



The Seniors (excerpt)

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It does not matter whether you agree with my view points or not, but it is better for you to think them over.

Four years ago, when I was a freshman, people liked to talk about “the seniors.” Actually, I knew nothing about their meanings. To me, the Seniors’ meant those who were studying in the parafinal years, those who spoke lots of medical jargons, those who talked about their past, those who wore shorts and slippers all around and those who behaved in ways which I could not accept. Indeed I was really afraid of the “elders,” because I did see somebody behaving very poorly in the Union Orientation Nite in Loke Yew Hall saying that they were the “Medic Finals.”

During my first year, even though I came across many friendly elders, I still felt very uneasy when I had to see one whom I did not know. It was probably because some of my classmates were occasionally shouted at, or were even shot at from above when were walking under the Residential Building. Some were driven out of the library study room, simply because some elders “need” it. There was also a “table for the finals” in our canteen.

When I was in my second year, the Medic Festival was introduced. During the organizing meetings, the programme secretary responsible for the Music Nite in Loke Yew Hall was very anxious, he repeatedly stressed, “I am really scared that some students, especially of certain classes, may disturb my Nite.” Before he could repeat for the fourth time, the class representative of the final year stopped him and said, “Sorry, my fellow student, I cannot help you. Can I ask them not to go?” And what came out later? The Music Nite was a great success.

At that very Nite, more that 200 medical students, coming from all classes, crowded around the Red Stairs. A group of fourth years, having prepared themselves as the “private police,” also set off. Yet right upon their arrival, they were being pointed at by the Orientation Camp tutors who said to their tutees, “Look! They are the Medic Guys. They are going to disturb us! The

programmes were terribly dull. Among them there were some which made jokes on medical students and their future career. I enjoyed their innocence and ignorance. The audience also cheered, probably for the humour they saw. At last came the hot hour. A group of “targets,” about 20 in number, walking in wonderful gaits, laughing and joking loudly, arrived. Every pupil immediately dilated and every heart stopped beating.

Suddenly paper planes came flying. Some people immediately accused with great certainty that it was Medic students who drove the planes. But I was surprised that no one was caught red-handed. Soon, whistling sound started penetrating its way through the noise into every one’s ears. It was the “targets” who made it. The bomb boomed at last.....

It was difficult to judge who was right or wrong. We had been preloaded with bad history and everyone’s threshold was lowered at that very moment. Actually, some of them who had whistled, or are going to whistle in the coming years, were once Medso ex-cos. And strange enough, some of them were among those who stood out, pointed at their elders and asked for order and politeness in the last Medic Nite in 1976. Now my class becomes the present final. Going along the same line, some of us are being accused as ‘the Seniors’ and probably I may have been one of the candidates.

Not long ago, there was a storm in Room 403 Professorial Block. There was a Registrars Round conducted by a popular visiting professor. Lots of the fourth years and finals crowded themselves early into the theatre. Nearly all the seats were occupied before the Professors and registrars came. Seeing the crowd, a final year put a statement on the blackboard to ask the audience to reserve seats for the staff and the seniors. (Sorry, I don’t know what is the meaning of the word “seniors” here) Some of the fourth years discussed this among themselves after the lecture, and thought that it was very unacceptable for finals to ask for seats in the lecture room. So again, some actions were considered to be necessary.

“Fighting against the Seniors” has been repeated year after year. There seemed to be a cycle that the last juniors would be fought against by the present ones years after their anti-senior act. I don’t know the reasons behind. But a final has made the following comments:

“Juniors always label the elders whom they don’t like or don’t know well as ‘the seniors.’ It may well be true that some of them do behave badly. But, why don’t they point these out, which is more fair, instead of accusing that ‘some of the finals’ or even simply saying that the senior students are bad. What would you feel, if your class were being accused to be bad and you find yourselves having done nothing wrong? As they have correctly pointed out that it is wrong for the Union Guys to mistake the whole medical school as bad, then why should they say ‘the Finals’ or ‘the Seniors’ without due thinking. I really feel that I am sacrificed in their act, just as how they feel when the Union Guys mis-labelled them. What should I do, and what should they do for me?”

“The Seniors” is not a nice term. Most of the elders are very friendly and willing to help. So please really think before you say anything.

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