

The Whampoa Academy of China's Internet

Note: These are Jeffrey Ding's translations. Jeffrey Ding is a researcher at the Future of Humanity's Governance of AI Program. As a Boren Scholar, he directly enrolled in classes with Chinese undergraduates at Peking University, and interned at a Chinese law firm. Others are welcome to share **excerpts from these translations as long as my original translation is cited. Commenters should be aware that the Google Doc is also publicly shareable by link. These translations are part of the ChinAI newsletter - weekly-updated library of translations from Chinese thinkers on AI-related issues:
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Author: Wang Jingjing 王晶晶

Interviews by: Wang Jingjing Ji Yi Niu Yiwen 王晶晶 季艺 牛一雯

Edited by: Ji Yi 季艺

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Microsoft Research Asia (MSRA) is the cradle of: the president of Baidu, the father of Alibaba Cloud, the CEO of Kingsoft, and the president of Xiaomi. Of those who go out from MSRA, more than 500 people are active in various big companies in China's IT industry and more than 100 teach in China's first-class universities. With the fervent hope of changing the world, as well as the good fortune to be treated kindly, a group of young people have created miracles here.

The Precocious Civilization

At the National Science and Technology Innovation Conference in May this year, in front of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, Huawei's president Ren Zhengfei raised a problem that has perplexed him for a long time: Huawei feels that the future is obscure and it is unable to find a direction, because the period of bonuses which it followed others into has passed. Huawei has not really entered the basic theoretical research. Without theoretical innovation, it is impossible to produce break-out innovations.

The basic research that Ren Zhengfei is talking about is an investment by enterprises toward the future. The most famous in history is most likely Bell Labs, founded in the United States in 1925. The theories behind solar batteries, semiconductors, and lasers were born there. In this utopia within the business world, researchers do not have the pressure of KPI and SCI. All they

need is to make amazing technology and change the lives of humans. In China, the earliest ones to realize this point were IBM, Microsoft and other foreign companies. In recent years, companies such as Huawei and Alibaba have increased their R&D investment and established similar internal institutions.

Given this trend, Mr. Kai-fu Lee, CEO of Sinovation Ventures, unexpectedly discovered that his experience of 18 years ago is getting attention again. In Beijing Zhongguancun, where 43 startups and 3.9 financings rounds emerge every day, it's not a wise decision to waste time on nostalgia, but one day in mid-April, he encountered such a thing. That morning in his office, he received several guests who had come a long way. They did not come to seek investment, but rather to inquire about his role in establishing Microsoft Research China (now Microsoft Research Asia) 18 years ago.

In 1998, Microsoft President Bill Gates entrusted Kai-fu Lee to establish a leading-edge basic research institution in China, where he would become the first dean. In the late 1990s, when the scientific research environment was still backward, Kai-fu Lee and a group of overseas returnee scientists, alongside dozens of newly graduated local PhDs, conducted research on cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality and facial recognition in the institute. At that time, China's Internet era had not really come, PCs were not popular, and they were working in Zhongguancun, where oxcarts lumbered along the streets, to create a precocious computer civilization.

"Virtually put some people in a room for a meeting. This is today's VR right? But it's 20 years earlier. At that time, if you saw the what we made in speech recognition, and also the smart input to predict the next word of your pinyin, although (afterwards) these were not necessarily made by Microsoft (for example, Sogou's pinyin input method, or Apple's Siri of today), they actually represented the forward-looking nature of our work at the time." Kai-fu Lee reminisced to the "People" reporter.

One of the visitors was named He Xiaofei, a professor at the School of Computer Science of Zhejiang University, and the new dean of the Didi Chuxing's research institute. After taking the position last year, he immediately thought to seek out Kai-fu Lee to learn from his experience. "How do I describe Microsoft Research Asia's influence in China? Basically the feeling is that Microsoft Research Asia ranks first, and I don't even know where second is." When he was a student, He Xiaofei had an internship at the institute. He still remembers the time he spent there living a pure research life.

If you want to lay out a list of the institute's "graduates," the names on this list can cover almost half of the IT industry: Baidu President Zhang Yaquin, the father of Alibaba Cloud Wang Jian, Kingsoft CEO Zhang Hongjiang, Xiaomi President Lin Bin "Our group of people are very lucky. You think that if China did not experience such rapid development in the past 20 years, our group could not have had the achievements we have in the industry today." Kingsoft CEO Zhang Hongjiang sighed with feeling to the "People" reporter . He is one year older than Kai-Fu

Lee and is known as “the builder of the first temple on a famous mountain” in the field of multimedia retrieval. “Our group of so-called elites, including KFL themselves, including Yaqin, including me, including Wang Jian, we have all found our own positions in the Internet industry in China, and it’s clear that they are much greater than the dreams we had when we first returned to China.”

Zhang Hongjiang, CEO of Kingsoft



One time at an event, Kai-Fu Lee bumped into Zhang Hongjiang, and said “Who is that, isn’t he/she your student, the one who is doing face (recognition)?” He looks at the founder who is speaking on the stage. “Yeah, if you are talking about all the companies that are doing facial recognition today, all the people inside that field have a relationship with me because I was the first person to do face detection at the institute.” Zhang Hongjiang said.

Today, KFL, who has recently recovered from cancer, has not had much time in Beijing. Once he appears, his schedule is always full. After talking with He Xiaofei and others that morning, he accepted an interview with “People” in another conference room. The interview was accompanied by a simple lunch. “I don’t really take interviews (ones that are this long), you also know this.” He took a bite of minced beef pie, hair meticulously combed, and he talked in a Taiwanese Mandarin accent. When he returned to China to start the research institute, KFL was 37 years old. That period of time is imbued with a special meaning for him — “a group of

like-minded people, a glorious time period, and also, the process of starting of undertaking that is relatively easy to remember.”

But the visit of He Xiaofei still made him feel somewhat surprised. Nearly 20 years later, China’s information industry has undergone iterative changes. The three BAT companies, Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent, have risen, small and medium-sized start-ups have emerged, and the

mobile Internet has replaced personal computers. "The Microsoft Research of today, does it still have that big of an attractive force?" KFL asked with a hint of surprise.

The Gravitational Field

Before becoming a teacher of entrepreneurs to the young people of today, KFL's identity was as a scientist in the field of speech recognition. In 1991, he developed the "Casper" at Apple, which could engage in human-computer intelligent dialogue. As a result, he became an academic star at the time.

But in the spring of 1998, KFL was experiencing his own "failure period" while he was a vice president of a company called SGI in Silicon Valley. Because the products they were making were too far advanced and could not find a market, he was forced to sell his own multimedia company as he was rushing about in all directions to do this. He originally wanted to do work that would thoroughly change the lives of people — transplanting all the multimedia software developed by the company into Microsoft's Windows system, influencing people around the world. Now he feels that his passion and talent were suppressed and buried.

Microsoft did not intend to buy KFL's products and company, but they had a plan to employ this person, who understood the science and also had management experience, to go to China to be the first dean of the soon-to-be-established research institute. At the time, Microsoft wanted to expand the scale of its global research institute. Founded in 1991, this organization was created to be an environment within Microsoft that would be similar to Carnegie Mellon University. It would conduct basic scientific research and make preparations for Microsoft's next 5-15 years of technology. The China research institute was the second branch to be established outside the US headquarters.

Many of Microsoft's employees know that Bill Gates is full of affection for China. His honeymoon was spent in China. Shen Xiangyang, global executive vice president of Microsoft, chuckled as he recalled the past with "People." Back then, Gates took a train to go sightseeing on the Silk Road, and he also visited the Dunhuang Academy of Art. When the academy's dean heard that this "young leader" was the world's richest man, he even laid out a red carpet, but in the end, Gates did not donate any money when he left. However, a few years later, he let KFL and others bring back a big gift: investing 80 million US dollars to establish a 100-person-scale research institute in China, creating a university-like environment and conducting basic research. A popular saying is that Gates felt the enthusiasm among the students when he went gave a speech at Tsinghua University. He felt that China was full of hope and made this decision on the plane back to the United States.

At that time, the enormous Chinese market was awakening. Before accepting Gates' assignment, KFL also received a headhunting call from Intel, as it also wanted to build a research institute in China. KFL felt that the future would be monopolized by Microsoft and Intel. If he had to surrender to one of them, he chose the software-maker Microsoft. While at SI he developed a fear of these hardware companies. As for another reason, he was also full of confidence in the opportunities contained in China. When studying at Carnegie Mellon University, a classmate from the mainland told him that the country was still programming on paper, but the calculated data could be run directly; and a friend at the Institute of Acoustics (Chinese Academy of Sciences) told him that the samples sounds were all inputted one by one through manual labor, resulting in 16,000 samples per second. KFL was deeply touched. He felt that China was not lacking smart brains and a hardworking bodies; it just did not have a good environment and opportunities. To borrow one of his rather teacher-like sayings: life is full of various choices, and one must always look for rockets that are taking off. And, at the time, China was his objective.

As the most influential company at the time, the news that Microsoft had a large-scale plan to establish a research institute in China had a seismic, shockwave-sending force. On November 5, 1998, the opening ceremony of Microsoft China Research Institute was held at the International Club in Chang'an Street. On the same day, there were more than 300 VIP guests including 18 academicians, 4 university presidents, 29 government officials, and at least 100 Chinese and foreign journalists who had come to report on the event. Yet the real protagonist of the day, the newly established research institute, had only 6 initial members.

Although he had not worked and lived in mainland China for a long time, KFL acted resourcefully. He hoped that this foreign newcomer could get the goodwill of the government and the academic community. Special attention was paid to inviting officials and scholars to the opening ceremony so as to maintain good interaction with them. When inviting officials, he listened to the advice of a local public relations company: "You must emphasize this statistic of Microsoft is investing 80 million US dollars. When you say this figure, it expresses your commitment to China." On the issue of whether to call it a "research institute" or "research lab," there was some internal debate at Microsoft in the beginning. KFL also adopted the proposal of the public relations company, and called it a "research institute," because it sounded grander and loftier.

Now, he still needed to "air-drop" a batch of Chinese scientists here. After experiencing many rejections, he pinned his hopes on Zhang Yaqin, who many people had recommended to him. That year, the 32-year-old Zhang Yaqin was the youngest fellow in the 100-year history of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). KFL identified this person as a "banner-bearer" in the computer field, and his joining would attract more people back. He intended to invite Zhang Yaqin to the Institute as the chief scientist and associate dean.

At the time, KFL did not have any handle on (how to get Zhang Yaqin). "Might as well call him. If there were any indications (he was interested), I'll ask him to come. If he doesn't come, maybe

I'll go to see him." Unexpectedly, Zhang Yaqin directly revealed his willingness to return to China on the phone and made his decision very quickly. Later on, his wife complained a little bit, saying that she really doesn't understand these men — their day-to-day lives were good, why go back to China and blindly squander it all.

"I think, back then, there was one sentence that may have touched me..." Zhang Yaqin recalled to the "People" reporter. "I said can China do research right? At the time, KFL said, in fact, we are actually starting a business, and we are also creating history. Let's just build a world-class research institute!" This "zero-to-one" feeling described by KFL got Zhang Yaqin (ZYQ) excited again. He had experienced this type of enormous change in his growing years. ZYQ was born in 1966 when the Cultural Revolution broke out. In the year of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, at the age of 12, he entered the first junior class of the University of Science and Technology of China. "You are younger, for myself, I feel that the transformational nodes of each era and my experiences are completely synchronized."

In 1998, ZYQ had already left China for 13 years, and his family was settled in a city of New Jersey in the northeastern United States. He independently led a laboratory at Sarnoff and just won the Outstanding Young Power Electronics Engineer Award. President Clinton had written a congratulatory letter to him. But with respect to that type of excitement and familiarity with "zero to one," ZYQ is different from those people who refused to KFL. Those who rejected (KFL) gave more consideration to the objective environment. "Oh, you don't understand. You are Taiwanese. What do you know? The mainland does not have that environment. If its environment was so good, we would not scale mountains, ford streams, and run thousands of miles to America to do research." This was the reason that Li Kaifu heard the most when he got rejected.

But ZYQ cared more about what he is currently attracted by, and he wanted to follow this attraction. "So why did I want to come back? This is very natural. That is, although I had been in the United States for so many years, I was always thinking of various opportunities to directly or indirectly have some kind of relationship with China. At that time, a friend of mine said a phrase — he said China is your gravity, how do you say this, your gravitational field. China itself is like a big force field, you are on its periphery. The United States may be another force field. After you go there, you have no relationship with it. This includes watching the presidential election in the United States, it may be very interesting to watch, but I feel as if it has nothing to do with me." When ZYQ did research, there was always a picture in his head: a person sitting in front of the computer, how the person was using the software, the interface of the software, and then pushes back to what type of research is required. When he graduated from the junior class of the University of Science and Technology, he had many majors to choose from, such as physics and mathematics, but he chose the computer which directly connected hope with reality. Also in that year, China was preparing to join the WTO, and the arduous reform of state-owned enterprises was beginning. China started to truly go from a planned economy toward a market economy.

KFL was not wrong. ZYQ's decision toppled the first domino. The news spread immediately among his American peers. For a time, they were dubiously questioning each other: "How is it that even ZYQ is going?" Zhang Hongjiang, who was at Hewlett-Packard in California, was surprised when he heard the news. "His outlook was bright in the states." At an academic conference two months before, Zhang Hongjiang had listened to ZYQ raise the prospect of returning to China and reminded him: "You should think this through." Zhang Hongjiang had been considering returning to China for some time, but always lacked the right opportunity. He had his own hesitations regarding the research institute in China: First, is this a political "gift" from Gates to the Chinese government, is he just playing around? Second, are there students in China who are willing to do research in accordance with their standards? Now, ZYQ was going back and had come to ZHJ home to invite him to go to Beijing to "make world-class multimedia things." After the two drank ZHJs wine, ZHJ was somewhat tempted.

In his youth, ZHJ was transferred to a cadre school with his parents. He was among the first group of college students after the college entrance examination was restored. He described these groups as a hungry generation. "We still wanted to do things, still wanted to do a lot of things, whether you're talking about that group of college students in the 1970s or early 1980s, everyone's personal mission, or you could say everyone's point in common, was to stand out among one's peers. It appears that it's not so easy for people to give that up."

In March 1999, ZHJ came to Beijing for one last exchange. When he was having lunch, the sky outside the window suddenly became dark. A sandstorm had come. ZHJ's heart went "thump". Before his departure, his wife had asked him to take a lot of pictures of Beijing: ones of the neighborhoods, the schools, the hospital. He did not dare to tell his wife (about the sandstorm) after returning to the United States. He quickly sold his house in America, even though the apartment in Beijing was only one-fourth the size of his place in America, and his two sons slept in a bunk bed in the same room. "ZHJ, have you thought this through? This will be a tough time." His parents did not understand. "We will go back (to the states) two years later. If Microsoft's stock doubles again, we will go back after making money." ZHJ said to them. The end outcome: he has stayed in China until today.

A month after ZYQ joined the institute, Li Shipeng also bought a return ticket for China. He is a researcher at ZYQ's laboratory at Sonarff. On Christmas Day 1998, as in previous years, several Chinese friends gathered at ZYQ's house. "I made a trip back to China, and this time there is an opportunity." Zhang Yaqin said. His decision directly influenced Li Shipeng: "Stay in the United States, so what? Life in the United States is still relatively monotonous. If you want to suffer to do some things, it is necessary to go to China." A few months later, Zhang Yizhao also came. He was a graduate of MIT and was working at a startup in Silicon Valley. At lunch every day, surrounding colleagues talked about stocks, company listings, and real estate. "It felt like this life is basically like this," but in China, every day will have new changes.

By the time the institute (MSRA) held its first anniversary party in 1999, nearly 20 scientists had returned to China and established the first few research centers, KFL's voice group, ZHJ's

multimedia group, Shen Xiangyang's graphic imaging group... during the evening party, these people all stood up and went to the stage to sing Cheung Ming-man's famous "My Chinese Heart" - this is the song that resonated most with the college students who went abroad in the 1970s and 1980s, and also one of the few Chinese songs that Li Kaifu could sing.

From the recollections of Microsoft's then public relations manager Shang Xiaoli, at first, these IT men were still a bit shy when went on stage. Later, they began to sway with the music and sing louder and louder. At the end of the party, as they were walking outside, this group of men were pulling on each other, embracing each other, and holding each other up. She was visibly moved when recalling that picture.



Early Members of Microsoft Research Asia

Catch up to MIT!

In January 1999, ZYQ took a connection from the Tokyo airport and returned to China. Because the flight was delayed, he ran into Shen Xiangyang at the airport. SXY and ZYQ are the same age. They used to be researchers at Microsoft's US headquarters. On the second day in Beijing,

KFL took the two of them to cut their hair in the morning, and then drove directly to the Sigma Building in Zhongguancun, the office location of the China Research Institute (MSRA), where dozens of PhDs from China's national key universities were waiting for interviews.

KFL and them — their goal was to make world-class research. In the world of computers, ACM is the most influential professional academic organization, and the Turing Award, which it chooses, is recognized as the Nobel Prize in the world of computer science. To establish a position in the world's academic map, to prove your choice — that you will be more successful in China than in the United States — you must make your way into the international top conferences under this organization (ACM). However, before 2000, Chinese scholars published less than 15 papers each year at various conferences of the ACM international computing society, accounting for less than 0.5%.

It is not enough to only rely on the dozen overseas scientists who came back at that time. What is more important is to cultivate a large number of outstanding local researchers. Most of these young people gathered on the 5th floor of the Sigma Building were the first group of computer students trained in China after the reform and opening up. In 1982, when Deng Xiaoping visited the Shanghai Exhibit of Science and Technology Achievements, he touched the head of a 12-year-old boy who said that "Instead of a doll, you have to grab ahold of the computer." From this, computer science became the hottest specialty in colleges and universities. Now, KFL is going to take these "computer dolls" from the 1980s and do research with them. He will use a team of 20 outstanding Chinese researchers to make things that three genius American scientists can't.

Tong Xin, who had a Ph.D from the Department of Computer Science of Tsinghua University, originally had an opportunity to go to Canada as a postdoctoral fellow. KFL called him directly at his lab and asked him to first come to the institute for two years, and afterwards when you go out there will be many opportunities. Wang Haifeng, who had a Ph.D. from the computer science department at Harbin Institute of Technology, already had other job opportunities at the time. When KFL went to Harbin Institute of Technology to meet him, Wang Haifeng said that he always wanted make technology that Chinese people could use. KFL happily said, then you should come to Microsoft because Microsoft's products — Windows and Office — are used all over the world, and the technology you make can really be used in these products. Wang Haifeng does natural language, which is part of the concept of the now-popular artificial intelligence. When interviewing, he asked one of the people in charge: "In this research direction, who is at the research institute now?" "Currently there's no one." "Well, I just finished my PhD, who will I work with?" "The dean knows, you can work with him." Later he went to the institute, and it was really KFL who personally derived formulas with him on the whiteboard.

At 8 o'clock every morning, KFL would come in carrying a big backpack. These people are very different from serious scientists in the traditional sense. They are witty talkers. They like to drink red wine in their free time, play basketball with interns, sing karaoke at parties, and when they lost at cards they would trick the table as usual. There were no such administrative titles like

Dean Li and Dean Zhang. Everyone would call each other by their name. Kaifu, Yaqin, Hongjiang... Tsinghua University retired professor Huang Changning, who was in his 60s, was the oldest. Here, he was called Tom.

In the beginning when setting up the institute, Microsoft headquarters had considered asking people from the United States and Europe to go to the China Research Institute, but they were worried about whether they could work efficiently in the area. But if you find someone in China, can you find a very excellent person? Now, KFL has already found them, not only young overseas scientists, but also local students who were even younger. Many researchers were former university teachers, who gave up many years of iron rice bowls and hard-won titles, but they still came.

However, when ZHJ went to work at the Sigma Building on the first day, SXY, who had been there for more than two months, gave him a head-on-blow: he had read the graduation theses of these PhDs from China. "I felt so bad I wanted to cry, these students are so good, but how can you write this type of paper?" At that time, many of their newly recruited PhDs would write papers that would start with a large chunk that never discussed the main point, and did not attach importance to the analysis of the experiment's results. Many English spellings were wrong in the paper. One paper would often have to go through dozens of revisions. The quality of PPTs was also worrying. During the first time Tong Xin went abroad to participate in an international academic conference, after seeing the animations in PPTs made by others, he realized that what he was making was "so crude."

They needed to let these students, who have just left university, know what is world-class technology and scientific research. "It's like 庖丁解牛 (the fable of the skilled butcher). It's very important that you plan where you make your first cut with the knife," said He Xiaofei, an intern at the time.

The goal of SXY's small group was the SIGGRAPH International Conference on Computer Graphics, the top international academic conference in the field of computer graphics. It only contains thirty or forty papers per year, with a maximum of two or three papers in each field. Few mainland Chinese scholars were selected before, but SXY ambitiously said to the researchers: "Catch up to MIT!" He was a well-known workaholic in the institute. From the records of reporters who had interviewed him in those years, his office was in the interior area of the floor, with no south-facing window. If you it was someone else, they may complain that they couldn't see the sun. He said that this is just a state of mind. You can completely not care about time. If you get very sleepy you can fall to the ground and sleep for a bit. Then when you get up, turn around and you're sitting back in front of the computer. His wife also helped to revise the English in the researchers' papers. She said that since moving to Beijing, SXY did not return home on time.

In the period before submissions of final drafts, the SXY group lived in the Sigma building. The research institute has 5 quilts for the use of those doing overtime work. Now these were not

enough. Many people were lying on the sofa with their clothes, making the most of the time when programs were running to get in some sleep. In a daze, they would hear the frozen window class make a “ga-la, ga-la, knocking sound” — 3AM was midnight snack time, and the researcher Xu Yingqing had specifically wrote a program for everyone to order food.

This kind of investment from a mentor makes many who were young at the time cherish those times up until today. He Xiaofei was an intern at the ZHJ team. His computer still contains papers revised by ZHJ. ZHJ's hair is very short, and he speaks directly. Once he got angry in the lab, because a student opened Word and accepted all his suggestions in Word's revision mode without even looking at them. He was so angry that he “let loose a torrent of curses.” “I was criticized by him for many years,” said Wen Jirong, who is now already the dean of the School of Information at Renmin University of China. At that time, he was an associate researcher in ZHJ's team. He would make one-on-one reports to ZHJ every week. When he walked into ZHJ's office, Wen Jirong was always very anxious, and he was afraid that he would get criticized right up in his face. “Hongjiang is a very strict boss. He would often say that you young people, you have to prove yourself, prove! You have to prove that you are qualified for the job, you have to prove that you can do first-class research!” It was precisely this type of strict demand that enabled ZHJ's team to achieve their first breakthrough at the 2000 ACM Multimedia Conference.

“The situation at the time was equivalent to a group of people who had found a problem and they felt that this problem was worth solving. Then this group of people just closed the door, and didn't ask about anything, only to solve this problem. Nowadays, this type of environment is very rare, that is, to really close the door and not think about anything else. It was a pack of wolves, you know. We saw a piece of meat and rushed to devour it all.” Xu Yingqing, who is now the chair of Tsinghua University's Academy of Arts & Design. On one occasion, KFL took them to a Xinjiang restaurant called “A Fun Ti” near Xidan. After dinner, everyone sat there drinking beer, and a boy from Xinjiang danced on the stage. SXY suddenly said to Xu Yingqing that this guy jumped for a long time, but there were basically eight movements. Isn't this just a symmetric transformation, with a rotation matrix added on. The 8 basic movements are connected together in a dance of five or six minutes. Can the computer do it? Conversely, if you give this dance to the computer, can it figure out that there are 8 movements. This is the same as a technical problem in Jin Yong's martial arts novels, “following the ‘picking grass-scare snake’ move with the ‘golden eagle-fluttering rabbit’ move.” They spent about a year's time before figuring it out.

In 2000, SXY's group published its first paper at SIGGRAPH. Tong Xin remembers that when the results were announced, Shen Xiangyang rushed over and said: “Our article is in it!” After a while, ZYQ also came over to shake hands with and congratulate the researchers. He said half-jokingly that the institute should follow an exponential increase. One paper this year, 2 papers next year, and 8 papers by 2003.

The actual results are very close to this prediction. In 2003, the institute published seven papers at the SIGGRAPH conference, becoming one of the top two institutions in the world in terms of

paper acceptances, with the other being MIT, which SXY had wanted to catch up to. In 2005, this number increased to 9, accounting for about 10% of the world's papers. An American professor just happened to call SXY at that time and asked about the SIGGRAPH situation. "It was okay, nine of them were accepted." SXY quietly said. The person on the other end of the line was silent for a couple of seconds. "Harry, with what you are doing, others will hate you." Then he hung up. "In that year, everyone else was completely destroyed." SXY said. It had just rained that day when the results came out, and Shen Xiangyang ran to the top of a hill madly yelling "Ahhh." He said that it was a kind of feeling from a martial arts novel, "Relying on a sword from heaven, who under heaven can be enemies with me."



November 15, 1998, the establishment of Microsoft Research China was announced in Beijing. Rick Rashid (front row, third from left), Kai-fu Lee (front row, second from left), Hong Xiaowen (back row, fourth from left), Shen Xiangyang (back row, fifth from left)

The World's Hottest Lab

This research institute, which no one knew about before, was called "the hottest laboratory in the world" by MIT Technology Review in 2004.

At that time, the Microsoft Research China institute had been upgraded to the Microsoft Research Asia institute, with 150 full-time researchers and 200 interns from universities. Researchers in the Beijing lab, who were an average age of about 30, were very surprised by the American journalists who came to interview them. These researchers who were producing world-class research were really too young. At the Microsoft headquarters research institute in Redmond, many were white-haired Turing Award winners. In an interview, ZHJ proudly said that this is a new kind of Chinese manufacturing. It is no longer just shoes, socks, and strollers. We are now manufacturing MIT students, papers, and software.

Looking around the office, ZHJ couldn't help but shed tears. There was nothing here a few years ago. Now it is a vigorous and dynamic scene, a group of scientists eager to influence reality and a group of young people who are hungrier than them. "I feel that the dream has been realized and we have created history."

In order to enable researchers to do research with peace of mind, the institute created a utopian environment. ZYQ set the "army rules": the researchers only published articles in the top 5 international conferences and journals, they couldn't publish them wherever, as he was afraid they would be influenced by China's academic sphere they will be influenced by the domestic academic community to exploit the SCI, EI (citation indexes) and do second-rate research. He also didn't want researchers to participate in domestic awards or enter into the assessment system of Chinese academicians.

"These leaders here are all insiders. They are not a group of executive leaders. They are all scientists leading the way. They know all the details in the research and some of the issues within the institute, so they will not judge us solely with those kinds of quantitative indicators. Let's say one person has published a bunch of papers, and another person may have only published one paper in 1-2, 2-3 years. But they have the ability to evaluate the value of this work and the value of that work. This is simple to say, but for many companies and many institutions, it cannot be done." Wen Jirong said.

Researchers would get sufficient support here. "Back then, each year we would budget to buy machines, and I would just say to KFL that we should go buy machines now. Let's buy 8 sets. And he would say OK, then go buy them." Zhang Yiqi, who is now the vice president of Microsoft Research Asia, recalled. His college classmate was a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. One day, when talking, his classmate was excited to say that they had finally applied for a grant after half a year, and now they could go buy a machine. "At that time, I felt that we were truly very lucky at the institute."

"People's Daily" reporter Ling Zhijun once conducted interviews at the institute for 16 months and wrote a book to record the story behind the founding of the institute. In 2000, KFL was

suddenly promoted to become Microsoft's global vice president, leaving the institute for the US headquarters, and ZYQ succeeded him as the second dean of the institute. When bidding farewell, everyone at the institute sang the old song "Send Off Comrades-in-arms" that they often picked to sing at KTV. At this time, it was exactly two years since KFL had returned to China, and he sent an email to all the staff of the institute. Among all of KFL's emails that Ling Zhijun had gone over in his interviews, this was the the only one written in Chinese: "Really, I don't want to go because smart, capable, ambitious, and diligent people surround me; really, I don't want to go because I love my work and love the people around me even more; really, I don't want to go because this is like my home and you are like my family; really, I don't want to go because we worked together to build this one-of-a-kind intelligent island."

"Intelligent Island" was originally going to be the title of Ling Zhijun's book. KFL liked the title very much, but it was rejected inside the institute. Some people were worried that outsiders would think that it can't be the case that everyone outside the institute has no intelligence. "There may have been a certain degree of this type of — how to say it — elitism," KFL admitted. "In our hearts, we believed that other foreign companies or domestic scientific research institutions in China are quite inadequate in many aspects. We gave ourselves a certain sense of mission to become a model to help guide or stimulate other research institutions, so we are doing this work while holding onto this type of ideal."

After KFL, in 2004, ZYQ also received instructions from headquarters that he was to be promoted to become Microsoft's global vice president. SXY became the third dean of the institute, and three years later he returned to the United States in the same way. Everyone at the institute said that the *fengshui* here is really too good.

A Sense of Loss

Zhang Yaqin likes to cite a quote from Gates. Every morning when you wake up, you should be incessantly excited about what you do – the progress of technology to bring development and improvement to human life.

He wrote in an internal article for the institute that publishing world-class research papers is not the ultimate goal. More important are the things you do that truly change human history. He likes to give examples of the world's most famous laboratories, Bell Labs and Xerox Labs, "You can't remember who wrote how many articles, who invented how many patents. When you think of Bell Labs, you think of semiconductors, you think of lasers, you think of fiber optics. When you think of Xerox Labs, you think of graphical user interfaces, you think of the Internet, and TCP/IP."

For a long time, it was because of a sense of mission connected to human progress that Microsoft was able to drive these young people to invest in the work regardless of reality. At that time, Microsoft occupied almost half of the computer world. After Windows 95 came out, there was even the popular saying that no matter what computer, if it could run Windows 95, then it was a good computer.

In fact, this also made up the common qualities of these scientists. Many of them chose to return to China because of an aspiration to make an impact in the real world. This aspiration was also key to why they could achieve success in industry in the future.

Wang Jian, chairman of the technical committee of Alibaba, recalled to the "People" reporter that he came to the Institute from Zhejiang University to participate in Microsoft's improvement project for Chinese input methods. "You know that Bill Gates would often say that if the Windows start-up time could be decreased by a few seconds, then the entire world would save so much time. So, you think about how many words China types every day, it would be a very big deal to save a few seconds for Chinese users every day," Wang Jian said. "At the time, there were goals that were that lofty and noble."

Zhou Ming was also a participant in this project. Before coming to Microsoft Research China, he had worked as a teacher in Tsinghua University's computer department for 8 years. In the environment of that time, it was very difficult to make innovations that had an influence in the world. "You continue to study even in old age, most of the times just to make it through evaluations, and then you get some second-grade prize for national progress. When you lay it aside on the top shelf, there is basically no shadow. Then, if you want to be in touch with users, in touch with society, contributing to society, it's very difficult to convert these so-called achievements." KFL said to him, if you come over here, Microsoft provides a platform, and the things you do will have billions of users, as well as many different languages, Japanese, American, all using your things. The improved technology of Microsoft's Chinese input method did later affect the Japanese input method.

"I felt so intrepid for the first time," recalled Zhou Ming, now a principal researcher at Microsoft Research Asia, "So many users — wowww — use it, and you can receive a lot of feedback. Some people tell you which areas you could further improve, and so we improve it again. Some say that your speed this time is much faster than before. So good! Then you feel very excited and want to tell all your friends."

The improved Chinese input method reduced the error rate of inputting entire sentences and improved the speed of touch typing. When reporting the work to Gates, KFL said: "If the speed of Chinese input doubles, in every two hours of work, we can help Chinese computer users save 1 billion hours." Gates humorously replied: "This is more than the time we can save from computer start-up times."

But by 2010, this attraction force was disappearing little by little. At that time, ZYQ had left Microsoft Research Asia and was promoted to the chairman of Microsoft Asia Pacific R&D Group. In his view, this aspect (decline of MSRA's attraction force) is due to the fact that the big companies in the Internet field have long been more than just Microsoft. In another aspect, this is also due to the rise of more local Chinese Internet companies. Their influence amidst the Chinese people has made it more and more striking to ZYQ that the stuff he was working on seemed to have less contact with his surroundings.

In the PC era, Microsoft and Intel were the two most influential companies, but according to the New York Times, global PC sales in 2009 fell by 9%, and Microsoft laid off 5,000 people for the first time in its 34-year history. Intel also laid off 5,000-6,000 people. At that time, in China, Alibaba and other local Internet companies began to rise. After Google left China, Baidu became the largest search engine.

Almost at the same time, ZHJ, who was still using MSN, also found that the products he was making were farther and farther from, less and less relevant for Chinese users. At that time, he was the chief technology officer of Microsoft Asia Pacific R&D Group as well as the dean of Microsoft Research Asia, there was a young man named Yang Yongzhi from the engineering division. After leaving his job at MSRA, he made Dolphin Browser, which was very successful overseas. The feelings this stirred up in ZHJ were no less than when he heard the news that ZYQ returned to China 18 years ago. "Yang Yongzhi, such a child, at that time, he had found a business opportunity. Think about it, what else could he do in Microsoft? Could he make Microsoft's business in China better? Can you make MSN compete with QQ? You will discover that your products are getting farther and farther away from, less and less relevant to Chinese users. People don't use Bing, people use Baidu. You always think that what you do is the coolest, you think what you do brings people the most sense of accomplishment. Suddenly I found out it doesn't..." Because of his long-term focus on Microsoft's system, ZHJ did not really use the QQ chat tool. The first QQ account he registered for was so he could open up Tencent Weibo.

They gradually discovered that these things they did had nothing to do with China. "Everyone will have this feeling," Zhang Yaqin said. In his view, Gates once had the vision to set up a research institute in China and create the future. But now, Microsoft did not have a timely relationship with China's current gravitational field. "This is an irreversible trend. No multinational company can do this," Zhang Yaqin said. When they raised their heads from the world of MSN and Bing and looked around, they found that the BAT companies were becoming the places to attract outstanding graduates because they had more local influence.

Wang Jian left the institute in 2008 and went to Alibaba as CTO. At that time, many people did not understand his decision. The research institute was in its golden age, and the Chinese Internet was about to encounter a round of bubbles. But that year, when the 52-year-old Gates chose to retire, Wang Jian seized upon a signal in his speech: "When he was talking about Internet, my own feelings still stayed in this browser era, because he would frequently talk about

IE... this IE had such a big impact on him, so you will feel that it is very difficult for a software company to become an Internet company."

What makes ZYQ feel regret is his belief that Microsoft missed the best opportunity to lead the trend of the mobile Internet. In 2004, ZYQ returned to headquarters to take charge of embedded cars, mobile phones, televisions and other non-PC products. "At that time, I didn't know if you remembered the mobile phones. China's Dopod and KCPC were both Windows systems, and you know who the only main competitor was? It was Nokia, but I knew that Symbian wouldn't work out, since its functions and architecture were not good. Our stuff was very fast, and Samsung, Motorola, and HTC were all starting to use our system, so at that time we were defining the smartphone's operating system."

Unfortunately, Microsoft's DNA was facing toward corporate customers at the time, and mobile phones had personal consumers as customers. "At that time, the biggest pressure on me was pushing me to do corporate work, but I was holding out." But when the new system was about to be completed, ZYQ received another appointment and returned to China to establish a research and development group. At that time, Kai-Fu Lee left Microsoft to join Google and was in charge of the R&D center for China products. The media regarded this news as a provocation from the new hegemon Google toward the old era king Microsoft. To a certain degree, ZYQ's return to China was a "putting out the fire" action.

Someone who came from doing corporate-facing work took over the mobile phone business, and the Windows Phone system was restored to a very "heavy" state: it did a lot of enterprise applications, but its speed slowed down. "Android was not supposed to exist in 2009. The iPhone itself has its own set of closed systems, but Android exists because we are not doing well. The concepts behind Android and the things we were doing at the time were actually the same." "If I stayed for another two years, I think it may have been different." Sitting in an opaque conference room at Baidu, ZYQ laughed softly.

In an article titled "Opening Windows — Windows at Middle Age," *The Economist* wrote that everything Microsoft has done in the past years was for the purpose of strengthening Windows, so that its operating system gets the absolute dominant position of "surpassing all others of its kind before and after." But such a corporate culture has caused many internal innovations to be killed off by a "strategy tax," which is something well known to those on the inside. Microsoft is also the first company to see the future of smartphones, but it has always wanted to make customers only use Windows systems, but does not try to develop a more suitable operating system for mobile phones. After the release of Windows Phone 7 in 2011, Microsoft decided to stop technical support for Windows Mobile.

ZHJ can't accept that he, who once served half of the computer industry, doesn't seem to lead the times any more. "And you still work very hard." He felt that his work "did not offer anything new, aside from adding more profit to Microsoft." Seeing the rise of Chinese Internet companies, he was once again guided by the force of returning to China in 1999 to participate in China's

practical scene. This type of idealism was not trapped by age and circumstances. "I don't think I have reached the retirement age, as I have not yet reached the retirement mindset," he told the "People" reporter.

"I also know that I can't keep you." When he gave his resignation to ZYQ, ZHJ remembered that this was the first sentence ZYQ said. "There wasn't a wave of people at Microsoft persuading me to stay, because everyone knows that they couldn't get me to stay. This is just like when I was at HP, and my boss said, why do you want to go, and I told him, I want to go back to China. This is the reason why you can't keep me," ZHJ said.

Three years later, ZYQ also left Microsoft.

Regaining Inspiration

ZHJ is used to being called Dr. Zhang by his staff. This form of address represents the early years of China's Internet, which was created by a group of scientists with overseas backgrounds. With the rise of local ventures such as BAT, that era has gradually drifted away. The ones really leading the wave of today's Internet are a group of entrepreneurs who are younger, more localized, and more inclined to grasp the user's psychological and practical needs as opposed to entrepreneurs who research basic science.

"When you see the rise of this group of people, what is your mood?" the "People" reporter asked ZHJ.

"I will only be in a good mood." After leaving Microsoft, ZHJ went to Kingsoft, a local Chinese company. Sitting in an office outside the Fifth Ring Road in Beijing, he answered with ease, "I think that China's stage is getting bigger and bigger, and the other thing is your own awakening, you know... In the past, we felt that multinational companies were leading the trend of China's technology. Before, ZYQ and I often came out to share some insights on technology, and then suddenly we realized that this era is changing. That is, we are no more technologically forward-looking than local companies."

"Are there some returnee scientists who can't accept this?" The "People" reporter continued to ask.

"Well, then they wouldn't come back. If we didn't see China's aspirations, why should we stay?"

"Even if this aspiration is only happening for local people."

"No, it is also happening for us."

Due to years of work at the desk, ZHJ's back is not in good shape. Frequently working while standing, the computer keyboard in his office is a lot higher than the table. On the first day of working at Kingsoft, the new environment allowed him to regain that type of excitement of starting a business like when he first came to the institute (MSRA). "Because it is a brand new world for you, most of the things you have not done before." The hope and fortune he comprehends is located here. For him, the most important thing is not wealth or status but the middle-age happiness of self-realization and real-world impact. This is also the root of why the earliest scientists at Microsoft Research, even if they left the research field, still play a central role alongside China's Internet entrepreneurs today.

ZHJ is grateful for his life and career. Once, at a gathering with families of a few friends, a friend suddenly said to his wife: "Look at us families, only your husband and my husband are still working." The other men sitting at the table had already left the front-line positions and half were younger than ZHJ. "Having a platform for you to do things is not an easy thing, so I am fortunate that China can still provide us with this platform," ZHJ said.

Baidu also let ZYQ find the original feeling again. Even when he hears complaints about Baidu, he still feels proud. "Every time I go to the plane, flight attendants will run over and say, I use your products every day. Then, President Xi said, I use your products every day. The Prime Minister said, I'm using your products. So I feel that this pride is in doing things that have more influence in China."

So far, Microsoft Asia Research Institute has trained more than 4,800 Chinese interns and more than 500 of them are now active in various large companies in China's IT industry, including Baidu, Tencent, China Mobile, Alibaba, Lenovo, etc. Over 100 people teach at leading universities in China, such as Tsinghua University, Peking University, University of Science and Technology of China, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

ZHJ, who is far from the academic world, often forwards updates from the academic world in his Wechat Moments, and one can see that he misses the days of the research institute. One time, ZYQ commented below one of ZHJ's posts: Today I still remember that time you led the team to dominate the ACM multimedia conference. Those times belonged to idealism. "Compared to the times of today, you won't have such clear utility-orientations or KPIs here, such as having to write 10 articles or something. No, no, not like the practicalities of our business world. Because I was just looking at the budget, that's really my budget, I've been looking at the budget for the past two days — the first quarter just ended and I'm looking at the second quarter budget. You are meticulously studying those numbers one by one." There is a whiteboard in his office filled with strange symbols. These are all his thought processes. These types of white boards could be seen all over the place in the institute.

Three years ago, ZHJ was invited by Lei Jun to attend Xiaomi's annual meeting. Standing on the stage, he asked, how many people below came from Microsoft's Advanced Technology Center. A total of 43 people raised their hands. At that moment, he was very impressed. Many

of these people he had personally recruited from the United States that year. Undoubtedly, the Institute has sent a large number of talents to industry, and he is still proud of this.

"I think Microsoft Research Bill Gates's kindergarten. What is kindergarten? Some say, kindergarten is actually useless, you know, but it represents the future." Wang Jian said. In 2009, Wang Jian was responsible for the development of Alibaba Cloud. This product has always been controversial within Alibaba, but he firmly believes that "We are not trying to improve on things other have already done, but to do things that people have never done before." This is the thinking he developed at the institute when he first participated in the improvement of the input method. Alibaba Cloud was also related to his experience at the institute. At that time, the institute had a very advanced department called Data Intelligence, which handled the data recovered by the User Experience Program. There was so much information that it was unable to be processed and they had to lose some of it. At that time, he realized the importance of data, "You have to think about it. This was a dozen or so years ago, and today everyone is talking about big data. We talk about it to the point no one knows what we are talking about, but at that time you would know that without the internet, data cannot be recovered. It's very simple, right? So you will slowly understand the importance of this thing... these had quite a big impact on me."

Today's research institute has moved to the Microsoft Building at 5 Danling Street, Zhongguancun. It has become the largest branch of Microsoft Research outside the headquarters, with more than 200 researchers. Through the floor-to-ceiling windows of the building, you can see the Boyata Tower of Peking University in the distance. Across the street, the huge billboards of Sohu and Youku. In the corner of the five-story engineering institute, there is an office temporarily used by SXY. One day in early June, SXY returned to the institute. He is now Microsoft's global executive vice president, responsible for Microsoft's global research and technology team, including MSRA in Beijing, often going back and forth between the United States and China. He is still used to carrying a black backpack, just like most men in science and engineering.

The interview was squeezed in during his brief Beijing trip, and the sun was particularly good that day, he said, just like when he first came to the institute 18 years ago. There was a doctoral thesis on SXY's desk. He served as a doctoral supervisor at the Institute for Advanced Study at Tsinghua University. The student he was advising suddenly became interested in entrepreneurship in his second year and quietly opened a company with his classmates. After a while, the student felt that his interest was still in scientific research and he returned to continue his studies.

Compared with himself back then, today's young people have too many choices. SXY thinks this is a good thing. "I feel that there is always a need for some people in the world to do basic research. There is always a place where some people want a longer-term future. I also don't think there needs to be that many people. I don't think most people are suitable for doing it.

Such a job, if you can cultivate a good environment, and then let them do 10, 20, 30 years, then there will be a lot of happiness," he said with a smile.

Shen Xiangyang has already been working at Microsoft for 20 years. He is not pessimistic about the departure of old colleagues. "I don't think that many years later, Microsoft Research should still be the only successful computer organization in China, because this is impossible. Maybe we will train more talents to go to local companies, go to local universities, or go to startups. This is very normal. I think there is only one thing that is important to us: Microsoft Research is able to innovate constantly, continue to do the most amazing things, and still be a place to attract talents to do research. If you want to go out and start a startup, I can't convince you not to start a business, because this is a matter of life choice, but for those who want to do research and want to have an impact on world-class products and society, if Microsoft Research Asia is not the best place, then we need to do some soul-searching."

The scenery outside the MSRA can also be seen in the KFL's Sinovation office, but he rarely has time to sit here. The "People" reporter completed the remaining interviews in his car. The car stopped and started on the Third Ring. 18 years ago, he thought that the future would be monopolized by Microsoft and Intel. "Now my views are different. The movement of technology is too fast." After leaving Google, Kai-Fu Lee founded Sinovation Ventures. He likes to deal with young people. Some of the project teams they invest in will come to the Sinovation office to eat and work together. "With them, this atmosphere is very similar to that of the institute back then," KFL said.

How to be the Best Research Institute

Today, most of the people who choose to work at the institute are those who are truly interested in basic research, are willing to quietly study their own subjects, and do not care about the changes of the outside world. Microsoft has provided them with a good environment to ensure that they are not disturbed. When the "People" reporter visited, the Microsoft build had just finished renovations, and the researchers had huge work stations beside the floor-to-ceiling windows. This was to allow them to enjoy better light and bring inspiration for research, while the leaders' rooms were in the interior with less light.

Zhou Ming is among the people who participated in the founding of the institute, and there are relatively few of those people who remain there. He always talks slowly and looks unhurried. Here, what he is proud of, in addition to Microsoft Xiaolce and Xiaona which he's been involved in researching and developing these recent years, are the more than 500 students who were trained in his natural language group. "These 500 are very impressive now, either the company's CTO, or VP, or professor, dean, deputy dean. When the students came to do their internships here, they would ask me right away, teacher, where should I go find work in the future. I said how is this a problem? When you go look for a job, all you have to say is that you

have interned here, in the natural language group of Microsoft Research. It's never been the case that someone couldn't get an offer."

Many companies have invited Zhou Ming (to work for them), but when he asked him if he could still continue to do natural language understanding, "Other would say, why are you still doing this thing? You can go do big search, social network, or you can help our company make money, then I would think it's not very suitable. So I thought that since I can't stick to my direction, I would rather not go. I have to stick to my own direction. This world doesn't lack a certain VP, or a CTO, but the world may lack a particularly solid, decades-long natural language understanding person. This is perhaps my opportunity... everyone works hard together to make the field better, so make this industry successful. Then, seeing everyone thrive, isn't this the initial intention of setting up the research institute? This is a good thing. We have both created history and witnessed history." His thoughts represent the choice of basic research, rather than the majority of scholars who are have thrown themselves into the hot Chinese market.

Hsiao-Wuen Hon is the fourth president of the institute. Unlike the first three, after he was promoted to Microsoft's global vice president, he remained in China, stayed at the institute, and concurrently held the position of chairman of Microsoft Asia Pacific R&D Group. People often joked to him and said, "How has it been so long and you are still at the research institute?" In his opinion, research is the happiest job.

18 years ago, Hsiao-Wuen Hon, a voice expert at Microsoft headquarters, flew to Beijing as a to help the newly established China research institute recruit talents. In 2004, he moved to Beijing and officially joined the institute in China. When he took over the dean position from SXY, Hsiao-Wuen Hon was about to lead a research institute that had just passed the rapid growth of "Golden 5 Years". "18 years ago, to do the most original innovations, Microsoft may have been the only choice; after 2007 and 2008, there will be more choices, so Microsoft needs to consider how to continue."

He can understand that the flow of talent is a natural thing, and he decides to endure loneliness and continue to do basic research. This patience comes from John McCarthy, his mentor's mentor, and the father of AI. "As for today's extreme hype over artificial intelligence, it was actually my mentor's mentor who put forward this concept," Hsiao-Wuen Hon told the "People" reporter. It just happens to be the 60 year anniversary for when the concept was first put forward. "60 years, a *jjazi*." John let Hsiao-Wuen Hon see that "it's possible that the thing someone is working very hard on today will be popular again decades later...", "Without the cultivation of people who came before, how can there be today's AI, so you can't say that today's AI is hot, so everyone should not do basic research. Where is the foundation 60 years later?" he said to the "People" reporter.

When he returned to the US headquarters recently, Hsiao-Wuen Hon participated in an informal gathering organized by Gates. Talking about China's current wave of technological innovation, Gates said that after World War II, the United States supported more than 70% of the world's

innovation. If China wants the world to change for the better, China must be able to bear the burden for an equivalent degree of innovation. This is also one of the objectives of his founding Microsoft Research China. It is also one of the reasons why Chinese companies such as Huawei, Didi, Alibaba and other Chinese companies, after enjoying rapid development, have realized the importance of research institutes and basic research.

"The world 18 years ago is very different from the present. In 1998, the Internet just started up. Most people don't have Internet. Let's not even talk about the Internet, even PCs were not that popular in China. 18 years ago, all the things you see now, including this office, did not exist." said Hsiao-Wuen Hon, sitting in the office on the 14th floor of the Microsoft building in Zhongguancun. Many local companies want to know the reason behind why MSRA can run a good research institute and retain talents. Hsiao-Wuen Hon, looking out the window, says he thinks that the today's institute is benefiting from Gates' tolerance, kindness, mind and vision for talent. And what he wants to do now is let the institute have the best research environment in China. In 2014, Microsoft's new CEO Satya Nadella took over and Microsoft began to change internally. According to media reports, he often said to employees, "I want to come out with things that users like," Microsoft began to break away from and abandon the old thinking of "Windows-only" as soon as possible, becoming a huge data center for the global web, providing a wide range of network services to corporate companies and individuals. At the beginning of June this year, Satya came to Beijing to talk about a lot of content related to open source. In the past, this would have been almost impossible to imagine for Microsoft. "Today's world is a mobile-first, cloud-first world," Hsiao-Wuen Hon said. "Now Microsoft is definitely more open than it was many years ago."

Not long ago, people who had left MSRA had a party in Beijing. This was SXY's idea. This year was the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Microsoft Headquarters research institute, and celebrations were organized by alumni associations of the institute around the world. SXY thought that China must also have one, but he was too busy, so he entrusted Li Shipeng, who had just left the research institute last year, to organize it. There were a total of 50 people who attended that party. Some came from outside China, even taking a special trip from the states to make it to the party. Some people had not seen each other for 10 years, even those who were all in Beijing, in Zhongguancun. These people who had been doing research and playing cards with each other every day now had very few opportunities to get together again, most only meeting in a rush during industry conferences.

Hsiao-Wuen Hon also attended the party as the fourth dean of the institute. In the face of these old colleagues who left, he didn't know what to say at first. Standing on the stage, he could feel how that kind environment of the institute had helped all these people, so in the midst of this he naturally said: "Some people have left for a few years, some people have just left. What I can guarantee is that our group of people will still be here dedicated to scientific research and innovation. We are not a product department, and we are not a university, but we are a solid unit. As long as the research institute exists, there will be a group of people with dedicated hearts, who continue to do research and innovation in this area."