

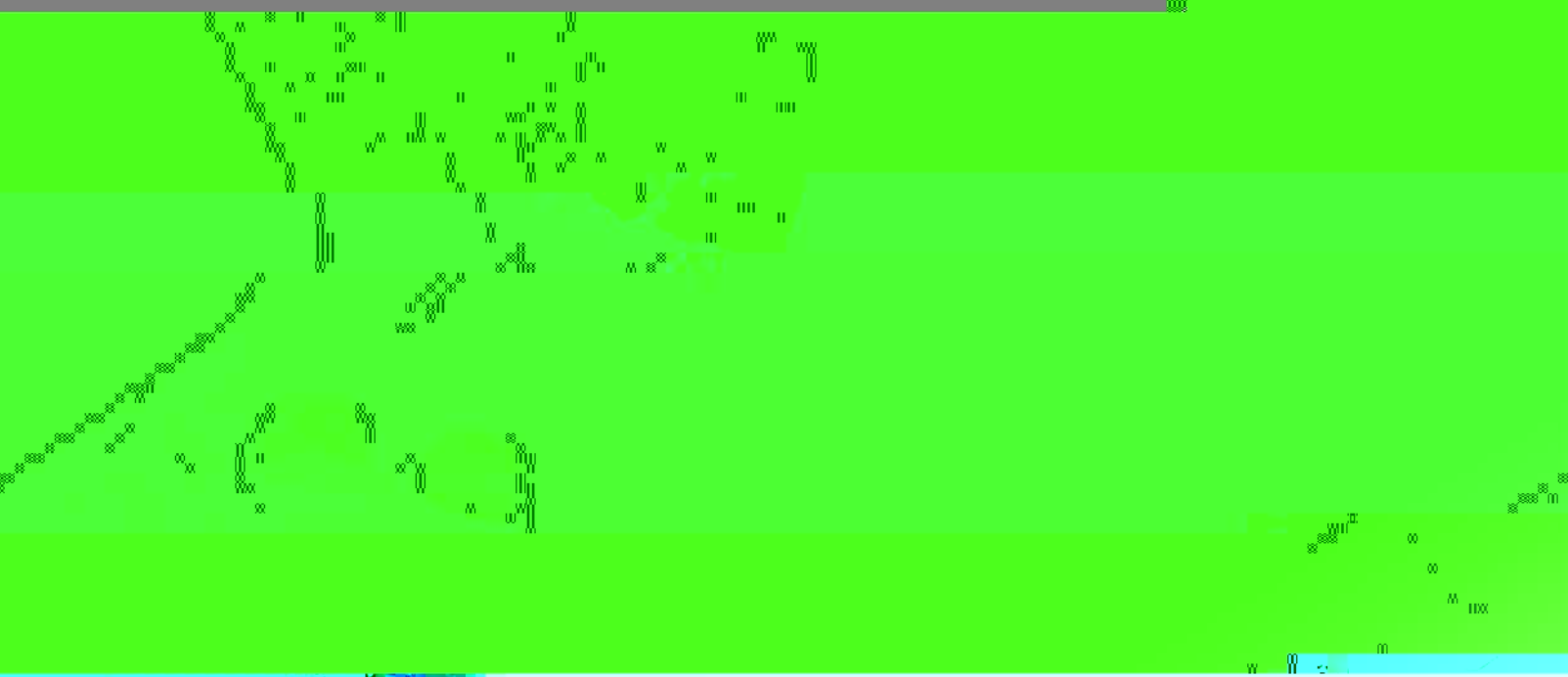
Taking to the Road to Rewrite Your Life Story

■ Wang Yiwan



*From left to right: Zuo 'Xiao Zuo' Huimin, Lonely Planet
Founder Tony Wheeler and Fu 'Xiao Fu' Wenxian*





It is not always sweet to have your life partner as your business partner. Xiao Zuo frequently mentioned “bickering” when it comes to this point. Two most important standards in selecting partners are sharing common goals and having complementary expertise. With different abilities, husbands and wives tend to misunderstand each other and have conflicts, but since they are also family, they cannot be as blunt as many regular partners are.

“You have to compromise,” Xiao Zuo says. “If both of us want to have a final say in such a small company, who we should listen to? It can only limit the strength of two opposing directions and will do no good for anyone.”

These days, Xiao Zuo and Xiao Fu have a clear division of work and any friction has diminished. Xiao Fu is in charge of daily operations and Xiao Zuo is responsible for business de-

velopment and innovation.

Turning a hobby into a business, Xiao Zuo feels the road to running a business resembles Chinese scholar Xuanzang’s journey to the west – it is full of challenges. She has come to realise that no matter your love for something, the process to make it a business can never be one of pure joy.

“When an unexpected situation is beyond your control,” Xiao Zuo says. “One can only try to live through it.”

Hardship also led her to greater self-awareness.

“Your youth is the best time to try different things,” she says.

company for the next decade – something which impelled her to join the CEIBS EMBA programme. For one, she was surprised by the school’s focus on CSR.

“I thought a business school would teach you how to manage a company and how to earn money right from the beginning,” she says. “It is apparently different from what I imagined.”

Her experience at CEIBS has also allowed her to meet and learn about many different people.

“Before, I used to keep away from others who didn’t share my values,” she says. “CEIBS has enhanced my tolerance and has helped me move beyond the borders I had set for myself.”

Xiao Zuo also regards travelling as an opportunity to rid herself of biases. Travel-lovers typically value world peace. They try to understand different cultures and feel connected to the places they visit.

“Everyone in China can recite the old saying, ‘Read 10,000 books and travel 10,000 miles,’” she says. “Few people, however, travel 10,000 miles.”

Looking ahead, Xiao Zuo says she would like to see travelling become part of compulsory education in China to allow everyone to stand in the actual places they learn about, to experience