



The twin Yin brothers in a Metro train on their way to work. — All photos by Jiang Xiaowei



Yin Tianbao serves a cup of coffee at Hinichijou Café.

# 600,000

Shanghai has nearly 600,000 people with disabilities. This means nearly 24 out of 1,000 people in the city have some form of impairment.

## Lu Feiran

Shanghai has nearly 600,000 people with disabilities. This means nearly 24 out of 1,000 people in the city have some form of impairment. So, you could encounter one or more of them in any neighborhood, school or workplace on any day.

“Shanghai is a warm city,” said Zhu Chenggang, who lavished praise on Shanghai’s efforts to “bring people with disabilities convenience and dignity” during the city’s “Two Sessions” political meetings held in January.

Yes, they are not left behind. As Chinese President Xi Jinping noted, “the cities are built by the people and are for the people.” Shanghai also focuses on people’s needs amid its urban planning and development considerations.

Actually, Shanghai started to create a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities in the 1980s, but it was just a small-scale

campaign limited to main roads and nearly-built complexes. It wasn’t until 2003 when Shanghai became the first in the nation to issue special regulations on barrier-free facilities, thus catapulting their construction into the fast lane.

Increasingly over the ensuing years, barrier-free toilets and elevators, wheelchair ramps and tactile paving (patterns marked on the ground for the blind) have emerged in public venues. Yet there’s a lot of improvement still to be done.

To speed up barrier-free construction, on a par with more developed cities, Shanghai on August 11, 2021, issued its five-year plan to support people with disabilities, underlining the construction of a barrier-free city.

Specifically, Shanghai envisions providing overall accessibility for people with disabilities during the 14th Five-Year (2021-25) Plan period, highlighting improved designs

and regulations on infrastructure and services.

One year has passed. How’s it going? Shanghai Daily spent a day with a pair of blind twins — both accomplished baristas — to see what their life is like in one of the world’s most populous cities.

Yin Tianbao and his twin brother Yin Tianyou spend nearly 75 minutes every day commuting from their home in Minhang District to the coffee kiosk they work at in the Pudong New Area.

Both born blind, the brothers, 23, take a bus to the Metro station, and then take two subways before walking through an underground passageway to the workplace. The brothers and their parents feel generally reassured about the long journey — as long as they can reach the bus station.

“The most difficult part of the commute is to walk from our residential building to the bus station,” said Tianyou. “So my parents — sometimes my grandfather