**Ren Zhengfei's Interview with Le Point**

June 18, 2019

**Q1: Let's start from your childhood, especially your experience in Guizhou. Today, Huawei is a beautiful, modern company. But I want to learn more about your past.**

**Ren:** I grew up in Zhenning County, Guizhou Province, where I lived throughout my elementary school and until the second year of my middle school. This small town's population is mainly made up of minorities. Today, it has become a tourist destination and the customs of the local people are one of the reasons the town attracts so many tourists. But, back in the old days, we had experienced very impoverished conditions there.

**So you suffered when you were a child?**

**Ren:** Of course, we lived in poverty. But we were very happy then, because we didn't know that French bread was delicious. I never left this small town until I grew up. The area in which my entire life took place wasn't more than 15 kilometers in diameter. We had no comparisons with the outside world, and we didn't have any idea of what happiness should be, so we were quite happy then.

After the second year of my middle school, my father was transferred to Duyun, a central city in another area that mainly had a minority population. I lived there from the third year of middle school to the third year of high school. In my eyes, Duyun was a very modern city, as it had a two-story building back then. Some older girls from my neighborhood took us to a local small department store, which was when we first saw a two-story building. We felt that it was amazing. Those girls knew more than us and taunted us for our lack of vision. How could we take Duyun as a big city? It was just a little bigger than a small town. After my graduation, I went to college and left Guizhou. I've never lived or worked there since.

**Were there times when you didn't have enough to eat?**

**Ren:** You should ask: Were there times when I had enough to eat? At that time, it was very normal for people not to have enough to eat. We were often starving, and it was rare for us to have a full stomach.

**Q2: Did you have any idea that you would be in the middle of a geopolitical war after so many years?**

**Ren:** Definitely not. Over all these years, we climbed upstairs step by step, without knowing what the second floor was going to look like. For this reason, I hope the Chinese education can start reforming, so that children in rural areas can envision what the second floor looks like and then climb toward this floor, step by step. We didn't have well-known mentors to guide us. We didn't have valuable resources to help us. We just kept climbing upstairs until we reached the second floor and were able to see the grand view ourselves. Nowadays, the Internet has helped greatly broaden the horizons of children in rural areas. Looking back on my younger days, children had limited horizons.

**Q3: Many are interested in your military experience. What was your job in the military?**

**Ren:** I served as an engineer in the military. The first project I joined was in Liaoyang, Northeast China, working to build a synthetic fiber factory that introduced technology from two French companies – Technip and Speichim. It was a quite large and modernized synthetic fiber factory in China then, with a high level of automation. See, this is my photo with a French engineer.

**Q4: Your daughter is still in Canada. How is this case impacting you personally and how is it impacting Huawei?**

**Ren:** Meng Wanzhou has not committed any crime. Canada's detainment of her is inappropriate. But we believe that Canada is a country ruled by law. If we present evidence and clarify the case, she will be released. We will wait patiently and go through the legal proceedings.

**Q5: The whole issue was caused by the fears of certain European countries and the US over the expansion of China. Do you think China is seeking expansion?**

**Ren:** I don't think China has ever sought expansion. China had remained closed-off for several thousand years. It is now reforming and opening up with the main goal of bringing in what's best from other countries. China is going global mainly in terms of commerce and trade, rather than in terms of political influence, and isn't seeking to spread its ideology around the world.

**The ships of the Chinese explorer Zheng He were three times larger than those used by Christopher Columbus. Due to domestic political intervention, Zheng had to turn back halfway during his voyage. As China opens its door and goes out today, will it turn back halfway just like Zheng He?**

**Ren:** The story of Zheng He is quite interesting, but the purposes of Zheng He and Christopher Columbus were not the same. At that time, China assumed itself to be the world's most powerful nation. Zheng visited many countries along the way, bringing them many gifts. Commerce wasn't his goal. Unlike Zheng, Columbus traveled across the Atlantic Ocean in search of treasure like gold and spices. Zheng didn't have a clear goal as a driving force, so he stopped halfway. Nowadays, China has clear goals for its reform and opening-up, which are to achieve economic prosperity and integrate more into the rest of the world. So China's reform and opening-up will not stop halfway.

Columbus's goal was clear: to search for treasure. This was his ongoing driving force, and he ultimately did find treasure. About 3.5 million ships sank during their trips between Europe and Asia. That was kind of economic globalization, which started several hundred years ago. Europeans hoping to find treasure and expand commerce have spread their languages – English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish – to almost all corners of the earth. These people have also spread their culture, philosophies, and industrialization throughout the world. Also, many missionaries have traveled all over the world to preach their religions, so there are Christians and Catholics everywhere. They have done this in hopes that the locals would identify with their ideology.

I'm deeply moved by the dedicated spirit of those European businesspersons. I also have great respect for European missionaries because they built churches in Africa's primitive forests and the Sahara Desert. Numerous missionaries crossed the oceans on small, shabby ships. When the ships finally arrived on the African coast, only several out of 100 missionaries survived. The death toll was even higher during their journey through forests. When they finally arrived at a local village, they stayed there, built a small church, and began preaching. They would never go back to their home countries because the journey back through the forest and across the ocean could mean death. If it weren't for the efforts of the missionaries spreading their culture in Africa over the past centuries, languages like English, French, and Portuguese wouldn't have been widely used to benefit this continent. Even now, developing a market in Africa is quite challenging. Yet when European businesspersons explored global markets and European missionaries carried out their missions back then, they faced even more difficulties than their successors do today.

I once visited a very remote village in China. It's called Pu'er Village, and it belongs to the Lahu ethnic minority group. About 100 to 200 years ago, missionaries brought a guitar to this village. This reshaped the local culture and turned the locals into music fans. I shot this video of the village last April. The missionaries have advanced the local culture and lifted this underdeveloped village to a new level. I can send this video to you if you want.

**This is great. Missionaries brought a guitar to this place, while Chinese people are bringing 5G to the world.**

**Ren:** It is what will happen next. Then, musicians all over the world can play the same song at the same time through ultra-low latency 5G networks.

**Q6: Huawei is an amazing company, which has grown so rapidly in such a short time. It has a decentralized authority system but is still based on collective decision-making. If I may ask, what gets you out of bed in the morning?**

**Ren:** I want breakfast so I can't sleep any more. We adopt a system of delegating authority level by level but with centralized oversight. It gives people who can hear the "gunfire" the authority to call for resources. We also account for the costs of these resources.

**Q7: The West is now scared of China. You said China has never sought expansion, and this has been proved true in history. Do you understand the anxiety when the West is discussing China?**

**Ren:** The US is exaggerating the geopolitical influence of China. Such exaggeration, coupled with the fact that many Westerners have never come to China, has resulted in misunderstandings. China isn't capable of deploying warships anywhere around the world like the US does. Personally, I think China is building a defense system. China is scared of the US, not Europe.

**Why do you think China is scared of the US?**

**Ren:** The US wants to rule the world, whereas European countries maintain political diversity and aren't aggressive. European countries are keen on making more money while Chinese people want to buy more luxury goods from Europe. We Chinese welcome European companies to make money in our country; otherwise we have to fly to Paris to go shopping. China has been lowering tariffs on luxury goods, which is a sign of welcome for European goods. China and Europe complement each other economically. China needs Europe and vice versa.

Thanks to China's "Belt and Road" initiative, European products can come to China, and China can export products to Europe. If we run out of fuel halfway, we can refuel in the Middle East or Central Asia, which are our energy hubs. As a result, an economic block will form to connect Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East. If China builds a free trade zone with Japan and South Korea, then the economic block will be much larger than the US in terms of GDP. When this happens, the US will find it hard to rule the world, and that's why they don't want to see countries in this block working together.

**Q8: You mentioned at the meeting yesterday that Huawei is ready to sign "no-backdoor, no-spy" agreements with other countries. Is Huawei ready to sign such an agreement with France?**

**Ren:** Sure, anytime.

**Have you ever met President Trump before?**

**Ren:** Why should I meet him? I would like to meet President Macron.

**The Chinese government has issued the *National Intelligence Law*, which requires companies to cooperate in national intelligence work. Considering this law, how can you sign such an agreement with France?**

**Ren:** We can try [if you don't believe it's possible]. We can sign such an agreement with French companies, and we can also ask the Chinese government to sign such an agreement with the French government.

**Q9: Can you describe your own or Huawei's relations with the Chinese government? Some think that Huawei has developed so rapidly because of support from the Chinese government.**

**Ren:** We are subject to Chinese laws in China and pay taxes to the Chinese government in compliance with the law. As a company, we make independent business decisions. We haven't received even a penny of capital from the Chinese government. Our annual reports were audited by KPMG. Here is our *2018* *Annual Report*.

**Q10: Apart from capital, if the central government requested you to submit the information you have obtained from your routers or network equipment, how could you decline such a request?**

**Ren:** First, we are always responsible for our customers. Second, the Chinese government has never asked us to do that.

We only sell customers bare equipment, like water pipes and taps. Device products are like taps and connectivity equipment is like water pipes. The stuff flowing through them, whether water or oil, is decided by information systems. The systems are controlled by carriers themselves, not us. So we have no access to data, and we promise we have never installed backdoors. I hope you can interview US companies and ask them to sign the same "no-spy" agreements with the French government as Huawei.

**You don't think Google or Facebook can make that promise?**

**Ren:** I don't know.

**How about Cisco?**

**Ren:** I have no idea either.

**Q11: Have you ever wanted to access customer or user information for business purposes?**

**Ren:** Why would I do that?

**Because information is as important as oil in the 21st century.**

**Ren:** Oil is of no use to us. What we need is petroleum, but we can buy that from gas stations. Similarly, customer information is of no use to us. What we find valuable is the information that is made public on the Internet and across society.

**Q12: What is the key to Huawei's success and what is the biggest difficulty you have faced?**

**Ren:** The key to Huawei's success is our dedication to creating value for customers. That's why our customers trust us. Even in such bad circumstances as we are seeing today, our customers are still buying 5G equipment from us. This is an example of customer trust in Huawei. The US is the most powerful country in the world. Yet, despite its harsh attacks on Huawei, customers are still buying products from us. This is the result of our years of commitment to customers and creating value for them.

What I worry about most is that we are too successful and our employees may become too complacent to take hardship positions or go to hardship regions. Now, President Trump has energized us and helped remove this complacency from our employees.

**Q13: Can you tell us about your Hongmeng OS?**

**Ren:** We have thousands of printed circuit boards (PCBs) and each one must be supported by an operating system (OS). Huawei's Hongmeng OS ensures a fixed latency. The end-to-end latency is 5 milliseconds or less, with the possibility of being reduced to sub-milliseconds. With such a low latency, the Hongmeng OS is useful for IoT-enabled automated production. Take autonomous driving cars as an example. The gears within a car rotate with a latency of a few milliseconds. If the latency is not fixed, the gears can miss each other and will be unable to work together properly. The purpose of our OS is to enable a world where everything is connected and intelligent.

**Does this mean that the Hongmeng OS will be faster than Android or iOS once it is released?**

**Ren:** We haven't done a comparison yet. It's likely.

**Is this a business argument?**

**Ren:** It's a technical argument rather than a business one. Compared with Apple's iOS and Google's Android, our weakness is that we have no ecosystem around our OS. It's just a technical system that operates telecommunications networks.

**There are two parts to the US-Huawei issue. The first is about business. The US government wants to stop Huawei from exporting its technology and equipment to their country. The second part is about suppliers. It's about European and American suppliers selling semiconductors to Huawei. If both parts of this issue went wrong, which one would have a greater impact?**

**Ren:** First, the Hongmeng OS is not designed for phones as everyone thinks. We didn't develop the OS to replace Google's OS. If Google does not open its high-end OS to Huawei, will we start building an ecosystem around Hongmeng? We don't have a clear plan yet.

**Do you mean Plan B?**

**Ren:** No. The operating system was essential for networks to run properly. It was originally designed for telecommunications networks.

Second, if the US or some other countries choose not to buy our products, we won't feel much of an impact. Over the past 30 years, many customers have chosen not to buy our products. After the huge amount of publicity Mr. Trump has given us, there are actually more customers buying our products. That's because this publicity has had a huge influence. Our own publicity might not work so well, because some customers might not believe what we say. However, when Trump says we are good, our customers believe this must be true.

If some countries choose not to sell components to us, both sides stand to lose. Our sales might shrink, but so will theirs. Since Huawei is not a public company, we won't be greatly affected if our business results suffer a little. But if their companies release disappointing financial statements in July, their stock prices will fall. So both sides will be affected.

**Q14: Will Huawei consider forging alliances with some European semiconductor companies, because you mentioned the "Belt and Road" initiative? Is it a feasible plan?**

**Ren:** Definitely. As you can see, we are purchasing more components from STMicroelectronics.

**If the friction with the US continues, will you forge alliances with some European companies?**

**Ren:** Yes. We will buy more products from European companies.

**Q15: My uncle wants to buy a Huawei phone. What suggestion do you think I should give him? Should I tell him to buy one right now or wait and see how the US sanctions play out?**

**Ren:** There's no need to wait. In terms of photography, Huawei's phones are the best in the world and we have many other exclusive functions to offer.

**Q16: As you mentioned Huawei wants to build an ecosystem. How long will it take to build such an ecosystem?**

**Ren:** It will take many years.

**China has many powerful software companies, Huawei can also forge alliances with them. To be frank, do you worry that Huawei's position will be weakened?**

**Ren:** I think our company may fall a little bit from the top in the short term. But when our center of gravity becomes lower, we will be able to stand more firmly. When we climb the mountain again, we might reach an even higher point with more strengths than before.

**Q17: If Orange and Bouygues sign 5G contracts with Huawei, will you have any problem with equipment supply?**

**Ren:** Of course there won't be any problems with supply. Besides, our 5G equipment is the best in the world. No other companies will be able to catch up within two to three years. Supply won't be a problem. Our production lines are working flat out these days.

**Q18: Some people might think that European carriers are not rushing to roll out 5G. It seems that the only profitable 5G application is autonomous driving cars. Other applications seem to be less profitable. Is this true?**

**Ren:** I don't think so. Why did Europe develop earlier than China? It is because Europe developed its rail and maritime transportation systems centuries ago, while China was still mainly relying on horse-drawn carriages for transportation. This was slower than trains and could carry far less than ships. So European countries were among the first to develop their industry. When information transmission speeds increase, we will see incredible economic growth. 5G is at least 10 times faster than 4G, and faster speeds will drive rapid economic and cultural development.

**This seems like more of an argument that concerns governments. Carriers invest their own money, but they will not be able to see returns right away.**

**Ren:** That's not true. If carriers charge the same rates as they do with 4G when they switch to 5G, their profitability will increase significantly.

**Why is that?**

**Ren:** The cost per bit of 5G is one-tenth that of 4G, as is energy consumption per bit. While consuming the same amount of energy, 5G is 10,000 times faster than 2G. Advanced products should not be costly and should provide greater value. When 5G becomes widely used, you will probably find that the US is falling behind in this area.

**Q19: During my visit to Huawei's campus at Dongguan's Songshan Lake, I found you really appreciate European architecture. Do you think Europe should speak as one voice in regards to telecommunications?**

**Ren:** Let me start by saying that the buildings on our Songshan Lake campus were designed by a renowned Japanese architect. He got his bachelor's, master's, and PhD in the US, yet his English is not that good. But he's a genius. He's great at drawing and designed our entire campus at Songshan Lake. That's how the campus came to look the way it does today; it wasn't something we planned ourselves.

**Q20: Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asked a famous question, "Who do I call if I want to speak to Europe?" Who do you think can speak on behalf of Europe: Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, or someone else?**

**Ren:** I don't think there's anyone who should speak on behalf of Europe. Every country has its own interests and thinks from its own perspective. The EU just needs to strike a balance between all of its member states.

It makes perfect sense to locate the headquarters of the EU in Belgium. If the EU had been headquartered in Paris, then France would have come to represent Europe. If it had been headquartered in Berlin, then Germany would.

All European countries are seeking their own economic development rather than trying to dominate the world. Therefore, I believe Europe is a very valuable partner.

**Q21: You just said Europe has very advanced rail and maritime transportation systems, but many people say Europe has lagged behind in these areas.**

**Ren:** What I was saying was why Europe was able to gain global prominence more than 300 years ago. I wasn't saying that Europe has an advanced rail system today. Back then, Europe gained global prominence because of its advanced rail and maritime transportation systems, while China was backward because we still used horse-drawn carriages for transportation.

**An AI researcher said Europe has been erased from the technological landscape. What's your view on this?**

**Ren:** I don't agree with this. Europe was the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and has the "pearls" necessary to make a difference. It just needs a string to put those pearls together and make them into necklaces. Africa doesn't yet have these same pearls needed to make such necklaces; their pearls are in mineral resources. What I mean is that Europe has a very strong foundation in technology. Mathematics is the foundation of artificial intelligence, and the world's top two countries for mathematics are France and Russia.

**France has a wealth of researchers, but no French companies have become giants over the past 40 years, like Huawei, Google, and Alibaba have. What's your view on this?**

**Ren:** The pearls are still there, but they can't become necklaces by themselves. This is where entrepreneurs and the government come in to play. We use software from Dassault Systèmes in our production systems. Europe is still great. You can visit our production lines. After returning to France, you can interview Dassault Systèmes and ask them about their successful collaboration with Huawei.

But I do believe there is one thing that needs improvement in the business environment in France: Workers are being given too much protection. As a result, many entrepreneurs don't dare to hire anyone. That's why it's difficult to build large companies that can go global.

**Q22: Is the conflict between Huawei and President Trump about technology or about business?**

**Ren:** I don't know what's on President Trump's mind. I assume the conflict is mostly political. The US doesn't possess many communications technologies like 5G and optical switching. So there is no competition between Huawei and the US in terms of technology. In addition, no US companies sell telecom equipment similar to that provided by Huawei, which means there is no competition in products. We really have no idea why the US government is targeting Huawei. Nevertheless, what the US has done could help Ericsson and Nokia, so that means they are essentially helping Europe.

We are happy about that. Huawei's ideal is to serve humanity, but we don't necessarily have to do it ourselves. This ideal can also be realized if humanity is served by Ericsson and Nokia.

**Q23: None of Huawei's major competitors, like Ericsson, Nokia, and Samsung, are US companies. What mistakes have Lucent and Nortel made over the past 15 years?**

**Ren:** I don't know what mistakes they made, but I do know we have made a lot of mistakes ourselves. I am actually criticized every day. Our Blue Team has even published an article online listing the 10 mistakes that I have made. We are constantly working to correct our mistakes.

We are glad that Ericsson and Nokia are able to serve humanity along with Huawei in the 5G era. That means countries that exclude Huawei will still be able to use 5G. Like the appreciation I have shown to Apple, I also appreciate Ericsson and Nokia. Technically speaking, Ericsson and Nokia are our teachers. Switches were developed by Ericsson more than 100 years ago. Nokia was originally engaged in rubber and wood products, and produced the world's best mobile phones in the 20th century. They are both our teachers, and we respect them.

**Q24: There are several black swans in the lake outside. Is this because you predicted that Trump would cause trouble to you?**

**Ren:** I really don't like those black swans, and they are not kept by me. They always eat the flowers and grass on the lakeside, and destroy our garden, but I want those plants to flourish. I want the swans to eat the fish in the lake, but they always eat grass.

**There is a book about black swans that was published before the financial crisis in 2007.**

**Ren:** Yes, that's why some people put the black swans in the lake. The swans even lay eggs and have cygnets, and we cannot get rid of them. If I find out who put those swans in the lake, I'll ask them to feed the swans with vegetables after lunch every day, so that the swans will stop eating our flowers and grass.

**Q25: An economist once wrote a book, saying that China had been the world's largest economy until the early 19th century. Do you think the current rapid growth of the Chinese economy is only a return to its normal state?**

**Ren:** Over the past three to four decades, China has made huge progress. However, we still need to improve the quality of our development in order to make more contributions to humanity. In this regard, we still have a lot to do, and European countries, Japan, and the US are still ahead of us. It's true that China has a huge GDP in total, but much of this is generated from low and mid-end goods and China's per-capita GDP is still low.

I know that you've visited Guizhou. You must have seen that people in many remote places there are still very poor. The central government has been emphasizing that we must lift more people out of poverty. Governments at all levels have been striving to facilitate development and alleviate poverty. Helping people rise out of poverty is the only way to make them feel reassured and live and work at ease. When people can get richer, they will focus on work and development, and will not bother engaging in the color revolution that the US dreams of.

You may not have been to Tibet. I think Tibet has better traffic conditions than Shenzhen. It has great infrastructure, and its economy and people's lives have significantly improved. Under such circumstances, I do not believe there will be chaos. The Chinese government has put a lot of efforts into solving poverty problems in this country. That is the right approach. On the contrary, the US hasn't properly dealt with this issue. They used to relate poverty to race, thinking "White people were rich and black people were poor." But today, this is no longer the case. Many of the poor population in the US are now white. With the current trade war, the tariffs have actually increased the costs of daily consumer goods in the US, putting heavier burdens on the American people.

We all know that China's exports are already at the lowest possible prices. If these prices were further reduced, many companies would go bankrupt. Therefore, the prices didn't change after the US imposed tariffs. As a result, it is the American people that pay for the tariffs. If the US government cannot reduce poverty among the American people, there will be chaos. In contrast, it is absolutely correct that the Chinese government is determined to eliminate poverty.

**Q26: I've noticed that Huawei has adopted a unique governance system with the separation of powers. Which do you think can get people out of poverty: the socialist system or the capitalist system?**

**Ren:** I think Deng Xiaoping designed the foundation of China's system when he adopted the reform and opening-up policy, and that is "socialism with a market economy". Socialism emphasizes the concept of fairness, which was mistakenly understood as equalitarianism in China in the past. In fact, fairness in a socialist society means more pay for more work. In other words, people who contribute more should receive more. For example, suppose you and I are carrying bags at the dock, and you can carry three bags every time as you are tall and strong, while I can only carry one because I'm old. In this scenario, your income should be three times as much as mine. But however strong you are, you can never carry five bags at once. Physical differences between people are not without limits. However, in a capitalist system, there are no limits for income gaps. You may have 10 billion US dollars while I only have 100,000. If our profit margins are both 10%, you will earn a profit of 1 billion US dollars, while I can only earn 10,000. So huge wealth gaps are created due to capital leverages, rather than differences in labor.

Deng Xiaoping thought that the basic principle of China's socialist society should be more rewards for more work, but we need to take the path of a market economy to achieve that. A market economy will surely have capital leverages, so China must ensure checks and balances between capital and labor. Who should be responsible for this? The government. They should make reforms to maintain the balance. When China started its reforms, its economic foundation was extremely poor. What was the first thing to be changed? It was the value distribution system. You could try to imagine how many conflicts and struggles would explode into life when you attempted to change the value distribution system for such a large population. Therefore, China needed a strong government to take control, preventing the country from falling into chaos. So Deng Xiaoping proposed the Four Cardinal Principles, insisting on reform, opening-up, and development while preventing chaos. Only a strong government could do that and control the direction and pace of reforms. When governments at lower levels were too slow or came to impasses in reforms, Deng Xiaoping said they could "be braver and walk faster". When reforms were too fast and conflicts arose, he just guided them to go more slowly while following the Four Principles. After three decades of exploration like that, China has now made the shift.

Where does the national capital come from? It's from the people. How can the government give the money back to the people? This can be done by building infrastructure like high-speed railways and highways. Can the government earn money by building high-speed railways in Tibet? You can think about that. Capitalists wouldn't invest in such projects. China is building highways, high-speed railways, and other infrastructure on a large scale and at a high speed. This is being driven by the government and it's the people who benefit. These efforts have helped to balance the conflicts between different strata. Therefore, China did not experience the color revolution that the US dreamed of.

**Q27: I think politics plays an important role in Huawei's business. When I came here via Hong Kong, I saw the demonstrations. The world is gradually splitting. Trump doesn't believe in China or China's system. At the same time, the Chinese people don't believe in Western media. Will this lead to a divided world?**

**Ren:** I don't engage in politics, so I don't know. You may ask me technical questions instead.

**Q28: Just now you mentioned education. What do you think children should learn? General knowledge or mathematics and IT?**

**Ren:** There are now several systems of education. In Northern Europe, there are almost no tests, so children can grow up with joy. Children in these countries can determine their development direction when they find out what they like. Although the Nordic countries are relatively small, many big companies, including Ericsson, Nokia, ABB, and Equinor ASA are based there. This is proof that their education system is successful. China is such a large country that it is really difficult to determine who is talented. Therefore, China has set different levels of tests. These tests can turn the children into "little nerds" and they lose their creativity. But a small number of those who make it through are geniuses.

**What do you recommend parents teach their children? Something like programming or mathematics?**

**Ren:** I think the most important thing is to give full play to a child's talents. We don't know in which areas children will be able to develop the best. So children should discover their own talents and set out on the right path early. In this way, children can grow effectively. Unfortunately, some parents don't know their children at all. To give you an example, this lady's husband majored in electronics, but it wasn't until he turned 50 that he realized he was a talented artist. You may go upstairs later and take a look at a painting he donated to the company. It is a copy of Napoleon's coronation at the Louvre. It was painted shortly after he started to learn painting. If he could have leveraged this talent from an early age, he might have grown into a famous painter. Therefore, children must find their best direction of growth, and move in that direction to avoid wasting their energy.

**It might have been quite late when you discovered your talents. You majored in architecture right? But you became successful anyway.**

**Ren:** At that time, I lived in a remote, mountainous region. I had no idea what the wider world looked like, and no one gave me any advice on it. So I didn't have the chance to discover my talents when I was young. Now that the Internet is so developed, children have much broader horizons, and they should quickly discover their talents. Therefore, the information society has been a great catalyst for the progress of humanity.

**Are there any writers or philosophers whose books really inspired you?**

**Ren:** There are so many. Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Mencius, and many French philosophers.

**Are there any inventors, scientists, or creators that you particularly admire?**

**Ren:** I admire all of them. Their inventions, big or small, have all represented great contributions to humanity. We cannot use a scale to measure people's contribution to society. Just like rescue and disaster relief, some people donate a lot of money, while others may donate just one dollar. It doesn't mean that those who have donated more are the greatest. Otherwise, the world would have never given Mother Teresa such amazing recognition. Therefore, when we evaluate a scientist, we should not use a scale to weigh their value. As long as a person has made a contribution to this society, then they are great. It is true that society will not always give you a medal. You could simply make one for yourself by engraving something on a radish, and then hold it to your chest. As long as you are happy, then that's enough. You have not only made a contribution to humanity, but also baptized your soul.

**Q29: There are now numerous emerging technologies, such as 5G, AI and quantum computing. Which technology interests you the most?**

**Ren:** First, it depends on how these technologies can create value for the future of humanity. Second, Huawei has limited capabilities and cannot be interested in everything.

**Q30: Huawei is playing a very important role in 5G, and there is no US rival to compete with Huawei in this regard. Do you think this moment is similar to when the US found Russia was ahead of them?**

**Ren:** Actually, we were aware of this issue years ago. A balanced world needs three pillars. If there were only China and Europe, the world would be unbalanced. In earlier years, we considered selling our business to Motorola. But when their new chairman took office, he dismissed this acquisition. Later on, we had plans to acquire Motorola, but this acquisition was rejected by the US government. Our aim was to create balance with three pillars. Now, there are only two pillars, which is unstable. This conflict will appear sooner or later.

**What are the two pillars you just mentioned?**

**Ren:** China and Europe

**What do you mean by pillars?**

**Ren:** Here, pillars means industries. This world needs to be shared. If the US does not take any share in this industry, it leads to imbalance, and the world becomes unstable.

**Why does the US want to prevent the spread of Huawei's technology? Do they want to buy some time to develop their own new technology?**

**Ren:** The wheel of time always runs forward. No one can stop it.

**Q31: It has been a tradition in Silicon Valley that a new king takes the stage after each transformation. IBM, Microsoft, Google, and Facebook have all been the king. When a new king comes to power, the old king steps down. Do you think Huawei has become the new king of the world for the first time?**

**Ren:** I'm not a lion. I'm just a rabbit trying to find a corner to hide in. I can't find a corner right now, and I don't know what to do.

**You don't look like a rabbit.**

**Ren:** But I am much less like a lion.

**Q32: Huawei was among the first companies to enter the African market. What do you think about future developments in this continent?**

**Ren:** Africa and Latin America are the two most recently developed regions. Most natural resources in Europe and Asia have already been developed, but natural resources in Africa are yet to be developed. I think we will see a new wave of development in Africa.

**Q33: Do you have any particular interest for France? Are there any French architects that you particularly like?**

**Ren:** The building that houses our Beijing Executive Briefing Center was designed by Jean-Marie Charpentier, a French architect. This is the last building he designed.

**You're a frequent visitor to France. Do you like French wine?**

**Ren:** I'm not much for wine, but I do like mathematics in France. Ecole Normale Superieure is a top university for mathematics. In the future, we will continue to increase our investment in France.

**In what fields will you invest?**

**Ren:** Our investments will mainly focus on R&D.

**Huawei now has five research centers in France, right?**

**Ren:** We will have more and larger research centers there in the future.

**Your France Rep Office now has about 1,000 employees. What will be your total workforce in France?**

**Ren:** I'm not sure about the figure, but I am sure about one thing: The number of scientists we have will increase significantly. As we gradually move toward AI-enabled production, we will not see a significant increase in our workforce, but we will greatly increase our exploration into future new technologies.

**Q34: Some entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley say that their ambition is to change the world, but you always say that your ambition is to make your company survive. Do you think they overstate their ambition or you are being too humble?**

**Ren:** If we were just 25 years old and we sat down for a cup of coffee, I would be as ambitious as them. Just imagine a guy was sketching a model on a napkin, and several others were talking about the structure. They were talking about starting their own business. This company later became known as Intel. Silicon Valley encourages restlessness, which fits well with young people. If they don't have passion or ambition, they wouldn't be able to succeed. I think I did the same when I was young. Now, I'm an old man. I have encountered many setbacks, and I now talk more sensibly.

**Did you think about all this when you were back in Guizhou?**

**Ren:** No. How could I have thought about this back then? When I was in Guizhou, all I thought about was getting out of my parents' control and studying in another province. When I heard that I could go to another province to study, I was so excited because I had never been out of our county before. I don't think it's a bad thing for young people to be restless. They could source energy from each other. There could be one to ignite the fire, and the one who ignites the fire can hire the others. I think the restless spirit in Silicon Valley should be advocated.

**Q35: You just said that in the era of AI, there may be less employment. Do you think everyone will still be able to get jobs in 10 to 20 years?**

**Ren:** Let's take a look at an example. When we designed base stations in Africa in the past, an engineer could design at most 4 base stations a day. However, with the help of AI, an engineer is now able to design 1,200 base stations a day. I once asked an engineer why the number was specifically 1,200. He said, "The contract contains only 1,200 base stations in total." This increase in productivity will help improve the quality of our lives.

With the help of AI, less people will be needed to create wealth. At the same time, more wealth will be created to support more people. If someone considers working to be necessary, they would study hard and then get a job. This will also promote the development of society. Income differences between people who work and who don't work will also be significant. If you visit our product lines, you will find that there are barely any workers.

**I think everybody would still like to work. But how could everyone get a job? Lifelong learning or minimum salary?**

**Ren:** The fears we have about AI may be similar to the fears people had about textile machines in the past. When textile machines were first introduced, some people even tried to destroy them. We are facing a similar situation now. How can we adapt ourselves to new technologies in the future? I don't know. It's still an unsolved issue.

**Could a good solution be to impose some restrictions on AI applications?**

**Ren:** I don't know. Currently, AI is mainly used to improve productivity, and it is not used in any fields that involve emotion.

**So you think some jobs can never be replaced by robots?**

**Ren:** Yes, of course. There are many jobs that can't be replaced by AI. For example, AI can't taste coffee. If you were sick and felt bad, and a robot came in and gave you an injection without any emotion, wouldn't you feel cold? In such situations, humanity is needed, and the patient's experience matters.

**Q36: What do you think Huawei will become in 30 years?**

**Ren:** I don't know whether Huawei will still exist in 30 years, so I can't predict what will happen. If possible, I hope you can visit us and have another interview in three years.

**If President Trump wanted to visit Huawei, would you welcome him?**

**Ren:** Of course I would. We could discuss how the world should open and collaborate for shared success. Maybe this would change his mindset.

**(Video interview)**

**Q37: President Trump said Huawei was an enemy of the US. How would you respond to that?**

**Ren:** First, Huawei has been promoting happiness and prosperity for humanity. How could Huawei be an enemy? Over the past 30 years, we've been staying in the front line to serve humanity. Huawei can always be found anywhere at any time, be it in war-torn or disease-ridden regions, or during natural disasters like the nuclear leakage in Japan. How could Huawei be an enemy? President Trump's thoughts about Huawei could be wrong.

**Q38: What is Huawei's goal? Satisfying employees, governments, or the world?**

**Ren:** We want to satisfy society and people, because our ultimate goal is to serve our customers. Who are our customers? 6.5 billion people, and possibly more in the future for more IoT connections. Therefore, we are committed to creating value for customers and ensuring we satisfy people's needs.

**Q39: Does Huawei have any plans in France?**

**Ren:** France is a country with a great investment environment. France is one of the most advanced countries in terms of math-related science and technology. This is largely attributed to Napoleon's national policies of focusing on mathematics several hundred years ago. The foundation of AI is mathematics. We will put more effort into the development of AI, and we will continue to increase our investments in France.

We've just experienced the impact of AI. Currently, Huawei's phone cameras are the best in the world. This should be attributed to the designs of French mathematicians. They helped us use math-related technologies to combine images. AI will develop in a wider range of areas and we need to attract an increasing number of excellent mathematicians to join us.

**Q40: What's your favorite proverb?**

**Ren:** Collaboration for shared success.