

WANG JIANLIN

THE

WANDA
WAY

THE MANAGERIAL PHILOSOPHY
AND VALUES OF ONE
OF CHINA'S LARGEST COMPANIES



Chapter One

Perseverance

Perseverance Breeds Success

29 April, 2013 – China Central Television program *Voice*,
featuring Wang Jianlin

During his guest appearance on *Voice*, a well-known weekly program produced by China Central Television, Wang Jianlin gave a keynote speech entitled “Perseverance is the Key to Success” and answered questions from an audience of university students.

In his speech, he shared stories of his upbringing illustrating this maxim with insightful personal anecdotes and the history of Wanda Group.

Here is what he had to say:

“I was asked to set the topic for this talk today and have settled on ‘success requires perseverance.’ I was only 15 or 16 when, in 1970, I did my military service. 1970 was the year when Chairman Mao issued the ‘24 November’ instruction, intoning that ‘camp and field training is good.’ Once the instruction had been relayed that day, we would set out in the evening, each of us shouldering a bag of grain and a rucksack. On top of that, we had another 10 kilograms or so to carry. We began our training by crossing more than 1,000 kilometers. The northeast really was forests of trees and knee-deep stretches of snow. We slept in the open. We were deprived of

everything. In the snow, we had to dig our own hole to spend the night. We walked a daily average of 30 kilometers. Some days 35 or 40 kilometers. If you could not cope, you could go sit in the car at the back, which was emblazoned ‘sag wagon.’ However, if you did that, you could forget about being chosen to move up that year or earning your Exemplary Fighter award. This kind of hardship is difficult for today’s youth to imagine.

During regular training, perhaps the regular rations were sufficient, but being as cold as it was, and exerting yourself that much, you still felt hungry even if you ate more. At that time, my squad leader said to me: ‘Wang, I want to tell you something, about how to eat your fill, but first you need to promise you will keep it secret.’ I told him I would never tell anyone. In those days, the soldiers used a bowl to eat, a big, tall, crude bowl. He said: ‘When you go up there to fill your bowl, first fill it up only half. No matter how slowly you eat, you will still finish your rice before the others and you can have seconds. You can then fill your bowl to the brim, and you won’t feel hungry. By all means, never foolishly fill up your bowl at the first serving – as many are tempted to do – because when they go back for seconds, there is no rice left.’ I never forgot his tip, and even though I was very young, that year on the road as a soldier, I was basically never hungry.

How tough was our camp and field training? I saw with my own eyes how a cadre was sitting there crying, saying he had had it. ‘I am not walking another step. I don’t want my Party membership. I don’t care about being a cadre!’ Many of us could not keep up. Of a team of more than 1,000 marching, not more than 400 reached the end. As a young teenager, I held on until the end. What kept me going was a conviction. When I started out, my mother told me, ‘You must become

an Exemplary Fighter. Your father too served in the army, and you should strive to surpass him.’ This kind of conviction and persistence allowed me to join the army the first year and become an Exemplary Fighter.

Therefore, whatever you undertake in life won’t be successful unless you have a teeth-gritting spirit and a desire to fight until the end. This is a theme I have been talking about for over ten years: perseverance lies at the core of the entrepreneurial spirit. First, no innovation, no dream can be achieved without perseverance. I started my company in 1988. In those days, I already had a really good life. In my early twenties, I had become a regiment-level officer. That was a really nice time in my official career. Those were the days – in the late 80s and early 90s – when there was a big wave of startups in China, and when many people tried their hands at a new trade. I was affected by the trend and decided that I too wanted to start up a company and realize my dream.

The industry I chose in those days is one probably loathed by many today – real estate. When I had chosen my industry, what I needed next was registered capital. We reached an agreement with a state-owned enterprise in Dalian to give us a loan. But with only money, we might not yet have been able to find a place to purchase because for that you needed to have a quota issued by the State Planning Commission. We did not have a quota. What could we do?

I found another state-owned company, one of the three largest real estate companies in Dalian. I knew that one of my old comrades was the president there. So I talked to him. Would he be prepared to lend me his quota? Of course, I understood full well that borrowing his quota would cost money. There I was, with half a million in cash and with a quota I started my real estate business with a single building.

The start was far from glorious. On the contrary, it was really tough. I still remember the kind of grind and discrimination I had to put up with as a private entrepreneur. For a loan of 20 million yuan – which by the way had already been promised to us by that bank – I must have run back and forth over 50 times. I confronted the bank manager in person, until he did want to see me. I knew what time he started work and would go to intercept him every day. As I was always standing near the entrance, he possibly got in through another entrance. Sometimes I waited for him at lunchtime. I thought he might go back to work after his noon nap, so I would wait for him at his office's entrance. I clearly knew he was inside yet his secretary said that he was out or asked me to wait. It came to the point that I knew his home address and caught him on his way home in the evening. In the morning, he'd wake up and look out of the window. When he saw me waiting downstairs, he would rather stay at home to avoid having to face me. This went on for a while. I ran back and forth dozens of times. But in the end, he did not grant me that loan.

So I set myself a target: I want my company to be big, to be the best in the world!

Secondly, success is a process of ongoing improvement, and the key to it is nothing but perseverance. Without appropriate planning, we encountered many detours from 2000 – when we had just expanded into the commercial property market – to 2004. During this period, we were named as a defendant in 222 lawsuits, which made it virtually impossible for us to focus on and grow our business. Some of my colleagues were under extreme pressure from public opinion. I was asked at that time why we had to enter the commercial property business since we had seen such great success in the residential property sector. In the face of all this, I wavered

many times. I then set a goal for my team and myself: we will keep going till the five-year mark, and if we are still struggling at the end of 2005, we will exit the commercial property market. It was our perseverance during those times that enabled us to successfully launch our third-generation Wanda Plaza. Given the opening and success of the Shanghai Wujiaochang Plaza, Ningbo Yinzhou Plaza and Beijing CBD Plaza, we fully established our confidence in continuing to be an active player in the commercial property sector.

By the end of 2014, we expected to own 20 million square meters of commercial real estate. It is likely that we will overtake the world's No.1 real estate developer, the US-based Simon Company, in terms of commercial space. It took us 15 years to get there, as compared to more than 100 years for the Simon Company. We have to realize that without perseverance and ongoing pursuit of our desired goal, there would be no way for us to leave those struggles and failures behind.

Another story that I'd like share with you is about the Shenyang Taiyuan Street Wanda Plaza. At that time, we engaged two commercial property experts in China to help design a pedestrian street to bring in customer flow. However, several hundred clients who purchased our retail spaces brought a class action against us because only 3–5% of them registered satisfactory returns, and most of them recorded extremely low or virtually non-existent returns. Although we won the lawsuit eventually, which meant that we were not obliged to take responsibility for their losses, I insisted on not letting our clients down. We first brought in a group of experts, on whose advice we spent tens of millions to install a canopy to shield against rain and snow to improve the business performance of our clients. Later, they advised us to put in several escalators leading to the basement to increase traffic. Both attempts failed.

Then, we were told that we picked the wrong buyers, so we had them replaced. Almost four years passed and nothing changed. We reached a consensus at last within the Group that this project was doomed to fail if we didn't demolish it with explosives. This meant that, in addition to refunding our clients, we would have to pay out 1 billion yuan in compensation as well as the cost of the demolition itself, coming to at least 1.5 billion yuan in total. We decided eventually to compensate our space buyers at 150% of the purchase price and rebuild the project.

Don't jump to the conclusion that you are successful simply because you have an innovative idea or rack up some early success. For example, running a small noodle restaurant successfully may give you the impulse to open a chain restaurant. However, if you really do start your own chain, you might end up failing because of not being able to adapt to the required changes, as running a chain requires a solid management model and putting together a good team. Most of you are university students and may have just left campus. Many of you dream of having your own business and achieving success. Every single one of you has the chance to succeed, and the first key is to understand how you can differentiate yourself from others and be innovative. What is even more important is to be persistent and never yield to failures.

I've always said that ambition never dies until there is no way out. Why? Because solutions are always there for the problems we face. Success can be ours only if we are persistent.

This concludes my speech. Thank you very much.”

Q&A

Sa Beining (host): Let's applaud him again for such an inspiring speech, Mr. Wang Jianlin. Thank you! During your speech, many students sent their questions and many of them are very interesting indeed. First, let me ask you, we can ask any questions, right?

Wang Jianlin: Yes, any questions.

Sa: Is your promise as good as gold?

Wang Jianlin: As good as silver, at least.

Sa: So a long time ago you promised the old squad leader to keep his secret, but you told us all here today. Why? He asked you not to tell anyone, not even a single person. Today, all Chinese people have heard it.

Wang Jianlin: Things were different back then. We now have enough to eat these years.

Sa: So it did matter back then?

Wang Jianlin: Yes.

Sa: And now it doesn't matter any more?

Wang Jianlin: No, not any more.

Sa: The next question is a tricky one. I heard that you once said that if the boss of a company went mountain climbing all the time, you didn't think that he could manage the company successfully. I know that a real estate entrepreneur by the name of Wang Shi is fond of mountaineering, so did you say that as an allusion to Wang Shi?

Wang Jianlin: I've never said anything like that. If I did, it would be a personal insult.

Sa: ...to Wang Shi for sure.

Wang Jianlin: Wang Shi and I are pretty good friends... You're obviously trying to sow discord between us with this question.

Sa: Not me, not me...

Wang Jianlin: It's such an unkind thing to ask.

Sa: But Wang Shi once said that if the boss of a company criticized others all the time for being obsessed with mountain climbing, he would doubt that he could ever run the business successfully. Well...I made this up. But you really didn't make that remark (about mountain climbing)?

Wang Jianlin: No, I didn't...no way. It's just that someone told me that I worked too hard, and I should relax more...it was possible to enjoy life and manage a successful company at the same time. I said I didn't believe that anyone can run a successful business while relaxing at work. Perhaps (it's because) I always believed in the three key factors for success that someone said before, which are talent, hard work and opportunity. Hence, hard work is part of the formula.

Sa: Next, we have eight young representatives on the stage here, and they'll ask you questions from different professional perspectives. Ma Li, please.

Ma Li: Hi, Mr. Wang Jianlin. It's great to meet you. My name is Ma Li. I'm from the University of Nottingham Ningbo China. You just mentioned the three major campaigns and Yinzhou Wanda Plaza in Ningbo was one of them. I'm very excited because the plaza is very close to our university. During my university days, I went there many times to dine with classmates, take my girlfriend on dates, sing and shop. Seeing you really moved and excited me. Why? The customer is king. I finally met the man who sold me the movie tickets for the first time in my life.

I liked your speech very much because as a business student myself I found the knowledge and case studies you shared with us very interesting. However, one thing I didn't like is that your speech was a bit too serious, and it didn't

feel like we were appearing on a TV show. It was more like a global board meeting in Wanda Group. You were the chairman, Sa Beining was the president and the rest of us were all regional managers...and we were talking about if we'd be paid one million yuan for this year.

Sa: I was wondering how much the president would be paid.

Ma Li: More than one million...that's for sure. Now my question is don't you have any tender feelings at all in life?

Wang Jianlin: Perhaps I'm not a take-it-easy kind of person as some other entrepreneurs are...I'm relatively more serious, but it doesn't mean that I can't have a kind heart. I'm very sentimental. Many of my old comrades and friends would tell you the truth that I always keep some cash in my office safe... as I always have visitors telling me that they met me before, but I can't remember who they are. I often ask them what they are visiting me for, and the answers are usually that they've got financial difficulties. I give them some money straight away, and I've never expected repayment.

Ma Li: I also believe what you just said...that you treat friends, comrades and people in need with a kind heart...a soft heart, but you didn't mention if you treat your employees at work with a tender heart. For example, I feel for the eight representatives or your regional managers, your speech is awe-inspiring as well as unnerving, but we couldn't feel the personal touch. This made me wonder if, given such an attitude, your employees dare to tell you their true feelings?

Wang Jianlin: You're right on this point. I'm very serious at work, and I think there are few people in the company that dare to tell me what they really think. I'm being honest with you about this. Especially junior-level and ordinary employees who rarely get the chance, so only some veterans of the company who have followed me during the past decade or

so and seven or eight close friends of mine...they're always straight-forward with me (if they disagree with me).

Ma Li: You just said that whoever met you could go to your office and ask for money. Next time we meet I could say, Mr. Wang, we met on the Voice...give me some money, please.

Wang Jianlin: If you can see me and manage to sell me on your idea, it's okay. If you really want to start your own business, then you need to send your proposition, and we'll ask three evaluators to assess your report. As for the other things you mentioned, I'll do my best to improve.

Ma Li: I've made up my mind on the kind of business I'd like to run in the future. That is, to tackle problems involved with communications between successful entrepreneurs and their subordinates. This will be the focus of my business. Thank you.

Sa: It's a pretty good idea.

Wang Jianlin: A good idea, and it may work out indeed.

Sa: Next, Wang Xichen.

Wang Xichen: Hi, uncle Wang. Ma Li just said that he was frightened of you because you looked very serious, but I felt an intimate connection when I met you today. Why? Because my father is also named Wang Jianlin, so when I saw you today you reminded me of my father.

Sa: This is your father's ID card?

Wang Xichen: Yes.

Sa: But the character *jian* (健) in the middle is different from that of yours (建). I think the *jian* as in *jian-shuo* (健硕 which means strong) suits you better.

Wang Jianlin: My mother named me with *jian* at first. I changed it to *jian* when I joined the army. What a coincidence!

Sa: What does your father do?

Wang Xichen: By coincidence, my father is also in business.

Wang Jianlin: We may meet someday.

Wang Xichen: My father is a very daring and courageous man.

Sa: So you didn't take advantage of that name claiming that...

Wang Xichen: I'm too shy sometimes and have lost some opportunities because of it. For example, during a class leader election, the teacher asked us three times who would volunteer for the post of class monitor. Each time I raised my hand like this, but I was too shy to stretch it out...I thought to myself that I would raise my hand when the teacher asked for the third time, but when it came and I was ready to raise my hand, my desk mate did it ahead of me and he was elected class monitor. The question I want to ask you is if you can teach us how to embolden ourselves within the shortest time possible. Is there some shortcut to doing this?

Wang Jianlin: There are no shortcuts. The only way to achieve this is through practice. The first time I appeared on a TV show, I was too shy to speak logically. The first time I sang in public, I was pushed onto the stage...I didn't realize that I was tone deaf until I started the song. The audience laughed their heads off...If there's a shortcut to success, it's practice. There's no such thing as shortcuts, otherwise my autobiography would be a bestseller. If you're afraid of speaking in public, you won't improve it unless you practice it in front of people. Currently, there is a saying that EQ (Emotion Quotient) is the key to success. Learning to get along with other people helps us most to achieve success.

Sa: We're sometimes afraid of doing something, but once we bite the bullet and do it for the first time, we're surprised about how good it felt. If you raised your hand that day, you'd be the class monitor now.

Wang Jianlin: I've never met anyone with the same name as mine. Tell your father to send me an e-mail. We can arrange a time to meet, seriously.⁽²⁾

Wang Zhen: The central theme of your speech today is perseverance, but I think certain types of perseverance are questionable. One of the graduates from my college was an enthusiastic mountaineer and had pursued his mountaineer career ever since graduation. Unfortunately, he died in an accident while climbing a mountain last year at the age of 28. At his funeral, his parents said that we support youngsters today to pursue their dreams, but you should also put yourselves in your parents' shoes. You're not living only for yourselves. So my question is do you think such perseverance is worth it?

Wang Jianlin: Entrepreneurship is a spiritual ideal, and we need to make sensible psychological preparations.

Sa: Perseverance should be based on sensible analysis.

Wang Jianlin: Exactly, exactly.

Sa: There's a man in Chinese history known for his perseverance, the man who stands by a tree stump waiting for a hare. He is persevering but is only remembered as a negative example.

Ma Li: I can't agree with Wang Zhen on this point. I think it's just one of the rare cases, and I feel that there are different types of perseverance. In some cases, perseverance is advisable, and some of our dreams must be changed, where perseverance is not advisable. If J.K. Rowling gave up her dream after numerous rejections by the publishers year after year, Harry Potter would have never been published. If Walt Disney gave up after the idea of a theme park was dismissed by the banks and other people, there wouldn't be any Disneyland in the world today. Similarly, if Wang Jianlin ever gave up when he didn't even have enough food to eat, Wanda would never be such a phenomenal success story as a world-class company.

Sa: Speaking of persevering with our dreams, I believe everyone has his own judgment. However, young generations today face different problems and challenges, including the probability of setbacks. How many of them are still willing to pursue their dreams? How long will they keep their dreams alive? And what attitudes do they have in terms of persevering with their dreams? What is more important for young people is that you need to know what is the dream that you really cherish in your heart and stick to it. For example, the majority of your classmates may choose to stay in big cities and find a decent job. Do you think that you should follow suit? What is the dream that you really cherish in your heart? Once you know this and persevere with your dreams, it's definitely worth it.

Wang Jianlin: The most important thing is that the career you choose should be something you enjoy doing yourself. Never choose something that you don't like and you're unsure of just for the sake of starting a successful business. You need to choose something that you really love and believe in its success from the bottom of your heart. My favorite catchphrase is: the most successful entrepreneurs are maniacs.

Li Shaobo: Nice to meet you, Mr. Wang. I'm from Fudan University. You once bet with Jack Ma (founder of Alibaba) that e-commerce wouldn't take up more than 50% of the Chinese retail market in ten years. If it did, you would pay him 100 million yuan, and otherwise he'd pay you the same amount. My question is why did you make the bet? And are you still convinced that you will win it?

Wang Jianlin: No. It was just a half joking bet, just between the two of us.

Sa: Half joking and half serious?

Wang Jianlin: Half serious. As for e-commerce, it's hard to tell who will win the bet after ten years. I was just expressing my opinion. No matter how successful his e-commerce stores become, they won't be able to replace physical stores. Additionally, consumer behavior...there's a type...we study consumer psychology, a significant proportion of purchases are driven by conspicuous consumption. Why do the girls want a certain handbag so badly? Why are public places the favorite hangout of fashionable girls and boys? They want to be the center of attention.

Sa: Right. Nobody can see them if they buy things on Taobao.

Wang Jianlin: So I said it's hard to tell ahead of time. I admit that I'm not sure about the scale of e-commerce in ten years.

Li Shaobo: Does it mean that back in 2012 you were totally confident of the bet, and now, knowing that you're about to lose the bet, you'll deny ever making it?

Wang Jianlin: No, no, no...If I lose when 2022 comes, I'll pay Jack Ma 100 million. It doesn't matter. I can't break my word, right?

Sa: Whose side are you on?

Li Shaobo: I'm on Ma's side, because I think informatization and the internet are definitely the trends that are moving forward, and there's been a growing shift in people's buying habits toward the internet... this is already a foregone conclusion.

Sa: But I'm really serious about it. You just said that the bet was made half jokingly and half seriously. I'm curious which half of it is a joke, and how much of it is serious? Is the 100 million part just a joke, or is it a serious bet?

Wang Jianlin: The 100 million bet is only half joking, but our debate about the e-commerce model is serious.

Xu Shengming: Hi, brother Wang. I enjoyed your speech very much. You said that a bold and thick-skinned approach is what it took for Wanda to be a success story across the country, and I really admire your ambitions.

Wang Jianlin: As I recall, I didn't say it quite like that. The meaning of what I said is that innovation is bold and experimenting and pioneering are daring. What I meant by a thick-skinned approach is that you must not be afraid when you first start a business...if you're too thin-skinned and dare not ask for help or advice...how can you possibly succeed in your business venture?

Xu Shengming: Then didn't you say something along the lines of (a degree from) Tsinghua or Peking University does not help as much as bold action?

Wang Jianlin: Yes, I did. I said (a degree from) Tsinghua or Peking University wouldn't help as much as a bold heart, meaning that regardless of your academic credentials and theoretical capability, you can never create a successful business if you're not daring and enterprising enough.

Xu Shengming: Your theory that a Tsinghua or Peking University degree doesn't help as much as bold action is what inspires me the most because I'm the only student among the eight of us here who's not from a top-ranking university, but I think that, like Sa, I've been bold and thick-skinned ever since I was a little boy. I'm always into new stuff and enjoy challenges...I always tell my competitors before every competition that I'll be the winner.

Wang Jianlin: So do you win?

Xu Shengming: Sometimes I win and sometimes I lose, of course. I personally think that youth is meant to be arrogant. Otherwise, it's not real youth. Would you agree?

Wang Jianlin: Young people shouldn't have any burdens. This is how outstanding talents emerge from among the rest. I agree with you very much on this.

Xu Shengming: My second question is do you still remember what is the most arrogant thing you said when you were young?

Wang Jianlin: The most arrogant thing...I tell you when I was a teenager before joining the army, I climbed a tree. Nobody dared to climb it, so I decided to do it...I fell off and broke my arm. And once, there was a rail...people jumped over it. I saw classmates two or three years my senior jump across the rail, but no one on this side dared to. I jumped, stumbled on the rail and fell down, broke this arm again.

Sa: But you broke the same arm in both incidents.

Wang Jianlin: Yes. Oddly enough, it was always this arm that I broke.

Sa: Such a poor arm.

Wang Jianlin: Let me give you a suggestion...arrogance and pride are different. I'd say pride is more appropriate... ambitious and with a strong sense of pride, but without being rude.

Xu Shengming: By arrogance, what I meant was confidence, recognition of one's own ability. Whatever we do, we need to do it following Mr. Wang's example – even after breaking an arm, he didn't stop climbing...Let's continue after the broken arm has recovered and keep climbing until we reach the top of the highest mountain.

Sa: Mr. Wang Jianlin summarized it very well. That is, being proud. If you're truly talented and have solid competence, your sense of pride and enterprising spirit will bring you bright prospects. Thank you. Next, Gao Jiahan, please.

Gao Jiahan: Nice to meet you, Mr. Wang. During your speech just now and on many other occasions, you stressed the importance of innovation for Wanda. We all know that enterprises relying on innovation are typically characterized by a liberal and relaxed corporate culture, but wild rumors abound that you have an almighty existence in Wanda, rule everything there, and you're very strict with your employees. Female employees are not allowed to wear more than three pieces of jewelry, and two earrings are counted as two pieces. So I was curious as to how they could innovate in such a strict company? Is every innovation in Wanda created by Wang Jianlin alone?

Wang Jianlin: First, let me ask you a question: do you believe "wild rumors?" The rumors are false in the first place. Actually, we have an employee handbook that requires or refers to etiquette requirements. Men must wear formal suits...it's one of the rules, a suit and tie. Girls must wear business attire. Moreover, you can see our innovations are not only limited to real estate but now also include culture, including tourism. These are all innovations. Many of them are not developed by colleagues or me but by foreigners. If all innovations came from me alone, I would've been exhausted to death years ago. That is impossible. The rumors can't be trusted.

Sa: Now that Mr. Wang has made it clear, all Wanda's female employees are spreading the news with tearful eyes... let's bring out our jewelry now.

Gao Jiahan: OK then. I've got another question that is also related to your company's management style. That is, your company organizes a journey of conscience every year, where the employees choose a village to visit the poor and ask about their sufferings...give donations. But the donations are made by the employees themselves and the company doesn't

pay anything. I feel that the employees have the right to donate or choose not to. Doesn't it mean that you're using their money to earn a good reputation for your company?

Wang Jianlin: Our charitable donations mostly come from the company, but the reason why we made it a rule that the employees must visit poor families every year is that our company has developed rapidly and most of our businesses are operated in big cities. The employees have bought their own apartments and cars, and have a very decent income. Over time many of us become swollen-headed, and our frame of reference and coordinates of life change. They regard money as the only measurement of success. Hence, we started a campaign ten years ago requiring every company to select one of the poorest local villages and visit every year. Donation is not mandatory. We call it Wanda Volunteers. If you think the campaign has a major impact, it's not necessarily the case, but it works in a subtle and imperceptible way. Charity at Wanda... I don't want to see that it becomes a cause for me alone. Instead, it should be a culture, a cultural atmosphere within the company...an atmosphere of a positive attitude.

Gao Jiahao: OK. Thank you very much!

Sa: So for Mr. Wang now, the biggest problem is no longer how to make money but rather how to spend money, to help more people. This might be what he needs to consider in the future.

Wang Jianlin: I've declared a long time ago that I won't leave a big share of my wealth to my children.

Sa: Yes.

Wang Jianlin: As the ancient Chinese saying goes: if the son is not as good as the father, why bother to leave him an inheritance? If the son is better than the father, why bother to leave him an inheritance? That's it.

Ren Yufeng: Hi, Mr. Wang. I'm an entrepreneur.

Sa: What do you do exactly? What kind of business?

Ren Yufeng: I'm in the catering business, running a chain restaurant.

Sa: Is it dandan mian (a type of spicy noodle from Sichuan)?

Ren Yufeng: No, our specialties are Taiwanese snacks. I have two restaurants, so it's a traditional industry, and what you're doing now can also be categorized as a traditional business. In your opinion, how can we keep innovating and transcending ourselves within traditional industries?

Wang Jianlin: I don't really agree with such a categorization. Instead, I think the business you're in is a promising one.

Sa: Food is the paramount necessity of the people.

Wang Jianlin: Food is the paramount necessity of the people, and catering is characterized as an industry by repeated consumption. As the owner of a restaurant chain, you need to learn how to standardize.

Sa: It's hardly scalable.

Wang Jianlin: There's one cook...if there are ten cooks in a restaurant, maybe only two of them are really good. Whatever they make tastes good, but dishes made by the others taste different. You're running a chain, so how do you guarantee (quality) when you have 100 cooks? Hence, the most important thing is to improve the cost-performance ratio. Your products should either taste better than others' while offering the same price, or be priced lower while offering the same taste. Talent is more important. For example, if you have five buddies running the business together, I believe it will be a success.

Sa: That's why I think, of all the eight representatives, you benefit the most from the show today. Not only did you talk face-to-face with Mr. Wang, but had the remarks he just

made. You tell me, how many entrepreneurs in China can ask Mr. Wang to give some suggestions face-to-face?

Today, Mr. Wang Jianlin shared with us his life story from his teenage years all the way through successes and, of course, setbacks. His story won't be repeated exactly by any one of us, but there are certain things that we all need to adhere to, such as his personality, honesty, integrity, perseverance and creativity. Let's have another round of applause for Mr. Wang's inspiring speech! Thank you!

Wang Jianlin: Thank you!