“I won't go because my feet hurt.” Every time my family asked me to go mountain climbing, I would come up an excuse. It was a weekly scene when I was in a local primary school. “It can be the best way to keep good health.”, my parents told me thousands of times. But compared with playing video games, climbing is dull and exhausting, and definitely unattractive to me. But my resist often turned out to be useless, and I would be dragged up the mountains by father, cursing and yelling, if not cooperate. Even so, we practiced the ritual regularly, although I never enjoyed it.

It was until I studied far away from home in junior that I started to miss this activity, more precisely, the time in staying with family. The first several nights in dormitory were the most intolerable. On quiet nights, my eyes often blurred up the unfamiliar neon lights outside the dormitory windows. I felt I didn't belong here: strange accent, unfamiliar faces, odd ways of doing things. So every time I got back home and had the chance of climbing with family, I would be satisfied, and my previous wall of hatred melted gradually. It felt good to be with people who care about you.

The second time that I had a true feeling of home was when I entered room 305, the self-managing computer lab in high school. Thanks to school's loose management, we, a bunch of abnormals who had special interest in Olympiad in Informatics could spend most of the time in the lab instead of dull classes as long as remembering to take regular examinations. We had a huge blackboard for multi-functionality: countdown for our next trial, map for seats ownership, doodles of somebody(usually for mocking in good temper), and vestige left by previous generations. We had sufficient facilities: a large wooden guitar for improvisation, a never-washed cushion for napping, one portable armchair for laying in a comfortable manner when watching movies, several sets of badminton and ping-pong rackets, and an overloaded modem which guaranteed a one-in-five-seconds crash of network. And most importantly, we had senior students, who had earned offers to colleges after gaining medals in Informatics, reaching for help every time in need, though not always response with patience. Senior students seemed both admirable and formidable, some with gold medals and top awards. But as time lapsed, they proved to be extremely easy to get along with, and were willing to share everything from jokes to programming skills. We kept our “lineage” by inheritance from one grade to another.

When the oldest finally graduated and leaved 305, we were responsible for learning by ourselves. At first, everyone was wary of the others, because we were both comrades and rivals, for sometimes we had to fight for privileges which could only be given to some of us. At that time, there was a inclination to study in individual to avoid leaking some tricks or methods though by oneself. It was sad of me to find the home-like feeling faded under the stress of competition, and it had to change, for we could improve our skills as a whole more efficiently. In the beginning, I tried the method of setting common goals. For instance, every week, I would find around 20 problems concerning with a specific algorithm, order from easiest to hardest, and ask everybody to try solving some of them as an additional practice besides individual tasks. Some agreed to give it a shot. Since each one of us had others to supervise his progress and to compete with, everyone worked harder than usual. After the week, we all cultivated a profound understanding in that algorithm, and we enjoyed a lot. So this was transformed into a ritual every week. It seemed simple enough, but in practice we potentially broke the ice among each other day by day. Before long, 305 felt like home again.

When we entered senior 3, new faces of freshmen emerged in 305. This time, we knew our mission clearly: to teach, to enlighten, and to let them feel a sense of belonging. Giving lectures and making problem set made us exhausted, but I did enjoy helping those brilliant though sometime stupid students, who were like phantoms of myself years ago. And when they made some accomplishments and sit around a lunch table, complaining about what bugs did they ignore, or how they solved the problem in an unconventional way, I was satisfied. Sense of belonging would be even sweater if sharing it with others.

Yet there are people in corners of the world who have no way to acquire such sense of being a whole, who are segregated from their surroundings owing to objective circumstances like physical deficiency. A friend who had just recovered from a severe disease told me how lonely and despair was she when lying in the hospital, doing nothing, and how good it would be if there was an online community for disabled people like her, so that members of the community could connect with each other without having to bear the hood of “deficiency”. I had built websites before. Why not use technology to gather more teenagers who definitely need more help, instead of just influencing acquaintance around me? So two months later, we carried out cornucopians.org, the online community for isolated teenagers to battle with solitude via sharing, to convey that loneliness is the only real disability. Although currently it is only a demo, we will feel warm even by thinking of establishing an online community, a home, for others we do not know.

Thursday

[Conclusion.]

young mike → community (more doubts) (tougher, independent) → higher common necessary need(restill take charge) (resourceful) → broader range (conclusion lesson)