Mike Li

REA Stanford Application

Current word count: 289 (max 250)

TOEFL: 115

SAT I: 2210

*Prompt: 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?” After contemplating this weird question for a while, I found my answer was “now”. Classmates and friends were going to universities with seemingly steady futures. But being free of guarantees with so many paths to tread, I felt like an escaped fugitive.

Stanford is one of the paths I've been taking. The first time I linked with Stanford was in junior 3, when I asked a friend who would pass by the campus to bury a bottle with my encoded dream message under an oak tree. On the lid labeled “date to open Sept. 2013.” The rejection last year implied the date might be wrong, but it was not the end, because the progress of dream-catching would never fail; it would only suspend.

Another thing I've always wanted to do is to put what I learn into creation, so I applied for internships. Although I passed the test and managed to get offers from Microsoft and Alibaba, upon visiting the company, I found it far different from what I conceived. Their work was constrained in a narrow research field, so I passed the offers, seeking real freedom of creation.

Later, I found two other college graduates with my same passion for game making, and we built the game studio C2. Life was hard at first in the rented 50m2 apartment, planting huge devices, setting productive goals and coordinating with other two who I knew little before. But it was the real creation, as we are the gods in the virtuality. It feels good to be out of shackles and be on my own control.