

The first day of schooling was a shock to me. It was a completely foreign environment. I could understand and speak only the ShengXian dialect. I did not know what the teachers were talking. Neither could I converse with my fellow students. I would get panic if I could not see my sister outside the classroom window. But gradually somehow I got used to the new environment. I could soon follow the course works, and I made friends. By the end of the semester, I even became the top students of the class.

Most of the fellow students were the kids of local peasants, only a few were from the family of government officials. The local students were all quite poor. They wore straw sandals and not shoes. If the school were not set up because of the Japanese bombing, it was likely they might not go to school at all. After graduation, I do not recall any local fellow students went further to middle school, although some of them were really quite outstanding. Some of us often boast that we succeed in life because of our talents and efforts. They do not realize how fortunate they were to have this and that opportunities. I feel humble when I think of those fellow students in Sichuan long time ago.

In contrast, I was, for a while, probably the most privileged kid in that locality. As an example, because of my grandmother's urging, when the weather was bad, a huagan 滑竿 would carry me to the school. I think I was probably the only student in the school carried by a huagan going to school. But still, I did not have any spending money. On the other hand, there was no store at all around to spend money.

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上学的第一天，我惊慌得不得了。周围的环境对我而言完全陌生。我只会听和说嵊县方言，完全听不懂老师在说什么，也不能和同学们交谈。要不是能看见窗外的姐姐，我就会发慌。不过，慢慢地我适应了新环境；然后就跟上了课程进度，并且交上一些朋友。学期结束的时候，我成了班上最佳的学生。

大多数同学是当地农民的孩子，只有少数几个是政府公务员家的孩子。本地孩子都很穷，他们穿草鞋，没有普通的鞋子。要不是因为日军轰炸而建了这学校，他们也许根本就不会来上学。尽管他们中有几个非常优秀，毕业后，我不记得有谁后来读了中学。我们有人为自己的成功是因为聪明和努力，却没有想过有着这样那样的好机会自己是多么幸运。想到很久以前那些四川同学，我就会自感谦微。

跟他们迥异，我那一阵子也许是那边有最多特权件的孩子。譬如说，由于祖母之命，天不好的时候，我就会坐着滑竿上学。我觉得自己或许是学校里唯一一个坐滑竿上学的小学生。尽管这样，我却并没有零用钱；当然了，附近也根本没有商店可以花钱。