



An overseas student looks around for job opportunities at a Nanjing job fair. With the intensely competitive job market, many returning students choose to start their own business.

AN XIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Jet skis to the rescue

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When Tianjin resident Tang Jiawei upgraded his favorite jet ski, among 30 that he owns, he wasn't expecting to turn into a lifesaver.

On July 25, Tianjin was inundated by heavy rain and many vehicles and motorists were stranded in the flooded streets. Tang put his jet ski to good use.

Organizing a team of 30 motorboats, he rescued eight vehicles and many stranded people.

"I helped rescue stranded drivers while surfing the waters," says the 30-year-old.

Tang went out four times in the following days, together with other volunteers, and rescued six more stranded drivers.

According to Tang, his 395 horsepower Kawasaki jet ski is comparable in power to the Audi A8 W12, after he made his modifications.

He says his wife was originally against his good Samaritan outings on the jet ski because she was worried about his safety.

"After seeing how many victims of the flood I saved, even becoming an online star, she supported me," Tang says.

"Were it not for my 2-year-old son she has to take care of, she said she would go with me," Tang adds, laughing.

The volunteer rescuers are all from the Zhuoyue Motorboat Club, which has 50 members and 30 jet skiers. On weekends they often drive to a nearby reservoir for fun.

Tang is the founder of the club and says that since he majored in auto repairs at college he has been a fan of extreme sports.

"It was the first time to carry out a rescue, but we hope our hobby can be of further help during emergencies," says Tang, who is also the owner of an auto repair workshop in Tianjin.

"Most of us are outdoor sports fanatics and are very skilled at driving the speedboats. We believe we are very qualified to take up such a responsibility."

Tang's assistance is not always welcome, however. Hearing that a rescue team organized by the Beijing government was about to carry out a rescue operation on Aug 2 at the Ming Tombs Reservoir, Tang and other volunteers offered their help—but they were turned down for "not being professional enough."

"We have years of experience driving speedboats and most importantly, we are willing to help," says disappointed volunteer Chen Wen, 29.

Tang says he was inspired to offer his assistance when he heard of a group of volunteers in the capital who assisted for free passengers at Beijing Capital International Airport, whose flights were canceled and could not find a taxi.

Wang Lu, 28, from the capital's Wangjing area, about 15 km from the airport, organized some 20 volunteers and picked up more than 500 passengers from the airport on July 21, when the capital was hit by the biggest downpour in more than 60 years.

"Whether or not we are accepted by the government, our efforts will proceed," Tang says.

"The local weather authorities predict there might be more hard rain in the coming days. We're well prepared," Tang says.



Tang Jiawei and his volunteer team help out stranded drivers in Tianjin's floods.

ZHAO CHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Back to business

Chinese students who study overseas and return are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship to make their dreams come true. **Zhang Yue** reports in Dalian, Liaoning province.

When 31-year-old Li Tuo applied to study for a postgraduate degree on public policy at Japan's Kyoto University in 2005, he was thinking he would get a government job when he returned to China.

But Li now runs his own company providing free school applications and a visa service for students who want to study in Japan.

The company, in Dalian, Liaoning province, has helped hundreds of students since it was founded in 2008 and makes a profit by receiving commission from universities in Japan.

"When I returned to China in 2008, I found that landing a job was not as easy as I thought, even with an overseas degree," Li recalls. "The salary was disappointing, too."

He got one job offer with a salary of 3,000 yuan (\$471) per month, but found his study experience in Japan could not help him get a government job.

This is not an unusual experience for students who return from their overseas studies to China in recent years.

According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, in 2011, 186,200 overseas students returned to the country.

While finding employment after years of overseas experience has become an issue for Chinese students, some are boldly starting their own businesses. Among those who returned in 2011, 20,000 set up their own businesses.

"Most of my schoolmates stayed at electronics companies in Japan," Li says. "But about 20 percent are returning. We see more potential for self-accomplishment back here."

Self-accomplishment is what Li was seeking when he set up his own business.

"When I returned from the United States in 1996, only those who could not survive in the US came back to China," says Xu Xiaoping, one of the country's best-known angel investors, who now provides

funds to entrepreneurs from overseas including Li.

"But now it is different. Mostly, those who return now have big ambitions and a clear career goal on returning to China and starting their own business."

This has become a major trend among overseas returnees, young entrepreneurs who are enjoying favorable policies in their motherland.

Since 2000, China has established various platforms to communicate with returning overseas entrepreneurs. Gatherings are held at both central and city government levels.

Among them and one of the biggest is Overseas Chinese Scholars (OCS), a one-week event held by Dalian government, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee.

"This year, the companies that have received most support from the government are in the fields of information technology, biotechnology and new energy development," says Gong Liming from the department of technology of Liaoning province on recapping this year's OCS event in June.

The event attracted more than 1,800 overseas returnees to Dalian and more than 800 projects.

Zhang Qun, a 41-year-old who returned to China and set up his company in Dalian in 2009, won support from last year's OCS.

He will receive a start-up fund of 2 million yuan (\$314,000) and will be able to utilize a 200-square-meter work zone for free for three years.

Since 2001, more than 3,200 overseas returnees who set up their own business have been enjoying similarly favorable policies.

"We want to attract more brilliant young Chinese to return to the motherland," says Wang Xiaochu, vice-minister of Human Resources and Social Security.

However, Zhang says after living in Japan



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LI TUO  
DALIAN ENTREPRENEUR

and the United States for 13 years, he did not have sufficient understanding of his home country. Recruitment, he says, is a tough issue.

His company, INTESIM, deals with simulation techniques and requires a lot of research and technical work.

"Only when I returned in 2009 did I notice that in China, technicians are not easy to find. More and more young people are going for higher education, but less are doing the handy work," he says. "Also, young people in China are lacking research skills in particular areas."

Zhang is now working with Tsinghua University in Beijing and several universities in Dalian.

"I have to make sure that once they finish their degrees, Dalian is the place they are willing to stay at," he says.

He is also working with students studying

overseas to ensure that "once they return, the company will become their career choice."

While people like Zhang enjoy favorable government policies, Li is working hard.

As the education service agency is a relatively new industry, and he did not receive any preferential policy from OCS this year, Li is raising funds from angel investors, such as Xu.

"Compared with those who studied abroad during the 1990s, overseas returnees like Li are very different," Xu says. "They've stayed abroad for a long time, sometimes since middle school. They grew up with both Oriental and Western culture, and their experience was much more ground-breaking."

Huang Teng, head of Xian International University, who also started his own education business in 1992, thinks that China still has a lot to do for young business starters.

"When I started the school in 1992, most entrepreneurs like us lacked good ideas about business due to the confined social environment," Huang says.

"But this generation is best at ideas. When I was in the US, I noticed that many universities have majors that teach students how to start their own business. I hope our country will do the same to help young entrepreneurs."

Huang's university has been helping more than 3,000 graduates run their own business since 1992.

Li has 10 overseas-returned staff working for him among a total of 37 employees. His online company, liuxuejp.net, has 117,651 followers on its micro blog.

He hasn't gone to bed before 2 am since the company started as he has been studying the service and marketing strategies of other well-known education agencies.

"I have to say that returning to China and starting my own business has been tough," Li says.

"Overseas experience doesn't make it any easier for me than other entrepreneurs. When I recruited my first employee, a certificate from Kyoto University did not make me any more credible than other young bosses."

"But I still encourage students to study overseas. No matter what you do afterward, overseas experience builds confidence and broadens horizons."

"You will be sure about yourself, and when you come back, even if you start your business the hard way like I did, you see a whole different world in yourself. It's a great treasure."

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