“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 were the most intolerable. It was my first time living in another place 200km from home, alone. The ladder was high. The bed was hard, so close to the window that I feared of fall off. On quiet nights, my eyes often blurred up the unfamiliar neon lights outside the dormitory windows. 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. There seemed to be a hidden power that made me safe and sound when staying with family.

But the effect of time lapse was silent yet powerful. Strangers came into friends. The fear for the unknown was diminished as my steps filled up the whole campus. Freshness became routine. I gradually established a similar “power” to the school. But looking back, I was passively influenced by the surroundings, eventually assimilated into them. And it took a long time.

The second time that I had a true feeling of home was when I entered room 305, the self-managing computer lab for Informatics in my high school. 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.

Throughout these years, I found the sense of belonging so crucial, not only to myself, but is an indispensable part of ever human needs. Moreover, we will be even more rooted, if helping people in the same community build up such feeling. After all, a tree doesn't make a forest. And by gathering more strangers together to shield against solitude, I feel more belonged to the world as a human being.