My initial impression of computers dates back to when I was still a child, no more than 10 years old. Computers, in my personal point of view at that time, were mainly for entertainment purposes, such as computer games.    I therefore failed to see the greater value of computers until years later.   One day, I accidentally opened a map editor of a game named StarCraft and saw a complex program, which literally controlled every piece on the screen.   Through that map editor, I could then see a whole different way of using a computer, that is, it could run powerful programs to carry out complicated tasks far beyond games.

Several years later, during the long summer days after China's College Entrance Examination, when I was considering what to study in future years, suddenly the old impression of the map editor came to my mind, and it drove me to seriously consider majors related to computers. With my excellent performance in the College Entrance Examination, placing 86th out of 170,000 peers in Jilin Province (similar in size to Florida), I was soon accepted by the School of Software of Beijing Institute of Technology, one of the premier universities in China.

Since my family is Korean-Chinese, a minority in China, the first year of my university life presented me with a significant cultural gap between the Chinese culture and mine, which gave rise to an identity crisis.   However, fortunately, these issues did not trouble me long as I soon found myself fully preoccupied by my major.   While working with peers to code various programs such as a FTP server, a lexical parser and a network port scanner, I gradually developed my enthusiasm for programming.   During the summer vacation of my junior year, I organized a team with several friends to participate in the Robocup China Open 2009, which was to be held in December.   We devoted the whole summer and fall to reading papers, discussion and coding, and in return, won 3rd place in the tournament.   Through this event, I acquired the chance to get a glimpse of research and experience the joys and frustrations it can offer, and more importantly, I discovered that my genuine interest is doing research.

During my senior year, I decided, headstrong, to attend graduate school in the United States to follow my interests.   I worked towards this goal and received several admissions. However, because of unfavorable financial conditions, I had to postpone enrollment for one year.   Being an optimist, this setback did not discourage me.   Instead of attending graduate school, I opted to go into the working industry for a year or two as I reasoned that it would afford me the time to gain valuable working experiences and some essential perspective in my field.

After a reasonable period of exciting job-hunting, I won a position at NexStreaming Corporation, a Korean IT company that takes the lead in global mobile multimedia solutions. Without knowing what a tremendous change I would go through, I started my life as a software engineer in Seoul, South Korea.   These working years were eventful as it has helped me further develop my capabilities, specifically embedded C/C++ & Linux, plus communication skills to arrange complicated tasks with many parties. During two year's work, I also gained a deeper understanding of computers and software systems, along with some perspective in this field as I expected. Additionally, I also practiced my leadership skills

as an organizer and manager of an amateur soccer club of twenty people on my leisure time.

However, slowly I have realized that my life and job were not what I am envisioning for myself. The career that I am dreaming about is a research engineer working on next-generation technologies and products which can bring about a large impact to the way people live. To achieve this career goal, a Master's degree is a must. Furthermore, as the first generation in my family to receive a college education, I understand how education positively affects the life of an individual. Witnessing the hardships, especially economical, that my honest and hard-working parents had to go through, I always cherished the opportunity of a college education I was given. This familial factor is also a strong drive for my pursuit of further education.

Though no one could foretell the future, I believe that when looking back at this crucial decision in my forties, I will be proud of myself since it will prove to be a wise one. My career goal, familial factors and primarily my great passion are driving me to undertake the Master program. Furthermore, my solid academic background and working experience have prepared me to strive for success in my graduate work.