

Nankai University

New Foreign Teachers Survivor Guide

2014



Philip Chou

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Introduction

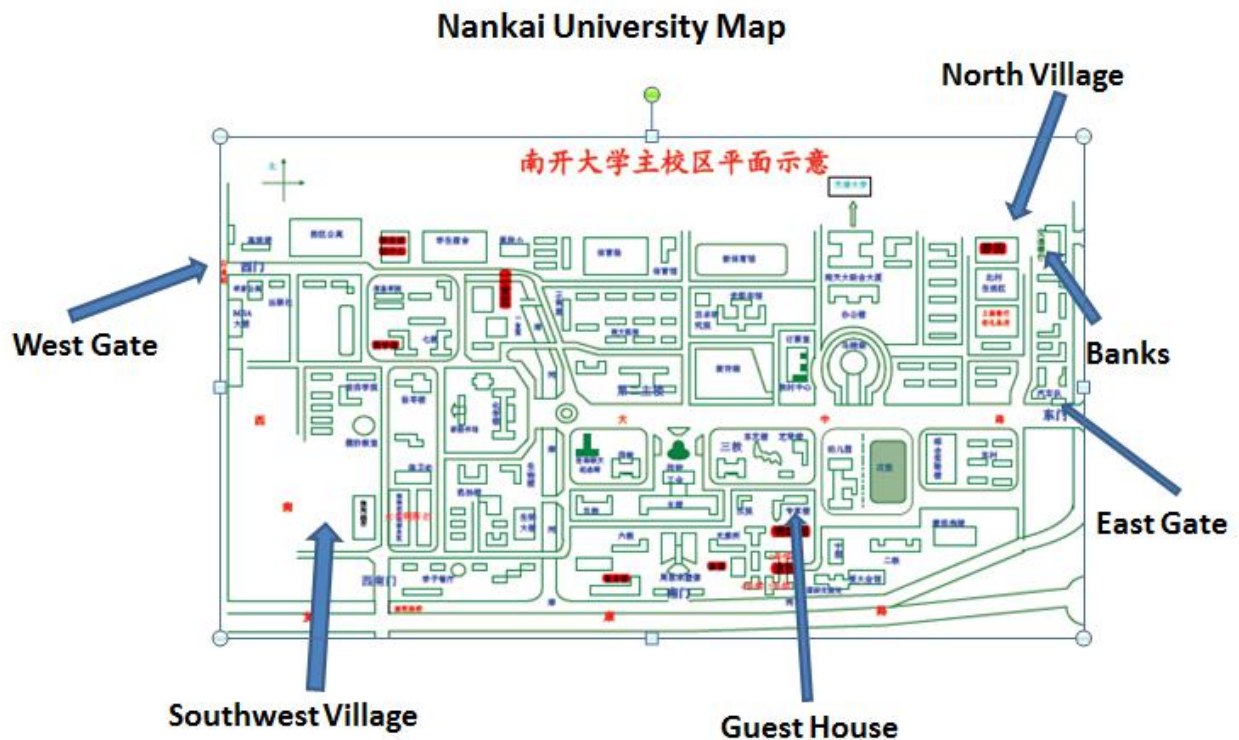
Are you excited and a bit anxious about living in China for the next nine months? Fret not, for this guide will show you a few things that will enable you to settle in easier. The following list is arranged in order of importance:

- Nankai University campus map
- Banknotes
- Drinking water
- Mobile phone
- Bank and Bank account
- Internet
- Washing machine
- Restaurants on/around campus
- Riding taxi, bus and subway
- Grocery shopping
- Buying a bicycle
- High speed train to Beijing

If you have any questions that do not fall under this list, contact Gloria Zuo, our hard-working foreign teacher liaison to the university. Her office phone number: 23508312

Nankai University Campus Map

It is a good idea to get yourself oriented during the first few days after you check in. If you can force your way through the jet lag weighing down on you, the best way to do this is to walk the campus.



Banknotes

The Chinese **Yuan CNY** [Renminbi or **RMB**] banknotes are issued in the following denominations:

Yuan: 100, 50, 20, 10, **5, 2, 1***

Jiao: **5, 2, 1**

Fen: **5, 2, 1**

*Also available as coin

Ten [10] Fen equals one [1] Jiao. Ten [10] Jiao (also called Mao) equals one [1] Yuan (also called Kuai). The smallest denomination is 1 fen, and the largest denomination is 100 yuan.

The exchange rate between US \$ and RMB is about



Drinking Water

The first thing you should do after you check in to your housing is arrange for drinking water to be delivered to your apartment. The price ranges from 10 RMB (drinking water), 12 to 15 RMB (Spring water), to 25 RMB (Nestle* Spring water) per bottle. Don't worry, the only thing you need to do is ask the Guest House receptionist to arrange the delivery for you. You need:

- petty cash to buy water vouchers
 - Fun fact: Buy ten water vouchers and get one for free (ask receptionist to confirm the offer)
- pay 50 Yuan as a deposit for each delivered bottle

- i.e. If you want two bottles of water in your apartment, pay 100 Yuan deposit
- keep the deposit receipt in a place you can find easily (this is based on the assumption that you'll want to get the deposit money back. If money is no object, then feel free to discard the deposit slip and roll in the mountain of money you probably possess)

*According to the European teachers, Nestle Spring water is good for coffee. This is an opinion gathered from a handful of Germans and is by no means based on scientific evidence or fact.

If you choose not to have the water delivered to your apartment, it is **HIGHLY** recommended that you use a water boiler to boil the tap water before consumption. This recommendation is based off of more scientific evidence than the above opinion about Nestle Spring water for coffee.



10 RMB



25RMB

Mobile Phone

Ask Gloria to send an assistant to accompany you to get a SIM card. **The assistant are polite and eager to please, and will want to practice their English with you. You may wish to practice your teaching on them.**

Two major mobile phone companies exist around campus: China Mobil and China Unicom. The most convenient shop to reach is a China Mobil shop, located near Nankai's west gate (this observation was made without any endorsement or fee from China Mobil. If the writer of this guide happens to own a yacht and a racing horse, that is entirely a coincidence).

If you are bringing your own mobile phone from US, make sure you unlock your phone. China Mobile uses CDMA, but China Unicom uses GSM radio system. If you bring in a phone that can work under both systems, it will function normally.

Buying a new mobile phone in China can range from few hundred Yuan to few thousand Yuan (smart phones).

Various mobile phone service packages are available. Consider what you intend to use and decide which package is suitable for you: Do you want to call local? National? International? Are you a rabid texter? Pic sender? Do you feel lost without a device to access the Internet tucked safely in your pocket?

You will pay a monthly fee once you pick a package, and you may pay at any nearby service shop or use the internet banking to add money for your phone account.

Ask the shop to disable the free daily messages (weather, stock reports, etc.) sent to your phone, unless you enjoy being bombarded with messages written in Chinese that you'll probably only occasionally glance at and have to delete every day.



Bank and Bank Account

Again, ask Gloria to arrange an assistant to accompany you for opening a bank account.

Salaries will be deposited into your account at the Bank of Communications. You will need your passport and a mobile phone number to set up the bank account. You may want to consider setting up internet banking*.

Bank of Communications branches are located at North Village and Southwest Village (check map on page 2) at Nankai University. Bank of Communications and ICBC Bank's ** ATMs allow you to use your US credit or debit cards to withdraw RMB if your card has **Interlink, Plus, or Star** logos.

* You may add money to your phone using Bank of Communications payment option under internet banking

**ICBC ATM works better for US debit cards (this is based off of the writer's experience. Feel free to ignore at your own peril). One ICBC ATM is located in North village.



Washing Machine

You will find a washing machine in your apartment. It is a perfectly adequate washing machine that will fulfill your daily needs except for the learning-how-to-use-it-part, as all of the operation buttons are labeled in Chinese.

Six buttons from left to right

Water volume

Timer

Process (wash)

Soaking mode; **standard** or saving water mode

Function change

Power on/off

To do a regular wash:

- Press on/off button; (right most button)
- Select water volume (left most button)
 - high (left), medium (middle), low (right);
- Press standard wash button (third button from right)

While this machine may not be hard to operate by those who are fluent in Chinese literacy, this guide isn't for you. It's for the foreign teachers and their family

members who might resort to mild cursing and violence when confronted with a machine that is plastered with indecipherable characters.

The only suggestion this guide can offer is to breathe through the frustration and remember that kicking a not-working machine won't result in a functioning one (this suggestion is based off of the writer's daughter, who lost patience with the washing machine soon after encountering it).

Your floor maid should be able to help you in case you really got stuck.

Internet

Nankai provides one wired internet connection in your apartment. The log-on ID and password are posted on the Guest House's bulletin board on the first floor. Internet can be slow during peak hours*.

If you need higher speed and bandwidth, you may choose to pay for your own wireless internet. Ask the glorious Gloria for more details.

* If you want to Skype with friends and relatives in your **home** country, pick a low traffic time for a better connection. Based on the writer's experience, internet speed works adequately from midnight to 8 am.

Restaurants on/around Campus

This is the most important part of the guide (from the writer's perspective).

The second floor at #2 student cafeteria offers a variety of food selections from noodles, dumplings, and rice dishes.

The third floor at #2 student cafeteria is a very reasonably priced restaurant which offers a range of options. Unfortunately, no English menu is available, but one of the restaurants staff should be able to speak enough English to give you a very bare description of each dish. If not—and if you're feeling adventurous—simply point at random to the different items and get ready for a few surprises.

Several more expensive restaurants are next to the Guest House:

”Ai Da Hui Guan (愛大會館)”, “Ming Zhu Yuan (明珠園)”,

“Zhuan Jia Lou (專家樓)”

“Zhuan Jia Lou” restaurant is part of the Guest house – most expensive one. This is the restaurant for those foreign teachers mentioned on the water bottle page who are rolling in piles of their own money.

*Actually, “Zhuan Jia Lou” is not very expensive by American or European standards. Expect to pay \$40 for two for a regular meal.

Many US fast food restaurants are around Nankai campus including KFC and McDonald's. There are also many other restaurants located around campus, each

with their own specialties—tea restaurant, steak house, Szechuan cuisine. Try them out! After all, part of the adventure of living in a foreign country is to explore new restaurants. Even if the food isn't to your taste, i.e. ends up being something so strange that you can't even believe it's on the the dish in front of you, at least you'll have a good story to tell your friends when you return home.

Riding Taxi, Buses, Subway

Taxi service in Tianjin is very affordable. If you're worried about communicating with your driver, have someone write down your destination address or landmark in **Chinese** on a piece of paper, then show it to the taxi driver. Local taxi rates start from 8 RMB.

Get a bus/subway metro card* from any **major** subway stations so you do not have to carry exact change every time your ride. Ask Gloria to help you get one. 20 Yuan will be reserved as deposit. You may add money into your metro card at the Bank of Communication branch office or at some subway stations.

Local bus costs 1 RMB. If you want an air conditioned bus, it'll cost you a whopping 2 RMB.

Subway fare depends on distance. Check the internet for routes.

*You use the same card to ride bus and subway. By using metro card to ride a bus, you save 5%.

Groceries

You can buy groceries at the Southwest Village on campus. A kiosk selling daily household stuff is located in the same area too.

Carrefour (aka Jia Le Fu 家乐福)* and E-Mart (aka Yi Mai De 易買得) are the two main supermarkets, accessible by both taxi and bus**.

*If you head north on Weijin Lu off the East gate, it will take you about 25 to 30 minutes to reach the Carrefour Supermarket on foot.

**Bus 8 goes south to the E-Mart shopping center.



Bicycle

You can find vendors* on campus sidewalks selling/repairing bikes.

Bring a good bike lock from the US if you intend to buy a new bike here. It is HIGHLY recommended to buy a used bike, as the probability of a new bike being stolen is so high that it borders on certainty.

*These are not regular bricks and mortar bike shops. You can also buy bikes from the big supermarket such as Carrefour. Bikes shops exist on streets too.

High Speed Train to Beijing

Beijing is the city you must visit while in China. This is a fact, non-negotiable.

A high-speed train only takes 35 minutes from Tianjin to Beijing. You may buy train tickets at the Tianjin train station or at the Southwest Village shop.

If you buy the ticket at the southwest village shop, you have to pay extra 5-10 RMB. You will need passport to purchase a train ticket as well as when boarding the train.

The train will stop at the Beijing South station. From there, you can take the subway, bus or taxi to get around Beijing.

You can buy a subway card at the service counter at the Beijing South station. 20 RMB will be charged as the deposit.

A former teacher from BYU wrote information about riding bus or subway to get around in Tianjin, and Beijing, which has been placed in the appendix.

Appendix

Helpful Information to get around Tianjin

Bus and subway information:

East gate of the campus: bus 161 and 855 goes north on Weijin Lu for shopping Chinese style at Da Hu Tong. Bus 8 takes you to the train station and many shopping opportunities in between. Bus 12 go to Ancient Culture street. Bus 643 travels many places, we just got on it one day and rode it to the end and back. Bus 8 goes south to the E-Mart shopping center

South gate of campus: bus 95 goes to the Yingshui Dao campus, you may be teaching there and the terminal is just across the street. The school provides a bus to the campus but if you miss it or stay on the campus later then you can get a bus back to the apartment. You must walk a bit from where they drop you off coming back to campus.

South gate of campus: bus 47/48 is interesting. One goes clockwise and the other goes counter clockwise around the city. The single deck bus travels a little bit different from the double decker bus. My suggestion is to get on one and ride it until come back to where you started.

Places to visit are several in Tianjin but you will have to be brave to explore the city.

Walking the river near the train station is very fun. You will pass near by the Italian Town, Ancient Culture Street and Da Hu Tong. The Astor Hotel is also there. It has the oldest working elevator in China. They seem to welcome people visiting the hotel and sightseeing. During the Dragon Boat Festival in June there will be boat races on the river.

At the end of Ancient Culture Street during the end of the New Year festival you will see thousands of people on the river lighting and sending lanterns into the night sky. Buy some and join in.

Walking Street is a large area where cars and busses are limited but small carts will carry people from one end to the other. One end of it ends at Nanjing Road near the Catholic Church. Near here is also a subway stop Ying Kou Dao, where there is a shopping center and restaurants.

There is an area called “the five avenues” that is within walking distance from Nankai campus and is quite interesting. Map reading is a skill that will be helpful to get around the city.

We have found that getting on a bus out one of the gates of campus and riding it to the end of the line and then getting on another one going the other direction is a good way to see the city and help find places you might want to visit. Have a small note book or your smart phone for making notes of your travels for future reference.

I suggest getting an app for your iPhone or Android of the subway (Metro) systems of Tianjin and Beijing for reference. They will aide in getting around the cities to places you might want to visit. You are only 30 minutes from Beijing on the “fast/bullet train” so it is very easy to go there. You will need your passport to purchase tickets for the train. You will come into Beijing at Beijing South train station. Subway line 4 is right there. You can get to anywhere in the city you need to go for sightseeing, shopping, etc. The subways will be crowded but they are an adventure in and of themselves.

Subway information for Beijing

The Pearl Market is near stop Tiantandongmen on line 5.

The silk market is at stop Yonganli on line 1.

The Forbidden City and Tian’anmen Square are at Tian’anmen West on line 1.

There are some other stops on other lines but the walk is farther.

Olympic sites are on line 8.

If you Google some of the places you want to go, you will probably find directions with the subway stops and how to get there.