

04.24-Chinese Braille

Chinese Braille

Feeling their way

Blind people in China struggle with more than just their **disability**
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Vocab

1. **Braille** 布莱叶盲文 (点字法) **Braille** is a system of printing for blind people. The letters are printed as groups of raised dots that you can feel with your fingers.
2. **disability** n. (身体上的) 残疾, 伤残, 缺陷 A **disability** is a permanent injury, illness, or physical or mental condition that tends to restrict the way that someone can live their life.
e.g. **Facilities for people with disabilities are still insufficient.** 供伤残人士使用的设施仍然匮乏。

AS MILLIONS of Chinese high-school students took their university-entrance exams on June 7th, the education ministry received a **freedom-of-information** request. It asked how many blind students had sat the exam, known as the gaokao, since 2008. In that year a legal change required papers to be offered to the **sightless** in Braille or with **aural** help through a computer. Why, the request's eight blind **submitters** wanted to know, was the law being ignored?

Vocab

1. **freedom-of-information** n. the right to see any information that a government has about people and organizations 信息自由, 资讯自由 (查阅政府所掌握有关人民及组织的信息的权利)
2. **sightless** adj. 看不见的;失明的;盲的 Someone who is **sightless** is blind.
e.g. **He wiped a tear from his sightless eyes.** 他从瞎了的眼睛里擦去了一滴泪水。
3. **aural** adj. connected with hearing and listening 听觉的; 听的
e.g. aural and visual images 视听图像
4. **submitter** n. 传送者; 提交人 (原形是submit)

Sentence

It asked how many blind students had sat the exam, known as the gaokao, since 2008.

主干: it asked...

known as the gaokao 是对 the exam 的解释, 插入语

China has 17m visually **impaired** people, including 6m who are completely blind. Few receive a basic education, **let alone** make it to university. There are just 22 schools for the blind, with a total of 1,500 pupils. The government regards **massage** as the default vocation for the blind. Some 17,000 were trained for the profession last year. Out of China's 2,000 universities, only three admit blind students. All of them are in Shanghai.

Vocab

1. **impaired** adj. damaged or not functioning normally 受损的; 损坏的; 出毛病的
e.g. impaired vision/ memory 受损的视力/记忆力

2. **let alone** **PHR-CONJ-COORD** (通常用在否定句后) 遑论, 更别提, 更不用说 **Let alone** is used after a statement, usually a negative one, to indicate that the statement is even more true of the person, thing, or situation that you are going to mention next.

e.g. It is incredible that the 12-year-old managed to even reach the pedals, **let alone** drive the car. 12岁的孩子能踩到踏板已经是不可思议, 就更不用说开车了。

3. **massage** **n.** the action of rubbing and pressing a person's body with the hands to reduce pain in the muscles and joints 按摩

e.g. Massage will help the pain. 按摩能减轻疼痛。

For blind people in China, as elsewhere, Braille is the key to **literacy**. But the **peculiarities** of the language make it even more difficult for Chinese people to use. Chinese has tens of thousands of characters. Their **monosyllabic** pronunciations can be **rendered** in Roman letters using a system called pinyin. Chinese in Braille is based on pinyin, not characters. But the language is **replete** with **homophones**. The four tones of Mandarin Chinese, as well as context, help to **eliminate** ambiguities. But not always. (In conversation Chinese occasionally use a finger to trace a character on the **palm** of the hand to indicate which character is meant.) Blind students are at a further disadvantage if they are used to pronouncing characters in their local **dialect**, rather than in the Mandarin pronunciation rendered by pinyin.

Vocab

1. **literacy** **n.** the ability to read and write 读写能力

e.g. a campaign to promote adult literacy 提高成人文化水平的运动

2. **peculiarity** **n.** 独特之处; 特性; 个性 A **peculiarity** is a characteristic or quality which belongs or relates only to one person or thing.

e.g. Each nation can have its own peculiarities when it comes to doing business. 每个民族做生意时都有自己的特色。

3. **monosyllabic** **adj.** having only one syllable 单音节的

e.g. a monosyllabic word 单音节词

4. **render** **v.** ~ **sth** (as **sth**) | ~ **sth** (into **sth**) to express sth in a different language (用不同的语言) 表达; 翻译; 把...译成

e.g. The Italian phrase can be rendered as 'I did my best'. 这个意大利语的短语可以译为“我尽力了”。

5. **replete** **adj.** ~ (with **sth**) (*formal*) filled with sth; with a full supply of sth 充满; 充足

e.g. literature replete with drama and excitement 充满紧张刺激情节的文学作品

6. **homophone** **n.** (语言学中的) 同音异形异义词 In linguistics, **homophones** are words with different meanings which are pronounced in the same way but are spelled differently. For example, 'write' and 'right' are homophones.

7. **eliminate** **v.** ~ **sth/ sb** (from **sth**) to remove or get rid of sth/ sb 排除; 清除; 消除

e.g. Credit cards eliminate the need to carry a lot of cash. 有了信用卡就不用携带很多现金。

8. **palm** **n.** the inner surface of the hand between the wrist and the fingers 手掌; 手心

e.g. He held the bird gently in the **palm of his hand**. 他把小鸟轻轻地托在掌心。

9. **dialect** 方言; 地方话; 土话 A **dialect** is a form of a language that is spoken in a particular area.

e.g. They began to speak rapidly in **dialect**. 他们开始叽里呱啦地说起地方话来。

Han Ping, a specialist in blind education at Beijing Union University, says the government needs to do more. It should start, she says, by making sure that blind

students are able to sit the gaokao. “There should be no problem, **technically**, with translating a test paper into Braille,” she says. But universities and local officials lack **motivation** to help.

Vocab

1. **technically** adv. according to the exact meaning, facts etc. 根据确切意义地；严格按照事实地

e.g. **Technically (speaking)**, the two countries are still at war. 严格说来，这两国仍在交战。

2. **motivation** n. 动力；诱因 Your **motivation** for doing something is what causes you to want to do it.

e.g. Money is my **motivation**... 金钱是我的动力。

Sentence

Han Ping, a specialist in blind education at Beijing Union University, says the government needs to do more.

主干: Han Ping says (that) 省略了 that, 从句成分是 the government needs to do more
插入语成分, a specialist in blind education at Beijing Union University 解释这个人

In 2002 Ren Zhengshao, then a student in Shanghai, was able to take the gaokao only after submitting a **plea** to the city government. He and two classmates became the first students in China to sit the exam in Braille. Mr Ren is now a teacher. Since then only 60 blind students have entered the city's three blind-friendly universities. The education ministry has told the group asking for more **statistics** to approach local governments instead. Navigating **bureaucracy** is **arduous** for all Chinese.

Vocab

1. **plea** n. ~ (for sth) an urgent emotional request 请求；恳求

e.g. She made an impassioned plea for help. 她恳切地求助。

2. **statistic** n. 统计数字(或资料) **Statistics** are facts which are obtained from analysing information expressed in numbers, for example information about the number of times that something happens.

e.g. Official **statistics** show real wages declining by 24%... 官方统计数字表明实际工资下降了24%。

3. **bureaucracy** n. 官僚作风；官僚主义 **Bureaucracy** refers to all the rules and procedures followed by government departments and similar organizations, especially when you think that these are complicated and cause long delays.

e.g. People usually complain about having to deal with too much **bureaucracy**. 人们经常抱怨不得不应付太多的繁文缛节。

4. **arduous** adj. 困难的；艰巨的；费力的 Something that is **arduous** is difficult and tiring, and involves a lot of effort.

e.g. The task was more **arduous** than he had calculated. 这项任务比他所估计的要艰巨得多。

From the print edition: China

Chinese Braille
Feeling their way
汉语盲文：摸索前进

Blind people in China struggle with more than just their disability.

在中国，盲人需要抗争的不仅仅是自身的残疾。

AS MILLIONS of Chinese high-school students took their university-entrance exams on June 7th, the education ministry received a freedom-of-information request. It asked how many blind students had sat the exam, known as the gaokao, since 2008. In that year a legal change required papers to be offered to the sightless in Braille or with aural help through a computer. Why, the request's eight blind submitters wanted to know, was the law being ignored?

正值中国数百万高中生于6月7日参加高考之际，教育部收到一封申请书，要求信息公开。申请人希望教育部公布，2008年至今得以参加大学入学考试，也就是普通高考的盲人学生人数。在2008年修订的一条法律要求为盲人提供盲文试卷，或采用计算机提供听力帮助。这八位盲人申请者想知道，这条法律为何会被无视？

China has 17m visually impaired people, including 6m who are completely blind. Few receive a basic education, let alone make it to university. There are just 22 schools for the blind, with a total of 1,500 pupils. The government regards massage as the default vocation for the blind. Some 17,000 were trained for the profession last year. Out of China's 2,000 universities, only three admit blind students. All of them are in Shanghai.

中国有1700万弱视人群，其中600万人完全失明。他们当中极少有人接受过基础教育，大学教育就更别提了。在中国只有22所盲童学校，学生仅有1500人。政府把推拿当做盲人的职业归宿，去年约有17000人接受了专业的推拿训练。而在中国的2000所高校中，只有3所接受盲人学生，而且都在上海。

For blind people in China, as elsewhere, Braille is the key to literacy. But the peculiarities of the language make it even more difficult for Chinese people to use. Chinese has tens of thousands of characters. Their monosyllabic pronunciations can be rendered in Roman letters using a system called pinyin. Chinese in Braille is based on pinyin, not characters. But the language is replete with homophones. The four tones of Mandarin Chinese, as well as context, help to eliminate ambiguities. But not always. In conversation Chinese occasionally use a finger to trace a character on the palm of the hand to indicate which character is meant. Blind students are at a further disadvantage if they are used to pronouncing characters in their local dialect, rather than in the Mandarin pronunciation rendered by pinyin.

同世界其他地区一样，对中国的盲人来说，盲文是识字的关键。可是由于中文的特质，中国盲人在使用盲文时面临着更大的困难。中文中有成千上万个汉字，每个单字的读音都可以用罗马字母标注、用拼音读出。中文的盲文是在拼音系统、而非汉字结构基础上建立起来的。可是中文里有很多同音异形字。中文普通话中有四个音调，加上语境的帮助能够减少语义上的模糊。但这也并不总是奏效。在交谈时，中国人有时会用一根手指在手掌上划出这个字的笔画，表明说的是哪个字。而如果一些盲人学生讲方言，而不是讲用拼音读出的普通话，这种劣势就更加明显了。

Han Ping, a specialist in blind education at Beijing Union University, says the government needs to do more. It should start, she says, by making sure that blind students are able to sit the gaokao. "There should be no problem, technically, with translating a test paper into

Braille,” she says. But universities and local officials lack motivation to help.

韩平是北京联合大学的一名盲人教育专家。她认为政府需要做得更多，首先要从确保盲童都能参加高考做起。“从技术层面讲，把试卷翻译成盲文应该没什么问题”，她说道。可是大学和地方官员并没有帮助盲童的动力。

In 2002 Ren Zhengshao, then a student in Shanghai, was able to take the gaokao only after submitting a plea to the city government. He and two classmates became the first students in China to sit the exam in Braille. Mr Ren is now a teacher. Since then only 60 blind students have entered the city's three blind-friendly universities. The education ministry has told the group asking for more statistics to approach local governments instead. Navigating bureaucracy is arduous for all Chinese.

2002年，上海高中生任铮浩在致信恳求上海市政府之后，才有机会参加高考。他和他的两位同学成为中国首批盲人高考生。现在任先生成为了一名教师。可是自那时起，只有60名盲人学生成功进入上海市那3所接收盲人学生的大学读书。至于那些要求公开信息的学生们，教育部让他们去联系地方政府。对每个中国人来说，同官僚机构打交道都十分艰难。