

# Essay on Sensing the Atmosphere, How Did You Feel as A Newcomer to A Club, Society, School or Other Organization?

With a few of my friends, I stepped into the compound of our new school. It was early in the morning and there were many pupils inside the school compound. Some of them were obviously in the same situation as I was because they wore no badges and their faces wore the same anxious look that I saw on my friends'. We were all to be admitted into Form One of our new school as our old school did not cater for secondary education. We had already finished six years in primary school and it was time for us to venture forth into another school.

We waited at the school office as directed by one of the teachers. Anglo Chinese School is a large and famous school with a long and proud tradition. I was happy to become a pupil at the school. Nevertheless, I felt a little lost in the strange new surroundings, the hustle and bustle and the completely different set of pupils and teachers that seemed to act and talk differently.

I stood at the fringe of my group of friends to breathe in the cool morning air. A short distance from us stood the Methodist Church could see a few people inside the church with their heads bowed. I presumed that they were praying. What a beautiful and majestic sight the church presented. With its tall spires, great roofs and thick walls, it looked like a picture of the past. Indeed it was built many years ago, long before I was born. I could feel its antiquity. I could also hear voices singing strange songs in the church. In the midst of the singing came the ringing of a bell. I wondered what the bell was for.

Then I realized it was the school bell ringing as one of my friends

shook me on the shoulder to bring me back to reality. The reality was that we did not know what to do. We saw bigger boys and girls all excitedly making their way to the school hall. They were obviously older pupils of the school so they knew where to go. We were new and we could not decide whether to remain where we were or to follow them. We looked at one another, each imploring the others to provide an answer. Everybody felt equally lost and unable to act.

Then a teacher happened along and told us all to go to the hall. Relieved, we headed for the hall. We put on a brave front but inside I, for one, felt like I was stepping into an unknown and strange place. I was filled with apprehension. My friends must have felt the same. At the hail, two prefects herded us right to the front of the assembly. I felt small and insignificant. In fact my friends and I were the smallest of all the students in the hall.

By the time the headmaster arrived, we were arranged roughly according to our forms. All of us were standing except the teachers who sat on chairs on the stage. A piano somewhere struck up a chord and the assembly started to sing. It was a school song. I had never heard it before so my friends and I just remained silent and listened to the strange music coming into our ears. When they finished the headmaster gave a short speech and then we joined in to sing our National Anthem. After that, the respective teachers led their classes to their classrooms and we, Form One's, were left in the hall.

An important-looking teacher, who turned out to be the senior assistant was the only one left on the stage. He called us together and uttered a few words of welcome. Then he told us to go home and come back in the afternoon for Form One's were supposed to be in the afternoon. I did not like the idea of being in the afternoon, but I had no choice. So reluctantly I went home.

In the afternoon, we waited for the morning classes to be over before we were assembled once more and divided into our respective classes. I lost a few old classmates in the process but I gained a number of new ones. We marched into our classrooms.

The classroom we entered was a small one. The chairs, desks and the rest of the furniture were not the same as those I had encountered before. Such newness and strangeness impinged on my senses. The room even smelled funny. Our teacher, an old cheerful man, entered and introduced himself as Mr. Lingam. He gave us a book list and told us to get the books as soon as possible. After that, we settled down in our seats and Mr. Lingam checked our particulars for entry into the class register. Names new to me were called out. Unfamiliar faces spoke unfamiliar things to the teacher. After a while, Mr. Lingam left the classroom.

We got around introducing ourselves to our nearest neighbors. It was an exciting time. We had so much to learn from one another and we had so much time to do it. Soon we were conversing like old friends. Other teachers came in, introduced themselves and proceeded to get to know us. There was no lesson on the first day.

Finally, it was time to go home. As I stepped out of the school with a few friends, old and new, I felt happy, for I knew that this was the beginning of a memorable part of my life.

Indeed it turned out to be so.