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Taiwan
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10,000 in HK apply to Taiwan

ABOUT 10,000 Hongkong residents have applied to resettle in Taiwan, which has granted residency to "almost all applicants", a government spokesman said in Taipei yesterday.

But spokesman Mr Shaw Yu-ming said only about 2,000 people have immigrated because most want to "make a last dollar" before leaving the territory.

Mr Shaw said Taipei will assist Hongkong residents "until the very last minute" to invest or resettle in Taiwan.

The Nationalists, who still maintain they are the sole legitimate representatives of all China and claim sovereignty over Hongkong, have refused to recognise the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Hongkong "created an (economic) miracle out of rocks" but its economy will gradually decline after it reverts to Chinese rule, the government spokesman said.

He said China would lose face if the territory's prosperity declines under its rule.