

Nankai Middle School was a private school. It was also an “aristocratic” school. The tuition was high. Many students were children of government high officials, generals and wealthy merchants and landlords. The original Nankai Middle school was in Tianjin. Zhang Bo Ling 张伯苓 was the principal of the school from the beginning. He foresaw the invasion of Japanese and prepared the retreat of the school one year before the invasion. He built the Chungking campus in Sha Ping Ba in 1936. Therefore the buildings and facilities were much better than the makeshift buildings and facilities of other schools and universities which moved to Sichuan after the war started. For example, in Nankai , we had not only electric lights but also tap water which nobody in Sha Ping Ba had, because Nankai had its own water tower.

All the students were living in the dormitory. The school life is just like military training. The daily schedules were dictated by the sound of bugle. Different melodies told you to get up, to gather for morning exercise and salute the raising of the flag, for breakfast, for classes, for lunch, for lowering the flag, for dinner, for evening self-study sessions, for time to go to bed, and for the lights out. Food was probably better than that of public schools, but still bad. I used to eat only very few selected vegetables at home. By the end of the semester I would eat whatever vegetable that was available.

To get in any school, whether colleges or middle schools, you need to pass the entrance examinations. The examinations were administered by each individual school. But you could get in if you had connections. The better was the school, the stronger connection you need. Nankai was no exception. To maintain the high academic standard, Nankai just made the life for students hard once they had been enrolled. There were 12 classes each in junior and senior male high schools. (Nankai was coeducational, but had separate male and female parts. Classes were not mixed, but curriculum and teachers were the same.) The first year had 5 classes, the second 4, and the third 3. So after first year, 20% of the students were dropped out, and only 60% of entering students eventually graduated.

I do not know whether I had the help of the connection to get admitted to Nankai. But I managed to be the top in the class after the first semester.

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南开中学是一所私立学校，也是所“贵族”学校。学费很贵，大多数学生来自于政府高官、将领、富商、地主的家庭。原南开中学在天津，张伯苓是创校校长。他在日军侵略前预见到侵华战争，并在战争前一年就准备了撤退学校。1936 年他在沙坪坝建了重庆校区。因此，建筑设施远远好过其它战争开始后转移到四川的学校和大学。譬如，在南开，我们不仅有电灯，还有沙坪坝仅有的自来水，因为南开有自己的水塔。

学生全部住校，校园生活与军事训练一样。日常起居都听从号角安排。不同的曲调指挥大家起床、早操、升旗、早餐、上课、午餐、降旗、晚餐、夜自修、上床、熄灯。伙食比公立学校好很多，但还是很糟糕。我在家时只吃很少几种蔬菜，一个学期下来，我什么菜都吃。

要进任何学校，无论中学还是大学，都得通过入学考试，考试是各校自己命题。要是有关系的话，也是可以进来的。学校越好，关系得越硬。南开也不例外。为了保障高水准，南开对招进来的学生要求甚严。学校男生部初中高中各有 12 个班（南开是男女同校的，但男生部和女生部分开，不混班，教学安排和教员都是一样的）。一年级 5 个班，二年级 4 个，三年级 3 个。于是，一年级下来，20%的学生被开掉，最后只有 60%的学生能毕业。

我不知道进南开我有没有走关系，不过一个学期后，我就成了班上第一名。