

Onofre Dizon Corpuz  
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JSPS Philippine Technocracy Project  
Transcript of Interview

**Onofre Dizon Corpuz**

[Also present during the interview: Aurora Corpuz (spouse)]

January 25, 2008

Corpuz Residence, U.P. Professors' Village

Tandang Sora, Quezon City

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*Interviewers:* Professor Yutaka Katayama, Professor Cayetano Paderanga, Jr., PhD and Professor Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, PhD

*Research assistance for the interview was provided for by Ms Mara Yasmin S.P. Baviera. The transcript of the interview was edited by Professor Laura L. Samson and Ms Jocelyn de Jesus.*

CORPUZ, OD: I was going to San Francisco actually, but in those days, the routes were not very clear... San Francisco... Kobe and Honolulu; we went to Alaska <laughs>. And when it was not a luxury liner; it was a cargo liner.

PADERANGA: Yes, that's what I thought—A cargo liner with some space for passengers.

KATAYAMA: When was that?

CORPUZ, OD: It was in the 1950s.

KATAYAMA: 1950s.

CORPUZ, OD: A half-century ago... I was going to San Francisco, California.

KATAYAMA: California, I see.

CORPUZ, OD: And the routes were so uncertain; we first were directed to Alaska.

TADEM: Oh my God.

CORPUZ, OD: It was not a luxury liner. It was a cargo liner.

PADERANGA: Mara [Baviera] is asking if you'd mind if we video-tape.

CORPUZ, OD: Oh no, no, no, no...

PADERANGA: ... The project will try to look back at how the economic and socioeconomic decisions were made during Marcos's time. Essentially they call it the technocracy project. I call it the economic policy-making project <laughs>. It's a joint [project]... We thought that... it's so difficult to critique from hindsight because you already have all the information. What we were

thinking is that we would like the technocrats to reflect, [to look] back, when they were making key decisions, what they were thinking at that time and what were the bases for [these]... So we want to see the dynamics of economic and socioeconomic decision making... at that time and how things were developing...

CORPUZ, OD: Let me ask first, how did you get together?

KATAYAMA: ...Several years ago I was a consultant for the Japanese Ministry of Finance to deal with possible financial crisis in the Philippines and he [Cayetano Paderanga Jr.] was my counterpart... And that project was not so exciting, but in the course of discussion, Dondon [Cayetano Paderanga Jr.] and I reached an agreement that we should go back to at least the Marcos period to know the decision-making process.... And he said many... have already been written but key figures like you have been very silent even if you had experienced and witnessed many things. And now we are sure that we can write [about] this, [and] analyze very objectively, [without] strong bias. So we agreed that you'd be the first person we should interview <laughs>.

TADEM: We've been trying to get [an appointment for] interview since last year.

KATAYAMA: ... This project was approved by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), which is the funding research arm of the Ministry of Education in Japan. That's why I tapped Temy [Temario] Rivera and Jojo [Patricio] Abinales and some other Japanese scholars. But as I said, this project is based in the Philippines, which is why I asked Tesa [Teresa Tadem] and some others from the [UP] School of Economics to assist us.

PADERANGA: The main output—the transcripts—will be written, and we plan to publish books on it... if you want to have some things...not mentioned we will do so... But the main output is the interview, [the transcript and] the video of the interview. And there will be two copies, one will be in Kobe [University] and the other will be in UP [University of the Philippines] at the Main Library ...

KATAYAMA: Yes, after we finish the project.

CORPUZ, OD: What are these interviews?

PADERANGA: We are interviewing Cesar Virata and Joe [Jose] Almonte ... we learned from him that we missed interviewing Adrian Cristobal.

TADEM: Yes.

PADERANGA: ... We have interviewed Sixto Roxas, essentially for the Macapagal period ... and we are trying to arrange a schedule to interview Armand Fabella. And I actually met Sonny [Salvador] Escudero and then out of the blue he started to complain to somebody, "You know... Cesar [Virata] ... my only beef with him was that whenever he would bring in some change in agricultural policy, he would bring it only a few days before the deadline" <laughs>. So I said I'm going to talk to him <laughs>.

CORPUZ, OD: Sonny [Salvador Escudero]?

PADERANGA: Sonny Escudero, yes. Because he was... complaining, but this was one of things we wanted— [views on] industrialization versus the agricultural policy--and maybe a little more personal view of people on record.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, I always say, and this is probably just a background to this, no? I always say that, well, [Ferdinand] Marcos like any other high-ranking person would have to be seen against a background that transcends his own time, that we should really see him over time, you know? We were very personal; I do not mean that to boast. Katanaka?

KATAYAMA: Katayama. Katayama-san.

PADERANGA: His first name is Yutaka.

KATAYAMA: Just call me Yutaka, yes, yes, Yutaka.

CORPUZ, OD: Yutaka.

KATAYAMA: Yes.

CORPUZ, OD: He [President Ferdinand Marcos] and I are fraternity brothers and in a very close fraternity. You know the Upsilon [Sigma Phi]?

PADERANGA: Upsilon, yes.

CORPUZ, OD: And on matters of educational policy, I would say, he [President Marcos] rarely, if ever, interfered with and or dictated to me because I think his view was that he must recruit people who would see things very similarly with him. So he needed [people who could work with] minimum instruction, minimum correction, except if a mistake was really made ... he very seldom gave instructions. And as I said, aside from the fact that he and I were close fraternity brothers, among the cabinet members—and I should share this with Dondon (Cateyano Paderanga)—I was rather personal in my behavior. For instance, I saw to it that all the Malacañang service staff [knew to serve me] cognac [while they served everybody else coffee in coffee cups] <laughs>. I gave them instructions. “Serve everybody, you serve coffee, ok with me, but don’t serve me coffee, serve me cognac”. And they knew that <coughs> on education... he gave me very few instructions. I think he knew he was not “an educator”, [that] education [was not his] discipline... nor [was it mine], but he gave me a fairly free hand. Well up to now I’ve been giving you [some] background about my relationship with Marcos and so forth, but maybe you have specific questions.

KATAYAMA: Ok

CORPUZ, OD: What’s that, Dondon, Yutok, Yutoko?

PADERANGA: Yutaka.

KATAYAMA: Yutaka yes, yes.

TADEM: Actually we wanted first to know your background... how you ... got into government service, your interests. Did you think you were going to be in government? Did you think you were going to be an academic?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I think every Filipino would tend to, if they are, if they say they are strong academicians—forgive me, I think I'm a strong academician—expect also to be tapped for government service. And so therefore they have a tendency to look at public policy. In my case—of course my major is not common in the Philippines—but my major, Dondon, is political economy. And by this is meant economic policies intended for government service, for public service. I joined, Yutaka-san, the School of Economics, Department of Economics, upon the invitation of a very close friend of mine, also of Dondon's, Pepe [Jose] Encarnacion, and who had the same view of, well, held a similar view of economics, political economy. Okay, [do you have] questions?

KATAYAMA: Yes, we regard you as one of the most important Filipino intellectuals. So that's why we have to know how you were developed. If not inconvenient for you, we'd like to know your family background, and how you were motivated to [go to] higher education.

CORPUZ, OD: My father did not have higher education; he reached grade seven. But at that time, the Americans prohibited him from going further because they required him to become a schoolteacher.

TADEM: Grade seven, that young?

KATAYAMA: May I know in which province were you born?

CORPUZ, OD: Tarlac.

PADERANGA: Camiling.

CORPUZ, OD: Camiling. The same as Ambassador [Carlos P.] Romulo.

KATAYAMA: Oh I see.

PADERANGA: Boy [Horacio] Morales also?

CORPUZ, OD: No, but same province.

PADERANGA: He's not from Camiling?

CORPUZ, OD: No. Camiling, General Paulino Santos, Carlos P. Romulo, Maria Clara.

PADERANGA: Ah, of Jose Rizal?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, very famous. You might consider her a woman idol of the Philippines.

PADERANGA: So he was a schoolteacher, your father?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

PADERANGA: And he retired as a schoolteacher?

CORPUZ, OD: No, he was officially called a teacher you know? But he was given the duties of a property custodian of all school properties in the province of Tarlac.

TADEM: The whole province? Wow.

CORPUZ, OD: That is to say our classrooms, our blackboards, our furniture, and so forth. And in those days I remember a very curious, interesting thing. Every six years, all textbooks were burned.

PADERANGA: They were replaced.

CORPUZ, OD: To be replaced by new ones.

PADERANGA: During the American period?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, yes. They were all burned and replaced by new ones.

KATAYAMA: May I know the exact name of your father?

CORPUZ, OD: Remigio L. Corpuz. L for Lagunero.

TADEM: From Tarlac also?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, but Lagunero means from the lake.

TADEM: But Tarlac is landlocked <laughs>. Where did it come from?

PADERANGA: [Jake] is Lagunera. Maybe some misspelling just happened.

KATAYAMA: How about your mother?

CORPUZ, OD: She was also a schoolteacher, but because she became a mother very early, she stopped teaching after four years.

KATAYAMA: And what is her name?

CORPUZ, OD: Isabel Ovejera. Ovejera is shepherdess, Dizon. That's why my name is Onofre Dizon Corpuz.



TADEM: So you all went to school there in Camiling?

CORPUZ, OD: Elementary school, until World War II. I was a third-year high school student when World War II broke out. But you see, Dondon, we had two high schools. Camiling was a fairly large town. And fairly academically oriented, I would say.

TADEM: Why is that so?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know.

PADERANGA: It was one of the richest towns in Tarlac.

CORPUZ, OD: Very rich!

TADEM: What's the source of [wealth]...?

PADERANGA: Rice was one; they had very fertile land.

CORPUZ, OD: Very fertile land.

KATAYAMA: May I know the land ownership of your family at that time?

PADERANGA: Ah, <laughs> did you belong to a landed family?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, yes...

KATAYAMA: Oh, landed? How many hectares?

CORPUZ, OD: In various places.

PADERANGA: So you were in the upper class of the province?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes and I remember when I was a growing up boy, we had five housemaids. And they were all daughters of our tenants. That was very common—not the number; ours was unusual, but the daughters of the family’s tenants usually served in the household of the landlord.

PADERANGA: How many brothers and sisters were you?

CORPUZ, OD: We were five.

PADERANGA: Ah, just five. One is to one. <laughs>

CORPUZ, OD: I was the third—older sister, older brother, myself, and then two younger brothers.

PADERANGA: Ah, I see.

KATAYAMA: When did you realize that you were doing very well at school? ...

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I think, always. Dondon ... in my first year of high school, one of my teachers was a Gatmaitan ... from that you can infer she was from Bulacan married to the brother of Carlos P. Romulo. And although she was from Bulacan she was teaching in Camiling. And it meant we attracted teachers or academic-career-oriented people.

PADERANGA: There was a Gatmaitan who was in education also at that time.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

PADERANGA: She would have been related?

CORPUZ, OD: In that family, yes. Asuncion-Gatmaitan.

PADERANGA: He became, I think, if not Secretary then Undersecretary of Education...

CORPUZ, OD: *Gat* means Lord something.

PADERANGA: Yeah, yeah... Gat Insiong.

CORPUZ, OD: Gat Insiong, Gat Bonifacio. They call Andres Bonifacio Gat Bonifacio.

PADERANGA: But would you say that UP [University of the Philippines] was instrumental... if you had not gone to UP would you have... or was there no other place you could go to at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: UP? Let's see now. Personally, I would say that I would think of no other place to go but UP. Just before UP, in 1944-45, I had a job. I left my family, well as I said, we had land in various places; when the war broke out they traveled together to some place. I went to another place and I had a very strange job. I was all alone; at this time I tagged along with an American unit. My job was to shovel eight hours a day.

KATAYAMA: Oh.

CORPUZ, OD: Very powerful <points to his muscles>. Eight hours to shovel sand and gravel.

PADERANGA: That's very heavy.

CORPUZ, OD: This was to provide the concrete for the barracks of WACS in Fort McKinley. When they were all built, my job was finished and then I had the greatest job in the world\_\_  
a timekeeper.

PADERANGA: The opposite of shoveling <laughs>. So if you just did time-keeping you did not do anything.

CORPUZ, OD: I say it was also a reward.

PADERANGA: Yeah, eight hours a day. I don't think I could do that.

KATAYAMA: At the age of sixteen or something like that?

CORPUZ, OD: Uhm, 16. I was born in 1926. Sixteen would mean 1932 <coughs>. Ah, 1942. So after that job of shoveling sand and gravel, the war ended 1945-46. So I went to UP Padre Faura.

KATAYAMA: How did you find UP at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: It was nice. In fact, looking back, I appreciate my UP experience. I took up three languages although my major was in the Arts and Sciences. I took up three languages, Spanish under a Spaniard, French under a Franco-German lady, and German under a Filipino who was very German. And I took these three languages and Political Science.

TADEM: Did you know you were going to take Political Science rather than Engineering? The usual courses at that time, Engineering...

CORPUZ, OD: No, I think I was not engineering-minded. I have a granddaughter who is taking up Engineering.

PADERANGA: Because then they would think Law, Medicine.

TADEM: But Political Science for Law?

CORPUZ, OD: No.

PADERANGA: Just Political Science.

CORPUZ, OD: No, I didn't intend to go into Law.

KATAYAMA: But from the beginning you thought of becoming a member of the academe or a professional teacher?

CORPUZ, OD: Not really, please forgive me for saying so; I just wanted to become educated.

KATAYAMA, TADEM: Ah, okay.

CORPUZ, OD: You have to forgive me, but I really mean that and I know I had that in mind.

TADEM: And for your parents was that okay? Because usually parents...

CORPUZ, OD: My parents were all right.

PADERANGA: They did not dictate to the children what to take.

CORPUZ, OD: My sister was AB, my elder brother was Law.

TADEM: All of them went to UP?

CORPUZ, OD: Not UP but good universities.

TADEM: And what brought your interest in political economy?

CORPUZ, OD: Aaah...

TADEM: And who was your teacher? Who was teaching political economy?

CORPUZ, OD: I wanted to be—excuse me for saying this—I wanted to be different.

PADERANGA: So it was an extension of Political Science?

CORPUZ, OD: What I didn't know was the difference. I did not anticipate the difference.

TADEM: And the professors, were there professors who...

CORPUZ, OD: Ah no, political economy was in my graduate study.

KATAYAMA: But how about professors who influenced or stimulated you?

CORPUZ, OD: .... There were recent graduates who came home from America. Ventura.

TADEM: Mamerto?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

TADEM: The wife just died.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, he had just come home.

KATAYAMA: Oh?

CORPUZ, OD: He had just come home from the United States.

TADEM: Eva Ventura, his wife, just passed away.

PADERANGA: I did not know.

TADEM: Monday.

CORPUZ, OD: Only this Monday?

TADEM: Yes.

PADERANGA: Because we started in the PSSC [Philippine Social Science Council] together.

TADEM: Ah. But Mamerto was 19 years older than her. I was surprised; I thought the age difference was only ten years.

CORPUZ, OD: He came from the United States.

PADERANGA: Of your professors, who would have influenced you the most?

CORPUZ, OD: I...

PADERANGA: None? I have a question because it's related to Pepe [Jose Encarnacion Jr.]. Did you ever fall under the spell of [Ricardo] Pascual the way Pepe did? <laughs>.

CORPUZ, OD: No. In fact I think, the relationship inspired in my mind was negative.

TADEM: Why?

CORPUZ, OD: Because Pascual's was a very narrow mind. His view of Philosophy was logic, syllogisms, and so forth. To me philosophy is very different. *Sophia* means knowledge, wisdom; *philo* means lover. A philosopher means a lover of wisdom, but in the Philippines we have an invention. *Pilosopo*! <Laughs>

TADEM: Pilosopo Tasyo!

CORPUZ, OD: That's a Philippine invention. *Pilosopo* means that you \*\*\*\*\*

TADEM: Smart aleck? *Pilosopo* means smart aleck, doesn't it?

CORPUZ, OD: It's not even smart. <laughs>

TADEM: Only "Aleck". <laughs>

KATAYAMA: So during your undergraduate days you were a sort of independent, self-made man?

CORPUZ, OD: I think so. You see, because I went back to UP. I went back to college after working by myself as a farmer away from my family.

KATAYAMA: So you did not enjoy any support from your family?

TADEM: In your studies?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I was a scholar all the way in college.

KATAYAMA: Oh, I see. So exempted from any tuition?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I think I paid tuition but, I'm sure my parents <pointing to pictures on the wall> <my mother, my father> I'm sure my parents contributed something.

KATAYAMA: But...

CORPUZ, OD: Me also.

PADERANGA: That gave you the independence?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah.

PADERANGA: And then soon after that you left for the United States for your studies?



CORPUZ, OD: I left the Philippines in 1951.

TADEM: Right after graduation?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, soon after. This was the beginning of the Fulbright Smith-Mundt Scholarships and I finished from UP my AB in 1950 and went to Illinois. I obtained my MA in Illinois in 1952 and from there... I went to Harvard in 1953. I finished Harvard in 1955 but the graduation exercises were in 1956 so that was when I obtained my PhD. From then on, Dondon, it was easy. It was an easy way out for me, with a Harvard degree.

PADERANGA: That's right, you must have been one of the very few at that time.

TADEM: Political Science definitely, no?

PADERANGA: And then Amado Castro for Economics?

CORPUZ, OD: Mine was even better because it was not relatively known in the Philippines. Political economy. It's economics as applied to public policy.

KATAYAMA: So you belonged to the first batch of the Fulbright scholars after the war?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know if I were the first but that was 1951.....and by the way... I think in 1955, Senator [William] Fulbright and I were members of the same committee in the University of Hawaii. We were very happy.

KATAYAMA: Yes, yes, wow. So you went to Illinois for the first time? You chose Illinois? Or they recommended you to go there?

CORPUZ, OD: No, I applied. Fulbright.

TADEM: Why did you choose Illinois?

CORPUZ, OD: I really don't remember; maybe they were open. I think maybe they had the reputation for being good.

KATAYAMA: But it was your first time to visit the United States, mainland of course?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, yes.

KATAYAMA: What kind of impression did you have at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: Oh all right.

PADERANGA: It was right after the Second World War.

<The telephone rings>

CORPUZ, OD: Let me answer the phone if I can get it.

KATAYAMA: This is very important information for us, to know your background and how the best and the brightest [in the Marcos government] were developed, were made.

<The team members offer OD juice but he cannot drink it, it makes him cough. They invite Mrs. Aurora Corpuz to join them.>

TADEM: So how did you get the... usually they give the fellowships when you're teaching already. So did you apply for this...?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't remember. Maybe I applied.

CORPUZ, A: During that time we used to... we went both as Fulbright [scholars].

TADEM: Ah so you already knew each other?

CORPUZ, A: We were already married then, with kids.

CORPUZ, OD: We were married against each other <laughs>.

TADEM: You were married while you were still in UP?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah yes, yes.

PADERANGA: So you were married when you went abroad?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, yes.

KATAYAMA: Oh....

CORPUZ, OD: It was a sacrifice.

KATAYAMA: Together?

CORPUZ, A: But no, I had to postpone mine because I did not want to leave my boy. He was young. And he was only one month old when we moved from U.P. Iloilo College to Diliman...

TADEM: So Ma'am you were in H.E. (Home Economics)?

CORPUZ, A: Yes...

PADERANGA: So you met at UP?

TADEM: How did you meet?

CORPUZ, A: In UP Iloilo College.

PADERANGA: Ah so UP Iloilo, okay, okay.

CORPUZ, A: While we were both instructors. During that time the instructors in UP were interviewed by the President himself.

PADERANGA: Really?

CORPUZ, A: Without our knowledge he would get the records from the registrar so when we went there we could see the records on top of his table. He was interviewing the faculty members himself at that time.

PADERANGA: Who was the president then?

CORPUZ, OD: President Gonzales.

PADERANGA: Bienvenido Gonzales.

CORPUZ, OD: But just before we were married I asked President Gonzales if he could be a sponsor at our wedding. And he said, “No, no. I think you are a bright mind but if I were your wedding sponsor I cannot promote you”. He was a very proper person.

CORPUZ, A: He did not allow it. But we appreciated him more. We could see that he was a good man, a straight man.

KATAYAMA: So when you went to the United States you did not have any uneasiness and everything was okay at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: No... number one, I didn't feel any racial bias or racial discrimination. Everybody was nice.

KATAYAMA: How about... yes, go ahead.

PADERANGA: I was just going to say at that time Illinois would be Urbana Champaign.

CORPUZ, OD: I think I took a course in Chicago in the University of Illinois but I was based in Urbana Champaign.

PADERANGA: At that time there were very few blacks, I would think.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, they were not conspicuous.

TADEM: Oh really?

KATAYAMA: How about the educational level? You didn't find any big gap?

TADEM: Maybe, you were brighter than your professor.

CORPUZ, OD: No, no, it was all right.

KATAYAMA: But what about the textbooks?

TADEM: What inspired you?

KATAYAMA: For textbooks...those that you used in UP were almost the same [as those in the United States]?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah yes, the textbooks were the same.

TADEM: The American....

CORPUZ, A: I think we framed the comments of your thesis adviser. It is somewhere here, dear.

CORPUZ, OD: What?

CORPUZ, A: The comments of your PhD thesis adviser at Harvard.

CORPUZ, OD: Ah yes, [I got] my Master of Political Science in Illinois, then I went to Harvard. And they offered me again... another Masters in Public Administration. The reason for that, I think, was that my adviser was the dean of professors of public administration in America, John Gauss. He had a very nice experience with me. He was chairman of the panel for my PhD oral examination and he would say, "Well, I think Mr. Corpuz knows more than we do about the subject" so I got him a cup of coffee <laughs>. There I was very lucky to have people like him.

CORPUZ, A: We framed the letter he gave; it's very nice.

CORPUZ, OD: Ah is that it, Mama?

TADEM: <reads from the framed document> "I cannot return this final section without telling you what a \*\*\*\*\* work I think this is and even more I respect it also for the qualities whereby this work was accomplished. To have done all this in a strange land yet in some measure for a \*\*\*\* related to your own, in the loneliness of absence from your family seems to be a great achievement. I am proud that you gave me the privilege of seeing this work in its progress and grateful for our association, which will I hope continue in the years ahead. A fellow colleague, faithfully..."

CORPUZ, OD: He was very nice. During Christmas vacation, one Christmas vacation...

TADEM: That's beautiful.

CORPUZ, A: That's why I framed it.

CORPUZ, OD: During one Christmas vacation, all the foreign students were away but I stayed in my dormitory. And then, on Christmas day, I was all alone in my dorm. And then out of my window I saw a gentleman walking with a basket, it was my adviser John Gauss bringing me some delicacies for Christmas. Very nice, I was very lucky to have good people.

KATAYAMA: Did they ask you to stay in the United States as a faculty member?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah no. Well I think they knew I would not do that. I think my nationalism was evident.

KATAYAMA: And you had to come back to the Philippines? It was one of the conditions of the scholarship? Not necessarily?

CORPUZ, OD: I was a UP scholar.

TADEM: So, sir, when you came back, you went back to teaching?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, it was an obligation.

PADERANGA: You must have come back in 1957?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, 1956.

PADERANGA: And then you joined government about 1965?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah that was already the Marcos era.

TADEM: But before that?

PADERANGA: I thought when you became Secretary of Education, right away?

TADEM: So you came back ... as Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs?

PADERANGA: No, of Education.

KATAYAMA: Education, Education.

CORPUZ, OD: And I was... I remember... very haughty.

TADEM: Why?

CORPUZ, OD: At the Commission on Appointments, all the appointees were expected to appear, right? To be confirmed? So I said, "If you don't like me, I don't like you! I'm not going to attend!" <laughs>. In my opinion, they were my intellectual inferiors.

TADEM: Well yes...

CORPUZ, OD: Why should they pass judgment on me?

PADERANGA: But they still let you...

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, yes.

PADERANGA: I realized that's the way to think.

CORPUZ, OD: That was because Macoy [Ferdinand Marcos] was there.

PADERANGA: But this was still pre-martial law?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, pre-martial law.

TADEM: Before joining government you were teaching for how long?



CORPUZ, OD: In UP?

CORPUZ, A: Fourteen years, dear, before you went to London for one year.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah I was invited. I think 1960 or 1961 I was invited by the University of London to be a visiting scholar. And I didn't know, I didn't know how it would turn out. But I was there, I felt a little disappointed but I shouldn't have been. I was assigned to the School of Oriental and African Studies.

KATAYAMA, TADEM: Oh yeah...

PADERANGA: Which was actually a good department.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, very good history department. And after a year I obtained a continental research leave. So I bought a car in London... well, as a visiting scholar with high stipend. In London all vehicles are either black or grey.

TADEM: Just like the weather! <laughs>

CORPUZ, OD: My new car had a red body and ivory top. So to avoid the sales taxes, I left Britain within a month and I drove the continent, I drove south to Sevilla and it was very nice because I collected and learned all the Spanish government materials on the Philippines, on Filipinas as a colony. And I still have that. A full year, Dondon, riding there, no stopping. I liked that time very much.

TADEM: So you were away from your family that time.

CORPUZ, A: He left three months and he asked me to join him in the tour all over Europe. It was nice; he kept driving and driving. And then there was the bed and breakfast. Then the next morning we would start driving again.

CORPUZ, OD: The way to do that is to drive, but not into a big city.

TADEM: The countryside.

CORPUZ, OD: Outside the big city, we spent the night there in the hotel. From there, before roaming, I arranged for the shipment of my car to Manila.

PADERANGA: So you brought the red car with the ivory top here?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

KATAYAMA: I had an uncomfortable time riding on the left for more than one month. But...

PADERANGA: So you already bought a left-hand...

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, left-hand drive.

TADEM: Sir, why were you disappointed with SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies)?  
What was your expectation?

PADERANGA: Actually they do very good work.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, excellent in history especially.

TADEM: And then did you also go to London School of Economics?

CORPUZ, OD: No.

PADERANGA: There are different campuses.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

KATAYAMA: So you taught at SOAS? You had a teaching obligation?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

PADERANGA: What did you teach?

CORPUZ, OD: Philippine history.

TADEM: How were your students, sir?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah okay.

PADERANGA: How did you, from that, how did you get into government?

CORPUZ, OD: Here?

PADERANGA: Yes when you got here.

CORPUZ, OD: I was in UP. Ah, into government?

TADEM: Yeah, as in nonacademic.

CORPUZ, OD: Government service?

PADERANGA: Government service. I'm assuming UP is not government. In fact you would think it is antigovernment <laughs>.

CORPUZ, A: UP is government.

TADEM: That's why I said nonacademic <laughs>.

PADERANGA: Into public service, aside from teaching. Essentially because [Ferdinand] Marcos became president?

CORPUZ, OD: No, no, no. But sometimes I don't keep track of these things anymore. How did I join government?

CORPUZ, A: You know when you came back from London, you continued [teaching] in UP. Then during Marcos time you were recruited as Undersecretary of Education.

TADEM: Before martial law?

CORPUZ, A: Before martial law. And then he became Secretary of Education when General [Carlos P.] Romulo became Secretary of Foreign Affairs... And during that time he also became ... of FAPE (Fund for Assistance to Private Education).

PADERANGA: FAPE, right.

CORPUZ, OD: When General [Carlos P.] Romulo became Secretary [of Foreign Affairs] he called me. I was in London at that time: "You come and help me. We are townmates."

TADEM: Ah, yeah, Camiling.

CORPUZ, OD: So I came home.

PADERANGA: Was he already president of UP (University of the Philippines) at that time or did that come later?

CORPUZ, OD: No, just Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

PADERANGA: He became President of UP later?

CORPUZ, A: Yes before [Salvador P.] Lopez.

TADEM: And did you know him from UP or Camiling?

PADERANGA: So it was from Camiling that you knew each other?

CORPUZ, OD: Well I'm sure our families knew...

PADERANGA: But you didn't really know each other personally?

CORPUZ, OD: No, he was in the UN [United Nations] and so on. Comparatively speaking, I was in a barrio <laughs>.

CORPUZ, A: When General Romulo became president of UP he recruited Rafael Salas and Ruben S. Cuyugan as vice presidents during that time. When General Romulo was named Secretary of Education he pulled out OD [Corpuz] from UP and he asked him to be Undersecretary of Education.

PADERANGA: That's the progression, yeah. So General Romulo became president of U.P.?

CORPUZ, A: Yes.

PADERANGA: Before becoming secretary of education? Because I remember when we were interviewing [Cesar] Virata, he thought that you had something to with him being recruited into government service.

TADEM: Yes.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes, I was very close to his uncle Leonides [Virata]. We were very, very close!

TADEM: Why sir?

CORPUZ, OD: In fact the DAP [Development Academy of the Philippines] in Tagaytay was the property of the DBP [Development Bank of the Philippines}. And he was the DBP man, right? “So what’s it to you?” “A weekend thing for my employees.” So I told him, “They will do all kinds of foolish things here”. “What do you have in mind?” That was how the DAP was born.

PADERANGA: But you had thought about that already?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

PADERANGA: A development academy?

CORPUZ, OD: The DAP?

PADERANGA: No I mean the concept of an academy for the training of government officials?

CORPUZ, OD: In fact I’m somewhat unhappy because the concept was not approved and adopted entirely by our government because the key concept there was a career executive service, meaning officers who were ranked 1, 2, 3, 4. And they could be assigned to any department in the government. While they were assigned, of course, it was after a deep study of that particular office so they would know what they... Today, if you are assigned somewhere, you are there, period. In the old days you could be shuffled including a stint or a term of service in the rural areas.

PADERANGA: ... It was accepted during martial law?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, after martial law. Or it was unfamiliar, actually.

KATAYAMA: When did you develop that idea? Even during your days as undersecretary of the Department of Education or...?

PADERANGA: Maybe another related question, was this part of your, I remember you wrote a book on bureaucracy in the Philippines; was it all mixed together?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't remember, Dondon. I don't remember. I think the bureaucracy [book] was more descriptive than prescriptive?

PADERANGA: So the academy came...

CORPUZ, OD: Later.

PADERANGA: So your conversation with [Leonides] Virata was really more opportunistic than anything? ... He had something that you think he wouldn't use fully and so you took it.

CORPUZ, OD: And I really admire that fellow. That's why the library at the DAP was called Virata Hall. Of course I was always close to his elder brother, Enrique [Virata].

PADERANGA: The father of...

CORPUZ, OD: The father of Cesar [Virata].

PADERANGA: Yes, the P.M.

CORPUZ, OD: He was the elder brother of Leo [Leonides Virata].

PADERANGA: Ah, so Leonides is already the uncle.

KATAYAMA: How did you find the Department of Education? Your first experience in nonacademic government sector and then you were the number one expert in political science and also Philippine political culture. How did you find that...?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I think that you have to be prepared for it. I am not orthodox, as I said in the Committee on Appointments, "if you don't like me I don't like you". So in the Department of Education, well I didn't have crazy and unorthodox ideas on education, no. I just saw to it, first of all, as a newcomer, I saw to it that I inquired into whether they were doing their existing jobs well. That's all. And then I told myself, depending on what I find out my next moves would come. But first I had to find out whether they were doing their jobs well. Education is difficult, broad.

CORPUZ, A: At that time in the Department of Education, there was no CHED (Commission on Higher Education).

CORPUZ, OD: No, that was one of my recommendations because I don't see why universities should be under bureaucrats in the government department.

PADERANGA: I see. No, I mean I see that you already had recommended that at that time.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, I didn't want the officials in the bureaucracy, the Department of Education, to be governing universities. Universities should be under a separate supervisory office and this was CHED (Commission on Higher Education).

TADEM: Did you express this during that time?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

TADEM: How was it received?

CORPUZ, OD: That's the reason for the Commission on Higher Education.



PADERANGA: But it really became independent only recently?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, relatively recently.

TADEM: Yeah because in the 1970s...

PADERANGA: From the 1990s...

CORPUZ, OD: Well, you see, people from our bureaucracy, let's say the Department of Education, if it's education they want it under them.

PADERANGA: Yes.

CORPUZ, OD: So it was not easy to let go of universities, in other words, to let CHED have its way.

PADERANGA: In FAPE (Fund for Assistance to Private Education), you joined at the start? This would be around 1965? 1966?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't remember precisely.

CORPUZ, A: In fact he was the one who started it.

PADERANGA: My guess is that FAPE was set up with the funds that we got from the PHILCAG (Philippine Civic Action Group) in Vietnam.

CORPUZ, OD: Ah no.

PADERANGA: So these two were not related?

CORPUZ, OD: Completely independent.

PADERANGA: Because of the timing, I thought. So how did the Fund for Assistance for Private Education come about?

CORPUZ, A: War damage fund given to the government.

PADERANGA: War reparations? War damage payments?

CORPUZ, A: Yes. For Private Education remember?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah yeah. That was the source of funding for FAPE.

CORPUZ, A: Because private education was part and parcel of education. In those days public and private...

CORPUZ, OD: But relationships were not very good because private institutions did not receive any funding and yet they felt uneasy with all the supervision over them.

PADERANGA: That's right.

CORPUZ, OD: That's one of the reasons for CHED.

TADEM: From undersecretary, you went up then you went back to teaching? After your term?

CORPUZ, OD: Undersecretary?

PADERANGA: Then you became secretary, and then went straight...

CORPUZ, A: To UP (University of the Philippines) as president.

PADERANGA: Concurrent, wasn't it?

CORPUZ, OD: Concurrent.

CORPUZ, A: ... He was [UP] president then he was pulled out to become the Minister of Education.

TADEM: This was during martial law.

CORPUZ, A: ...Then they called him the Minister of Education.

CORPUZ, OD: I remember when I was UP president I was still president of DAP (Development Academy of the Philippines).

PADERANGA: Ah yes.

CORPUZ, OD: So at 12 noon, I would leave my office at the UP presidency, my motorcycle was waiting downstairs, and I would go to Tagaytay right away.

PADERANGA: So you were holding office in Tagaytay?

CORPUZ, OD: In DAP, yes.

PADERANGA: I remember you had an office on Amorsolo Street?

CORPUZ, OD: Amorsolo Street?

PADERANGA: In Makati?

CORPUZ, A: Afterward. A little afterward. Because his office in DAP was in Tagaytay.

TADEM: How long was the motorcycle ride <laughs>?

CORPUZ, OD: ... The fastest motorcycle. I had three motorcycles, all 750 plus an 1100. Two 750s.

TADEM: Where did that come from, the love of motorcycles?

CORPUZ, A: He would ask me to ride with him; ah, that was the first and the last! <laughs>  
Imagine, from our residence here to Tagaytay!

TADEM: Oh my God! <laughs>

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, you have not asked whether Dr. Paderanga's wife had any influence on me! <laughs>

TADEM: Yeah, yeah we want to know!

TADEM: When did she work for Secretary Corpuz?

PADERANGA: No, no. That would be around early 1970s when she graduated in college.

TADEM: In the Department of Education?

PADERANGA: No at DAP.

CORPUZ, OD: One of the finest ladies I have ever met.

CORPUZ, A: Very nice and pretty.

TADEM: Yes, that's what I was asking...

PADERANGA: I think that's what she wanted to find out <laughs>.

TADEM: You were not married that time?

PADERANGA: No, no.

CORPUZ, A: And they were very close friends with Mrs. Santos, of Chemistry?

PADERANGA: Miren.

TADEM: Ah, Miren.

CORPUZ, A: \*\*\*\*\* because Miren attracted Paeng [Rafael] Salas very much.

PADERANGA: Yes.

CORPUZ, A: He wanted to marry her.

TADEM: What happened?

PADERANGA: Miren Dumlao at that time.

CORPUZ, A: Oh Miren and Paeng... He would make O.D. "bugaw" <laughs>

CORPUZ, OD: I think Miren was from Tarlac; she was a Dumlao.

PADERANGA: I think their roots are back in Tarlac because they were just migrants in Surigao.

CORPUZ, A: Miren is still in Chemistry?

PADERANGA: Still in UP.

CORPUZ, A: But she has not obtained a PhD?

PADERANGA: Yes she has a PhD now. And her sister, the one who is now in Malacañang. The first name I forget.

CORPUZ, A: I remember his wife and Miren were good friends.

TADEM: So he was witness to the courtship! <laughs> Did you also go to Tagaytay?

PADERANGA: No, I met her in the US.

KATAYAMA: Okay, going back to... <laughs>

PADERANGA: She wanted to find out a long time.

TADEM: I did ask how he'd sort of fooled her!

KATAYAMA: Ok so going back to Marcos days, did you know the plan of Mr. [Ferdinand] Marcos to declare martial law? Or you didn't know?

CORPUZ, OD: Such a decision... he will not reveal that to others.

KATAYAMA: But you expected it to happen? No?

TADEM: You were surprised?

KATAYAMA: It was all of a sudden?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know, but I did not myself expect it.

TADEM: So when he declared martial law, sir, what came to your mind?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I said it was natural. He had a strong mind, and you know he was even accused of murder. In Ilocos.

KATAYAMA: So your first encounter with Mr. [Ferdinand] Marcos was during your undersecretary days?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah.

KATAYAMA: So what kind of impression did you have about him? You described him a little bit—he gave few instructions—but what kind of impression came into your mind at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, first of all, I must confess that to people like me, that is to say [people] who are appointed to high positions, you would think highly of the person that appointed you. You would say that the appointment was correct <laughs>. Naturally. But in my case, well I agree with that. But in addition, I say that the correct judgment of Marcos would only come some time after him...

PADERANGA: I will ask a question before another question. My question is that when you came into government did you have some, I don't know how to say it... either deep-seated expectations of what you could do or did you have some deeply held principles already that could be deployed when you got into position?

CORPUZ, OD: No, I had no substantive plan, Dondon, but I had procedural ideas. That is to say, first I will watch how things are going, how the department functions, how it goes along. And in this case, I tried to look for people there, already there like [Magdaleno] Albarracin and so forth, whom I already knew. Manuel, Juan Manuel, who was a relative of President [Ferdinand] Marcos. So I decided that I would establish contact with them and that this contact would continue for a while until I felt confident that I could decide things for myself.

PADERANGA: There was no grand plan so to speak of at that time? You picked it up as you went along?

CORPUZ, OD: No ... a grand plan would mean that that would be your permanent long-term assignment. I did not have that idea. My plans were only to see to it that things were going well and that things would continue to do well.

PADERANGA: In our conversations with Prime Minister [Cesar] Virata and General [Jose] Almonte, what came out... or what they thought was that Marcos was actually a deep thinker and that he was thinking several steps ahead. PM Virata said, just like you, that President Marcos would just let him do his work in the economic sphere, and he said that as long as it was military and security, that was his. But on the economic [aspects], he was essentially, I would not say left alone, but he was essentially in command and...

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, I agree with that.

PADERANGA: But both of them, I mean also General Almonte, they thought that President Marcos had actually thought deeply about things that he was planning to do. Did you get the same impression?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, maybe I should say yes or no, but my idea is that basically when somebody or when Marcos appointed somebody to a position, he appointed one who was either a like-minded person or a person whom he expected to be like-minded on many major matters. In fact, I'd be friendly with President Marcos. In Malacañang he would put his arm over my shoulder, and he'd say, "What's up, OD?" I think he called me O.D. much more than Mr. Secretary.

KATAYAMA: Yeah, your explanation and analysis is a little bit different from what we heard from other technocrats. They said they agreed that Marcos had enough courage to tap the best and brightest however different mindset; he had enough confidence in controlling them. But you are not, you are different, he preferred like-minded personalities or...



CORPUZ, OD: Not necessarily. Number one, it's not really like-minded already. [But] they could accept his orders or instructions or preferences. Because if he were to accept those who were already thinking like him, that's not a good method.

PADERANGA: What were the dynamics of decision making at the start, or did it change with martial law or onward? He wasn't a puppeteer.

CORPUZ, OD: No, but a factor you should have in mind is Mrs. [Imelda] Marcos, especially from halfway of Marcos's term. She began to be, I don't know to use the word, assertive, but obviously after some time she began to have ideas of her own about governance; she would like this, she would like that and so on, and especially about human settlements. My thinking about human settlements goes like this, that people live on the ground not up in the sky, and when you think of a human community, you have to bring that thing in the sky down to the ground and that's how... the term human settlements was becoming widespread. So I thought, we should simplify it, human settlements not there, but here, and how people actually live and how this way of life might be improved and all kinds of studies about that. And she became interested there because of the factor of improving the lives of human communities on the ground. And that was why she insisted on becoming Minister of Human Settlements. I was the person in charge of the problem of human settlements in the Marcos regime, but she took it and there was no resentment on my part. I think, after all, she was the First Lady [Imelda Marcos] and she probably could do a lot.

TADEM: Did you have any working relationship with Mrs. [Imelda] Marcos then?

CORPUZ, OD: Oh yeah, we had.

TADEM: In what...

PADERANGA: This would be about 1974 onward.

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

PADERANGA: Before that she was not very involved.

CORPUZ, OD: Because before she heard of the “human settlements” expression she was...

PADERANGA: Ah she was not involved.

KATAYAMA: Going back to just before the declaration of martial law, [were you able] to push through with what you had in mind, your ideas to reorganize or to enhance government capacity? Was an authoritative regime more convenient or better as a condition or not necessarily?

PADERANGA: So even under a presidential system, would you have been able to push through with what you thought were the [necessary] reforms?

CORPUZ, OD: Oh yes.

PADERANGA: Very interesting, that’s the same thing that [Cesar] Virata was [saying]...

CORPUZ, OD: Because I knew that [Ferdinand] Marcos would not oppose a good idea.

KATAYAMA: So the situation in the Philippines, you think, is quite different from that in other East Asian countries\_\_ South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore? ...

CORPUZ, OD: Oh, once you name the country...

KATAYAMA: But without an authoritarian regime, do you think you could do that?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

KATAYAMA: So it means the rationale for the declaration of martial law was just for political ... or security reasons?

CORPUZ, OD: Oh, not security.

KATAYAMA: Oh okay, just political?

CORPUZ, OD: Because political, in my sense, means anything that has to do with the human community. There are two words I like to use in describing the human community. *Civis* – a civil community, which is Latin—and *polis*, which is Greek. In the Greek term, to have people live in the polis, they cannot live outside of the polis, outside of the community. And as Aristotle put it: A man who does not belong to a polis is not a man. He is either a beast or god. So every person lives in a polis, a political community. But when I say political, it is not political in the modern sense. It is in a polis community. And as I said the Latin is *civis*, civil community. So... we're dealing with this in relation to martial law?

PADERANGA: I think more just structurally, whether an authoritarian government was really needed to push the reforms.

CORPUZ, OD: Ah, I see.

PADERANGA: Whether martial law had to be.

CORPUZ, OD: Ah no, I don't think so. But of course it was in [Ferdinand] Marcos' character.

PADERANGA: He wanted to be in control?

CORPUZ, OD: You go back to the [Julio] Nalundasan case.

KATAYAMA: Ah, but what do you mean by natural when you describe the declaration of martial law. You thought it was natural.

CORPUZ, OD: It was in Marcos' nature <laughs>.

PADERANGA: Natural if you think about Marcos' personality, a natural extension.

KATAYAMA: I see.

PADERANGA: That is the same...

KATAYAMA: Ah, our project also involves comparative studies.

CORPUZ, OD: Excuse me, what is this project?

KATAYAMA: Oral history of the Philippine developmental state in comparison with other Southeast Asian or East Asian countries. That's why we are very much interested in the function or role played by the technocrats in the authoritarian regime. Compared with the counterparts, so far we found that Philippine technocrats had a very minimal role in the authoritarian regime.

CORPUZ, OD: I think that's true.

KATAYAMA: So that was a little surprising for us. Even Prime Minister Cesar Virata said without martial law, we could do our programs.

PADERANGA: Because the impression of people looking from the outside, and maybe this was part of the justification given at the time, was that they needed to impose martial law in order to push the development of the country.

KATAYAMA: For instance, in the government bureaucracy in the Philippines political appointment is quite rampant and government bureaucrats are very much discouraged by the external intervention, particularly from the Congress.

CORPUZ, OD: The United States?

KATAYAMA: No, no, no the Philippines, the politicians... That is why they cannot implement their own goals; but martial law is quite different setting. [There is] no intervention from the politicians. Technocrats are given a kind of freedom, liberty to pursue their policies. That is the general idea about authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia or East Asia, but in the Philippines, the technocrats did not enjoy that kind of freedom or advantage given by the declaration of martial law.

CORPUZ, OD: In the Philippines we do not believe in literally applying the word *cratos* or *cracy*. We don't believe in really applying the meaning of power. I think we are more a negotiating people; even our marriage is a negotiation <laughs>. We are more a negotiating people. We're not fond of imposing. Maybe the law is the law and all that, but we get out of it.

PADERANGA: But at the same time, the impression we get also is that President [Ferdinand] Marcos—what's the right word?—went out of his way to choose technically proficient people. In other words, the choice was people who were good at their jobs.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, I think Marcos thought that way. He had to choose people and then let them act their way until they begin to act beyond their limitations.

PADERANGA: I have a question that then comes to mind. When you were in Education and even at DAP (Development Academy of the Philippines) were there any external influences that made you comfortable on one side or very useful for you on the other that you can remember, looking back?

CORPUZ, OD: I would have difficulty answering that because when I am in a position, I think of how to do it...

TADEM: And then when you were in Education, what were the perspectives then that were dominant and what did you bring in for a change?

CORPUZ, OD: It seems like a long time ago.

PADERANGA: I have a follow-up question to that, would you say that EDPITAF (Educational Development Projects Implementing Task Force) is a good indication or reflection of your thinking?

CORPUZ, OD: What's EDPITAF again?

PADERANGA: The Education... this was the project that you started <Corpuz laughs> and then continued by Dr. [Waldo] Perfecto, the Educational Planning and Implementation Task Force.

CORPUZ, OD: Ah...

PADERANGA: It was a World Bank-funded project. And then I think this led to other projects like the textbook project, but this was the first one, what had been done, in fact pre-martial law. It would have been around 1969 or 1970.

CORPUZ, OD: I don't remember much of it anymore.

PADERANGA: Yes because I think soon after that, I think it was Waldo Perfecto who continued it and in fact died in that office... had many proposals for improving Philippine education.

CORPUZ, A: Textbooks I think...

PADERANGA: Was one, I think, instruction was another. I think I have a copy of the report, it's a very old copy but I still keep it at home; no it's in my office.

CORPUZ, OD: There were many questions on education. For instance we used to have seven grades in the elementary then it was shortened to six grades, then it was shortened to morning sessions and afternoon sessions. Both were very serious changes.

PADERANGA: I don't think... the shortening of the classes into morning and afternoon sessions was in the EDPITAF report <laughs>. In fact if any, the EDPITAF report was to lengthen the hours of instruction.

CORPUZ, OD: I remember I had seven grades, morning and afternoon.

CORPUZ, A: Then they just teach the subject matter in the morning and repeat it in the afternoon; afternoon period for mastery.

KATAYAMA: May I go back to a different question ... A sort of think tank during martial law... when we interviewed Joe [Jose] Almonte he said that PCAS (Philippine Center for Advanced Studies) functioned as a sort of think tank for President [Ferdinand] Marcos to invent very attractive ideas and to appeal to the masses and I think the same might be true of DAP (Development Academy of the Philippines).

CORPUZ, OD: I don't think Mr. [Jose] Almonte can speak, should speak like that. Mr. Almonte is a little small thing in the system although he speaks out loud <laughs>. His impact on the thinking community...

PADERANGA: Was small?

CORPUZ, OD: Very tiny.

PADERANGA: So PCAS was not thought of...

CORPUZ, OD: Philippine Center for...

PADERANGA: Advanced Studies.

CORPUZ, OD: I have forgotten already.

PADERANGA: Ruben Cuyugan, Adrian Cristobal... I was so surprised when I saw so many names there.

TADEM: Luis Teodoro, Conrado de Quiros

PADERANGA: Conrado de Quiros, I was so surprised!

CORPUZ, OD: They are not intellectuals, they are columnists.

TADEM: I stand corrected <laughs>.

PADERANGA: So many, many people actually in the UP (University of the Philippines) faculty. There was a Mendoza.

CORPUZ, A: Rene?

PADERANGA: Ah Rene Mendoza, yes, yes. They were all there in PCAS.

CORPUZ, A: [Josefa] Saniel and company.

CORPUZ, OD: Intellectually they are our juniors.

PADERANGA: They were students, actually.

KATAYAMA: You didn't like the PCAS ideas?

TADEM: How did you find PCAS? He doesn't even remember because it wasn't important.

CORPUZ, OD: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies. Well, it had not made itself important.

PADERANGA: Yes, yes. It actually was very short-lived.



TADEM: Sir, what made you choose Francisco “Dodong” Nemenzo as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences?

CORPUZ, OD: Did I what?

PADERANGA: Appoint...

TADEM: Appoint Dodong Nemenzo as dean... it was martial-law period.

CORPUZ, OD: Dean of Arts and Sciences... Dodong [Francisco Nemenzo] is a nonconformist and it was for that reason that I made him dean. And for the same reason, I would have also made him president of UP.

PADERANGA: Even though you knew that he had once been a member of the Partido Komunista [ng Pilipinas]?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, yes.

PADERANGA: I had to ask that question <laughs>.

TADEM: Yes, and during martial law.

CORPUZ, OD: Sometimes the nonconformists have ideas that should be considered because the conformists come out with expected ideas.

PADERANGA: But he must have been difficult to handle?

CORPUZ, OD: No. Dodong [Francisco] Nemenzo? He is a good friend of mine.

PADERANGA: But he was always attacking the government at that time I remember. But not you <laughs>.

CORPUZ, OD: No, I was never lectured or chastised or scolded by Malacañang on account of Dodong, never.

TADEM: Oh really?

PADERANGA: Or Gon, I remember, Gon [Gonzalo] Jurado.

TADEM: Ah also Gon Jurado.

PADERANGA: He was attacking Malacañang all the time.

CORPUZ, OD: He is not as picturesque as Dodong.

PADERANGA: If you were to divide the Marcos years into how many periods, how would you divide them? By policy and by people involved?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know.

PADERANGA: Because you had already said that, for example, the First Lady [Imelda Marcos] did not become very active until the second half. Were there people who were there in the first half who kind of faded away?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah, no, I think we have to go to the reason why she became active. She became active because of human settlements and she thought human settlements was a way to keep up her position, image, whatever.

PADERANGA: But she also felt that she really believed it.

CORPUZ, OD: After I explained to her <laughs>.

PADERANGA: I was a consultant to DAP (Development Academy of the Philippines) at that time, when I came home from a three-month period here. Of course it was through Jolly [Jose Conrado Benitez], Jolly is from Stanford.

TADEM: Sir, at that time you were aware of Marcos's health, it was deteriorating...

CORPUZ, OD: No.

PADERANGA: So he really compartmentalized the decision making in a way?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know. In what sense?

PADERANGA: In the sense that Prime Minister [Cesar] Virata would describe it—security and military essentially were kept from them, but essentially when it came to economics, he had a lot of leeway and, in your case, in education, you seemed to have a lot of leeway.

CORPUZ, OD: I was thinking back on our meetings in the Cabinet. And I cannot see it that way.

PADERANGA: So things were discussed?

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, things were discussed.

PADERANGA: Roundtable?

CORPUZ, OD: Some were more talkative than others but things were discussed.

PADERANGA: Was he like a chairman of the board wherein he would listen and then...

CORPUZ, OD: Not really. Well maybe he was, but he was not as noisy as a regular chairman.

PADERANGA: I see.

CORPUZ, OD: He was a good listener. I remember the Cabinet room, it was small. I think only as long as –from here to this wall.

PADERANGA: Oh really? So very few members?

CORPUZ, OD: Well one long table; only members of the Cabinet were there, not the undersecretaries. Only Cabinet members, that's how it should be.

PADERANGA: Not under [Corazon] Aquino... and then [Gloria Macapagal] Arroyo's is bigger. And so when you went there you just brought your papers, nobody else just you?

CORPUZ, OD: Well a Cabinet member going there with his assistant... that means he doesn't know his Cabinet.

PADERANGA: That's what's happening now.

KATAYAMA: How about his capability of understanding, did Mr. Marcos understand the problems issues quite well? Accurately?

CORPUZ, OD: I really don't know but I expected that when he asked a question he would be thinking of the responses and grading them accordingly. That's how it was.

TADEM: Sir, when you were in Education, how did you sit within the national priority at that time? In terms of the budget, policies?

CORPUZ, OD: Well we had the largest budget, only defense...

TADEM: Defense then education... and education policy, was it tied also to economic policy making, was there a conscious effort or was it treated separately?

CORPUZ, OD: No, I think it was treated as education but not separately. Anybody knows that even the budget people are wise, are not too ignorant to separate education from the economic requirements of the country.

KATAYAMA: Did you find any significant difference between, before martial law and after the declaration of martial law in your function as secretary, no difference?

CORPUZ, OD: None.

KATAYAMA: Oh that's very interesting!

PADERANGA: Maybe we can follow up on that question.

KATAYAMA: So that feeling did not change? There was no significant change in the course of martial law?

CORPUZ, OD: I think changes...you will find them if that's what you're looking for.

PADERANGA: But none that you noticed?

CORPUZ, OD: Yes.

PADERANGA: Maybe I will just recount to you what PM [Cesar] Virata told us. He said, and I found it very fascinating, he said that even during the Vietnam War, Marcos was already thinking beyond. That was why he did not want to allow the Americans to use the American bases for bombing Vietnam because he thought, President Marcos thought that the Americans would not win in Vietnam and that –

CORPUZ, OD: You mean Virata did not think...?

PADERANGA: No, Marcos did not think. So that's how far Marcos was thinking, that the Americans would not win in Vietnam and that after the war he would have to live with whoever won in Vietnam. So I was wondering if you had noticed something like that or caught the way that Marcos thought about Philippine education?

CORPUZ, OD: Excuse me for a couple of minutes.

<O.D. Corpuz goes to the washroom and the team discusses other questions to ask. After a few minutes Corpuz returns to the living room.>

CORPUZ, OD: I was looking for a shirt.

CORPUZ, A: Ah you want a shirt, *mahal*?

CORPUZ, OD: No it's a black shirt that says Die President Ho Chi Minh.

<The group laughs>

TADEM: That would be nice for the camera.

CORPUZ, OD: I cannot find it.

CORPUZ, A: You want me to find it?

CORPUZ, OD: No, its okay.

CORPUZ, A: Next time.

KATAYAMA: Ah, yes, please allow me to repeat the questions. So what do you think martial law was, to put it simply?

CORPUZ, OD: Well I, it's really more complex, no? What martial law was... why Marcos declared martial law... it will take me an hour <laughs>.

KATAYAMA: Because you are the best person to describe and make judgments, you know.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah. It's difficult. What was martial law?

KATAYAMA: Okay, I shift my question a little bit. You agree that even without martial law Marcos would have been able to push through with his goals and his policies?

CORPUZ, OD: I think so. <KATAYAMA: Wow> I think so. Who were our other presidents? [Ferdinand] Marcos, [Carlos] Garcia, [Diosdado] Macapagal, [Ramon] Magsaysay... Yeah Magsaysay probably had the greatest, memorable impact in the Philippines. Garcia not too much, Macapagal not too much. Marcos very much more. You know the last two or three years I have had in mind these thoughts. But it will take some years, maybe at least ten years after Marcos that we can have a, not really valid, but good working opinion on martial law. <PADERANGA: Yes, yes. > I have been thinking that way so if I'm... if I don't answer easily, it's because of that reason. Again, honestly, Dondon, it will take some time.

PADERANGA: That's why we are, I hope you don't mind, we're also racing against time, so to speak, to record the recollections of people who might put flesh into a thought because we are afraid that these will be gone. For example, among ourselves we feel bad that we were not really able to have a long discussion with Alex [Alejandro] Melchor.

KATAYAMA: Yes, yes, yes.

TADEM: And Paeng [Rafael] Salas also.

CORPUZ, OD: He's no more?

PADERANGA:... Paeng[Rafael] Salas, of course, but that was a long time ago. When Secretary [Alejandro] Melchor died we said, "Oh there goes our project" <laughs>. But we wanted to have the recollections, even the little bits and pieces... so people can look back... Because we also think that it would take maybe ten, maybe even twenty-five, years before things could be brought out. I was really so surprised that in all of the people we had thought of, that there is a general respect, even fondness, of President Ferdinand] Marcos. I mean there is none of regret or anything. Also we are very surprised that both you and PM [Cesar] Virata agree that even without the imposition of martial law, the reforms that you at least thought in your areas would have gone through anyway.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, I agree.

KATAYAMA: Yes, very surprising.

PADERANGA: Because we had been hearing about this and that is why General [Jose] Almonte became important because PCAS (Philippine Center for Advanced Studies) was trying to –

CORPUZ, OD: Became important?

PADERANGA: Ah, General Almonte. Because PCAS was in the midst of trying to... well one of the organs being used to give reasons for <TADEM: Martial law> Strategic studies... we thought it was development, we thought that development and economics and security were together, the umbrella under which martial law was pushed.

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know. I don't know whether security was that important.

PADERANGA: That important? So it was really...



CORPUZ, OD: I would say that security was an offshoot or an accompanying issue but not the issue, not an issue even.

PADERANGA: Yes, yes, very interesting.

KATAYAMA: How about the important policies of Mr. [Ferdinand] Marcos like the dismantling of oligarchs. Did you believe in that?

CORPUZ, OD: Dismantling?

TADEM, KATAYAMA: Oligarchs.

PADERANGA: The power of the oligarchs.

KATAYAMA: Did you believe that at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: Well, it's a natural thing that may not mean much anyway, but he would, a person in his place would say "Let's dismantle the oligarchy" in the way that a leader would always say that because the oligarchy is always thought of as an obstacle to change and reform and progress.

KATAYAMA: So nothing new?

CORPUZ, OD: Nothing new.

PADERANGA: But also nothing in the sphere of education.

CORPUZ, OD: Nothing.

PADERANGA: When you, if I may go back to... DAP, did you think of it like the Indian administrative service? The career executive service?

CORPUZ, OD: Career.

KATAYAMA: Oh yes, that is a very good question. So did you have any model to follow...?

CORPUZ, OD: No, if I had a model I would have thought... of the British civil service, but I did not. I did not study it in order to copy it or in order to reflect it in the kind of civil service.

KATAYAMA: Ah, this is one of the questions I raised more than thirty years ago when I interviewed you for the first time. Some people I interviewed before you agreed that Mr. Marcos lost his interest in carrying out the career executive service reforms so... he ignored or abandoned that system within a couple of years. Is it true?

CORPUZ, OD: No, I think the career executive service was never really adopted by him, by Malacañang.

PADERANGA: Even during his time.

KATAYAMA: Why so?

CORPUZ, OD: It's difficult. It's an overwhelming change in the system.

KATAYAMA: Yes, yes... too drastic in some sense.

PADERANGA: And would threaten the power of, maybe not the president, but people...

CORPUZ, OD: The oligarchy, the oligarchy.

PADERANGA: In fact that was the question I was about to ask. Did Marcos buy into the career executive service?

CORPUZ, OD: It was good, but the system would not accept it.

KATAYAMA: So you were not happy at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: No, no, not happy. I would accept... I think I have spelled out the career executive service concept more than any other observer, but I know it is very difficult. I was looking for something...

<Corpuz looks for a magazine among stacks. He says that when their grandchildren come all the papers are messed up. Mrs. Corpuz says that it is because they encourage the children to read. She says that they have ten grandchildren, nine girls and one boy. O.D. Corpuz narrates what is written on the magazine article.>

CORPUZ, OD: I think the front page [reads]: "In the beginning there was O.D. Corpuz..."

KATAYAMA: When I came across to know about that system, I was very much impressed because ah-

CORPUZ, OD: When you came across that?

KATAYAMA: That career civil service, because I had already read your book and I have some ideas about the problems of the Philippine bureaucracy, so as you described same salary, same treatment by rank not by the position, [that was] very attractive. But the output was a little disappointing. So I do not know if this is the appropriate word, but please allow me to be a little frank. Don't you think that you were used by President [Ferdinand] Marcos to rationalize the martial law regime, by your inventing those beautiful ideas?

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know, I don't think he could have foreseen those things that I have said or written.

PADERANGA: That is a charge that is made often, that President Marcos just used the technocrats to, well to make him look good

CORPUZ, OD: Well, I would if I were in his place.

PADERANGA: That's true.

CORPUZ, OD: It would make me look good.

PADERANGA: But that's not the impression that we get from talking to you or PM [Cesar] Virata; that in fact he knew how to use people, it's coming out as a much more complicated picture of him.

CORPUZ, OD: Yeah, actually that's what's expected from somebody who is there leading.

PADERANGA: Would you, just as a side issue, and maybe off the record, but do you think we should interview Mrs. [Imelda] Marcos? From the point of view of our project would that be a [good idea]...

CORPUZ, OD: I don't know but you might have to; well you'll have to write her, no?

PADERANGA: Yes.

CORPUZ, OD: And you'll have to indicate your major areas of interrogation, the actual questions and not too many <laughs>.

TADEM: They'll be all on human settlements

<Mrs. Corpuz finds the magazine and reads from it.>

CORPUZ, A: "In the beginning there was O.D. Corpuz..."

<Professor Katayama copies the publication information.>]

PADERANGA: Who were the other personalities at that time?

CORPUZ, OD: What time?

PADERANGA: When you were there in the government... who would be good to talk to also on technocracy.

CORPUZ, OD: Precisely, Cesar, Cesar Virata.

PADERANGA: Would Armand Fabella?

CORPUZ, OD: Maybe; he would be a little flighty.

PADERANGA: Yeah, but at that time he wasn't really in government anymore but he was, I noticed, he was always in the Reorganization Commission.

KATAYAMA: Yeah, yeah Presidential Commission on the Government Reorganization.

CORPUZ, OD: Would you like to interview Leo [Leonides] Virata?

PADERANGA: Is he still...?

CORPUZ, A: No more, he's been dead a long time...

CORPUZ, OD: Ah I didn't know that.

CORPUZ, A: ...he's gone...

PADERANGA: Oh we would have... He would have been a good person to interview, DBP... He was one of the first Filipino PhDs in Economics. <CORPUZ, OD: I see> We've looked, Noel [Emmanuel] de Dios did that and found out as far as we can tell the first Filipino PhD in economics was from Stanford. Horacio Lava, 1936. Because <CORPUZ, OD: The Lava brothers> Leonides Virata and somebody else was 1939 and then Andres Castillo....

KATAYAMA: Okay, what do you think of the legacies of the Marcos regime and the succeeding administration?

CORPUZ, OD: Who became president after Marcos?

PADERANGA, TADEM: Aquino

CORPUZ, OD: Cory [Corazon] Aquino.

PADERANGA: Yes and then [Fidel] Ramos and then Erap [Joseph Ejercito Estrada].

CORPUZ, OD: I don't think they...

KATAYAMA: How about Ramos administration? Ramos seemed kind of like a brainchild of Marcos, don't you think so?

CORPUZ, OD: If it was, it was only in the beginning and he would not last as a brainchild.

PADERANGA: He was one of the Rolex 12?

CORPUZ, OD: For me it's quite difficult because I keep thinking of [Fidel] Ramos as West Point and maybe [Ferdinand] Marcos as Laoag Elementary School <laughs>.

KATAYAMA: Ah, I see.

CORPUZ, OD: Or UP.

PADERANGA: But intellectually Marcos was; he could hold his own.

KATAYAMA: Even during the GMA (Gloria Macapagal Arroyo) administration... one that is advocating the strong republic, I thought it is quite similar to the Marcos ideas, prioritizing the capacity of the state.

CORPUZ, OD: Even today there is a slogan “*matatag na republika*”, a strong republic.

PADERANGA: That actually started during the time of President [Fidel] Ramos. Joe [Jose] Almonte was one of those because I think among others, Pepe [Felipe] Miranda, the political scientists was saying that what we have is a weak state, and so they picked it up and I think part of the initiative of those to give Marcos another term was...

CORPUZ, OD: I would still think of the Philippines as a weak state. I mean not politically, but structurally, organizationally it is a weak state.

KATAYAMA: But many foreign observers agree that almost all the reform initiatives rooted back to the Marcos regime and the problem was that Marcos did not take advantage of the [opportunity] that's why...

<O.D. Corpuz's son arrives.>

KATAYAMA: So what I meant to say was that the Philippines missed the biggest opportunity for reform during Marcos's time ...

PADERANGA: There was one thing though. If you look at the names of families before Marcos had martial law and now the names of families, they are different. Before that the names of the families had been the same ever since the 1920s. You know, Araneta, Lopez, and so on. Now it's

different, so in a way you could say that he was at least partially successful in breaking up what they called oligarchies at that time.

CORPUZ, OD: In that sense.

PADERANGA: In that sense, yes.

TADEM: But then his own cronies also...

PADERANGA: Well, that's true.

TADEM: New ones.

PADERANGA: New ones. What changed, of course, are the Chinese names.

CORPUZ, OD: Everywhere the outsiders will say [that] the people close [to the President] were cronies, always.

PADERANGA: I have one question, what was the influence in education at least, of external institutions like the World Bank, and did it bother you; was it good or bad or was the influence good or bad?

CORPUZ, OD: No, no.

PADERANGA: It didn't bother you?

CORPUZ, OD: It didn't bother me in the sense that I knew they were not better than I was. I mean, I knew that I could think better than they did.

PADERANGA: But they were strong in the education sector? Were they imposing?



CORPUZ, OD: Ah no. What happened was that it was possible to get loans from the World Bank but you had to meet their conditions and you had to know their conditions in advance. So they were strong only if you were prepared to meet those conditions.

PADERANGA: But they were not <CORPUZ, OD: Pushy?> pushy.

CORPUZ, OD: No, the World Bank merely announced that... it was prepared to fund this...

TADEM: You remember, sir, the conditions for the education?

CORPUZ, OD: No, they had to be specific; the reforms had to be specific and the conditions had to be specific.

PADERANGA: My own sense, talking to [Cesar] Virata and then you, is that of course in our time, our negotiating strength is less now than it was during your time.

CORPUZ, OD: With the World Bank?

PADERANGA: With the World Bank, I suppose even the IMF. You were, it seems to me, not that troubled discussing with them.

CORPUZ, OD: No, no, not troubled.

PADERANGA: Not troubled? You were not too worried; you didn't find them pushy?

CORPUZ, OD: No, I didn't find them pushy.

PADERANGA: In our time it ... I think the relative strength on the negotiating table probably changed over that period.

CORPUZ, OD: I think you will see my attitude relative to the Commission on Appointments.

PADERANGA: That's right.

CORPUZ, OD: If you don't like me, I don't like you. I never appeared before the Commission on Appointments but they confirmed me.

PADERANGA: That probably also showed the strengths of, of course, your name, but also the strength of President [Ferdinand] Marcos.

CORPUZ, OD: Could be.

TADEM: Yeah because they just have to follow...

CORPUZ, OD: The alternatives were very limited. It would be a rebuff to the president.

TADEM: Not like now...

CORPUZ, OD: Just who will the President nominate next? That's why I like government because it's very interesting; government is very interesting.

PADERANGA: But there are many players now. There are more players, sometimes more unexpected players.

KATAYAMA: Do you keep diaries or memoirs?

CORPUZ, OD: No.

KATAYAMA: Even before your Cabinet days?

CORPUZ, OD: No.

PADERANGA: Would you have some of your materials that you will not have any places to deposit...? We can keep it in the U.P. Library...

CORPUZ, OD: No.

PADERANGA: The education office close to Manila Cathedral... Was that during your time?

CORPUZ, OD: It was there already.

PADERANGA: It's a beautiful building, at least.

CORPUZ, OD: I remember it's the governor's residence.

PADERANGA: Yes before, yeah.

CORPUZ, OD: Probably.

KATAYAMA: Department of Education, yes.

PADERANGA: But I think... I don't know where the secretary holds office now. It used to be in Arroceros.

CORPUZ, OD: Where is the education office today?

PADERANGA: I suppose when you were secretary you were in Arrocerros? Close to the Quiapo bridge?

CORPUZ, OD: Near the bridge?

PADERANGA: Yes near the bridge of Quiapo.

CORPUZ, OD: I think so, yes. You ask your wife.

PADERANGA: Oh but she was with you at DAP. I remember visiting you when I was with the Human Settlements project we made a report to you. This would be at around 1976. We actually made a report to you in Amorsolo.

TADEM: Sir, how did you juggle your time as U.P. president and education secretary?

CORPUZ, OD: No problem.

PADERANGA: If you choose good people you don't have to...

<Dr. Paderanga chats with O.D. Corpuz's son.>

KATAYAMA: So you have no plan to write on <CORPUZ, OD: Memoirs?> yeah on Marcos days?

CORPUZ, OD: I always think of doing so but I never have time for it. Not just the Marcos period but years behind.

KATAYAMA: Contemporary politics? If you do write which chapter, which phase would you highlight?

CORPUZ, OD: Ah, it will take some time. And I cannot say right now because as I've said, if you were to write about the Marcos era you'd have to develop a perspective of that era and after. Not so much before, I think but during and after, and that will take some time.

KATAYAMA: When observing contemporary politics, which aspect of it is most frustrating?

CORPUZ, OD: During the Marcos era?

KATAYAMA: No contemporary politics, the GMA [Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo] administration.

CORPUZ, OD: I haven't thought about it. I am not frustrated yet. <laughs>

KATAYAMA: But is the situation being improved or has it stagnated or...

CORPUZ, OD: Usually Filipinos would wind up on top, whichever. Filipinos don't have a concept of defeat.

TADEM: We're so used to all the turmoil and hardship.

CORPUZ, OD: As a people...

PADERANGA: We're always happy.

KATAYAMA: Any other follow-up question?

PADERANGA: That's all for now

KATAYAMA: Yes, for now.

PADERANGA: Can we come back if we think of other questions?

CORPUZ, OD: Sure, tell my boss [refers to his wife].

TADEM: We can just call up.

CORPUZ, A: He did not tell me because when you called up I thought you would talk to him first. He did not tell me anymore.

PADERANGA: Next time I come maybe I'll bring Delia [Paderanga].

CORPUZ, A: Oh yeah, bring her.

PADERANGA: I did not know how to get here.

TADEM: And it's the first time we heard of a U.P. Professors' Village.

<There is small talk on Dr. Paderanga's family, the origins of the U.P. Professors' Village, and the Corpuz residence in U.P. Village.>