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PEKING UNIVERSITY



# The Reform of China's Gaokao: Beyond Educational Matter

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Dr.Xiaoguang SHI  
Professor ,School of Education,  
Peking University  
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# Gaokao :Chinese enigma

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Chinese higher education is the largest system in the world in term of enrolment in particular

What kind of effective mechanism may guarantee China's 3, 000plus HEIs to admit the eligible applicants from thousands of promising high school graduates ?

It is Gaokao— a college admission system which is currently useful and usable mechanism in China today.

# What is “gaokao”?

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Gaokao (高考) is a term in Pinyin, its full name is the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE).

In Chinese society, there is nothing more sensitive matter of concern than Gaokao, as it is related to social justice, educational equality, equity and opportunity.

Therefore, Gaokao Reform is deemed as one of the most lively, most complicated discussing topics in both Chinese academic community and public circle.

# Brief History

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Historically, Gaokao grew out of Keju Exam System which is originated in Sui Dynasty and was abolished in 1905 before, the late Qing Dynasty ended

The modern Gaokao system started as early as in 1911 when the government of Republic of China was founded.

The nationally- united Gaokao started in late 1930s but stopped very soon as some reasons, such as Civic War

In PRC period, Gaokao system was newly established in 1952 but stop operating during the Cultural Revolution which lasted from 1966 to 1976 in the name of so-called Educational Revolution.

the Chinese system of Gaokao was restoratively re-established in 1977

During the past four decades, China's Gaokao system has been experienced great deal of change, and any policies and initiatives in the field have been made in the last ten years in particular.

# Two Major Functioning of Gaokao

Inside and outside of the venue of exam

Screen machine which determines who is granted admission to the various levels of HE but more importantly, who is granted admission to the most prestigious HEIs, those that will determine the occupational and income future of graduates” ---IFE 2020

Social Stratification which is considered as one of the most significant mechanism for social mobility, from low social class to middle and high social class, from rural areas to cities

Now, Let me show you several photos to leave impression on you, how important the GaoKao is!!



(Photo 1-2) It is crucial to rush...

Today is ....

Are you ready?

A Battle for the whole Family

JUNE.

7 or 9



# Times and testing contents

## 一、普通高考科目及时间安排

日期	时间		科目
6月7日	上午	9:00-11:30	语文
	下午	15:00-17:00	数学
6月8日	上午	9:00-10:30	政治/物理
	下午	15:00-17:00	英语
6月9日	上午	9:00-10:30	历史/化学
	下午	15:00-16:30	地理/生物

其中：英语听力测试内容安排在英语笔试考试开始前进行。

Gaokao composes of three mandatory subjects plus an integrated subject.

The three mandatory subjects include **Chinese, Math and Foreign Language**.

Since 2000s, a integrated subject was added as a mandatory testing subject called either as **Mixture of Nature Science (MNS)**, or **Mixture of Humanities & Social Science(MHSS)**.

**Since 2014 , new model 3+3(elective)**

**Since 2018, 3+1+2 /**

**or 3+3**

# The pro-con debate about Gaokao

## the advocates

- 1) the most effective and efficient
- 2) the most equitable and just as a catchword saying “everyone has an equal right facing to scores of Gaokao”
- 3) the most possible, practical to change a single personal identity in social stratification

## Criticism

- 1) the testing looks like something of a game of gambling with uncertainty and contingency.
- 2) the system is viewed as a chief culprit, which is supposed to block candidates’ creative thinking and innovative spirit.
- 3). The system is criticized with a dubbed name as “the Hell of Exam”. Some say that road to Gaokao looks like “millions of troop killing for chance to cross a narrow, thin log over a river”.



# Reform of Gaokao

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Called New Gaokao since 2010

Policy environment

2010,---2020 vision

2014, --suggestion on deepening system of admission and examination

2019 --educational modernization of China 2035

2020 general proposal of deepening education evaluation in the new ages

# Reform Directions

--From a single paradigm of college students' admission to a multiple-one, eg. some subject tests might be arranged more than once annually. Gradually shifting from a nationally united system of the Gaokao to a flexible one with the standardized proficiency test.

--From a knowledge based-test to a capacity-based one; particularly focusing on testing creative thinking, imagination....

---From that taking Gaokao score as single criterion to that considering multiple-indicators as reference ,such as principal's recommendation, interview, special test for genius talents so on and so forth

--From the centralized to the decentralized, more than 20 provinces and regions

--From a nationally united exam to a classified (hierachical) one ,and more autonomy given to both institutions and individual;

eg. some top universities as an alliance might be allowed to organize their Gaokao system.

# Conclusion

Gaokao **is a selective mechanism** which is one of the most important parts in the higher education system

Gaokao has been **bridging above the secondary and tertiary Education** that is playing irreplaceable a role in the Chinese society.

The traditional paradigm of Gaokao is facing a challenging reality in the 21th Century, so that, to reform the system of Gaokao has been put on the top of national agendas in educational development and reform

As Gaokao is very much influenced by the traditional, habitual and cultural forces for several centuries, to reform the system seems of the most complicated, and hardest job. It is considered as a bottleneck in reshaping the framework of whole system of higher education in China.

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**Thanks for your Patience**