 hours to cook and boil them and they became soft enough. This was a saving we all liked. It was immediately, of course, someone from our Indo-europeans, who knew a way, a tremendous idea, you can make them schimmel, moldy. You put them on beds or on the iron, put the beds, broken beds, put them out and they didn't look like very much when it came to three days, like a cake, a hard cake. But this you could eat. This you could digest. This was even apparently, this I don't know, I didn't even care for, that the proteins came easier into our blood system after it was moldy. I think it is so as a scientist, but I don't know whether it's true.

C.G.R.:

Yes, I think so. I've heard something....

C.N.:

So therefore my brother was in another camp, he did this day and night, to work, because he found this was a great work for people to do. Now, I would say if it is finished, then....

I came back. I had trouble, stomach trouble, slight dysentery trouble. In the beginning I had some slight trouble with beriberi. But it wasn't too bad.

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