Please reflect on your experiences and personal development since your last application. (250 word limit.)

The day I rejected Tsinghua's offer and decided to take a gap year, my father asked me, “What was the happiest period of your life?” I contemplated a while on this weird question. Astonishingly, I found my answer was a “now”. Previous classmates and friends were going to universities with promising future, all except me. But it was free of guarantees that made me lighthearted, with so many paths to tread. And I could reapply.

Stanford has been my dream school for many years. The start was too complex to cover, but the first time I tried to create a connection was in junior 3, when I asked a friend who would pass the campus by to bury a bottle with my encoded message under an oak tree. I long for the prevailing “wind of freedom”, and diversity, two things nowhere to be found if I pursue in my nation. The next time I found myself closest was three years later, and was unfortunately in the 94% pool. But it was not the end, because the progress of dream-catching would never fail; it might only suspend.

I have grown much in the past 7 months. Most of all, I learned to take initiatives, and to pick my own route. I first planned to do an internship. So I applied to IT companies, although normally high school graduates are ineligible. Through contacts and interviews, I proved my ability and passed the test. But visiting the company, I hesitated because I did not want to be constrained in a narrow field at so early an age. Instead, I contacted two other college graduates, and we started a game studio from scratch. Game making was always my childhood wish, and it was a good idea for me to realize it in this sparing year. I am happy to find the control of destiny is again in my hand. The reality and dream are integrating into one.

+transition, development in mind, chongzu