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# It Won't Be Long Now: The Diary of a Hong Kong Prisoner of War

*Graham Heywood*

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**It Won't Be Long Now: The Diary of a Hong Kong Prisoner of War** Graham Heywood
Japanmarched into the British colony of Hong Kong at the outbreak of thePacific War on December 8, 1941. On the same day, Graham Heywood wascaptured by the invading Japanese near the border while carrying outduties for the Royal Observatory. He was held at various places inthe New Territories before being transported to the militaryPrisoner-of-War camp in Sham Shui Po, Kowloon. The Japanese refusedto allow Heywood and his colleague Leonard Starbuck to join thecivilians at the Stanley internment camp. Heywood'sillustrated diary records his three-and-a-half years of internment,telling a story of hardship, adversity, and survival of malnutritionand disease; as well as repeated hopes of liberation anddisappointment. As he awaits the end of the war, his reflections uponfreedom and imprisonment bring realisations about life and how tolive it.
“Accountsof life in the internment camp differed widely. One friend, anenthusiastic biologist, was full of his doings; he had grown championvegetables, had seen all sort of rare birds (including vultures,after the corpses) and had run a successful yeast brewery.Altogether, he said, it had been a great experience ... a bit toolong, perhaps, but not bad fun at all. Another ended up her accountby saying ‘Oh, Mr. Heywood, it was hell on earth'. It alldepended on their point of view.”
Heywood'shighly positive attitude to life is food for thought for all of ustoday, in the midst of increasing consumerism but decreasingspiritual satisfaction. We have enjoyed freedom and an abundance ofmaterial wealth in the 70 years since the end of the Pacific War, butperhaps we may not recognise our true good fortune.

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