

# Skills, not language, may favour young returnees

**B**ack in the 1980s, many Hong Kongers were migrating overseas because of the uncertainties that faced the city with the coming handover in 1997.

The mainland economy was not the global powerhouse it is today and there were fears in Hong Kong of political repression from the new masters-to-be in Beijing.

At farewell parties across the city, the most commonly heard speech usually contained the sentence: "I do not really want to migrate to another country, but I am only doing it for my children's future."

Twenty years on, the children of these migrants have grown up and are now flocking back to seek job opportunities in the surging economies of Hong Kong and the mainland.

Some of these young people may

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even be wishing their parents had stayed in Hong Kong. Many moved at a young age and their knowledge of the language and culture may have been limited to Saturday morning classes.

Christine Greybe, Asia-Pacific managing director of executive search firm DHR International and our video report guest this week, said this was not necessarily a big problem if they had special knowledge or ability that offset their lack of language skills.

"Of course, language skills are a consideration, but some mainland companies are more concerned about the technical knowledge of the expatriates," Ms Greybe said.

She said that while China was a prime career destination for overseas Chinese and westerners, the job's location was important.

"People like to work in Hong Kong, Beijing or Shanghai," she said. "For second-tier cities such as Tianjin, Dalian or Wuhan, people will be more hesitant before they accept a job offer."

### Counting on accountants

The Ministry of Finance yesterday appointed as advisers 12 local accountants, including former legislator Eric Li Ka-cheung, Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing director Marvin Cheung Kin-tung,



**Watch the Video** Log on to [www.scmp.com/multimedia](http://www.scmp.com/multimedia) to see Christine Greybe talk about the job opportunities on the mainland

PricewaterhouseCoopers tax partner Tim Lui Tim-leung and two former presidents of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants Paul Chan Mo-po and Edward Chow Kwong-fai.

The 12 will advise Beijing on how the mainland can update its accounting systems to meet international standards.

### Adding to the list

The listing committee of the stock exchange is seeking new members.

The committee has 28 members, including Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing chief executive Paul Chow Man-yiu as an ex-officio member, 19 appointed members and eight appointed investor representatives.

The application period lasts until March 25.

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