

Personal History Statement

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My friend tells me he studies mathematics to understand the universe, then he could understand life and eliminate the fear of death from his childhood. When young, everyone has her special, sometimes ridiculous fear, which often affects her future deeply.

My greatest fear of childhood was to *live inactive having nothing to do*. I found any playfulness of a game or toy would fade off some day and any ceremony would end someday, then I would be left with nothing to play with.

For me, *the process of growing up is the very process of figuring out my perpetual interest*, without which I feel empty and unsafe.

Science is the first candidate. Mathematical reasoning and physical experiments entertain me, filling me with joy. From a boy hanging around with scientific tricks to a undergraduate major in fundamental science, studying natural phenomena constitute the main part of my daily life. ¹

The second is computer technology.

My journey with computer began in my 10, 1997, when my hometown was still in DOS age. The machine seemed mysterious and magical at the first sight: a TV set that can interact with people. My passion suddenly ignited and soon computer became my closest toy. I learned various kinds of techniques of DOS and invented cool stuff, like tweaking a disk copy software to run on a low memory box. Those experiences granted me the first prize in computer contest for elementary school students. Later when I was 13, I got my own computer. I studied BASIC and Pascal on it and also elementary algorithms. I taught myself concrete mathematics to understand algorithms and programs deeper, and competed in National Olympiad in informatics. In the contest, I met with legendary GNU/Linux.

Entering university, I thought my interest in computer should stand on its own value, i.e., aid my natural science study, instead of being guided by contests. I investigated different areas of computer's application. The free software movement lead by Richard Stallman soon caught my sight. Its philosophy coincides with my value of freedom and the authors of free

¹This is my most significant value of life, but is already covered by my *Statement of Purpose* and I am not going to describe it here in detail.

software often have strong academic backgrounds. It is my fortune to enter such a warm, wise and free society. I discuss on mailing lists, report bugs and submit patches, advancing very fast. The position of computer in my heart promoted: It is no longer a toy, but a friend who can understand my thought and aid my work and provide a way to communicate with smart people around the world. With such knowledge and experience, I joined technology clubs and took part in server administration on campus, to follow the spirit of free software.

I have been using the GNU/Linux operating system for about 6 years, and I can feel my deep love upon it. I regard to free software movement as the starting of the a true human civilization. I admire the hackers of the technology, and dream of being a hacker myself.

The last perpetual interest I found is traditional Chinese philosophy and art. They studies nature, society and life as a whole. The Tai-Chi and Yin-Yang theories, having practical applications today and its own intrinsic value, are independent of science. They give people other angles of view to investigate and tackle problems, and often give solutions that can not be explained by modern science yet. I practice Tai Chi Chuan everyday. It is a branch of Chinese Kong-Fu which is based on Tai-Chi and Yin-Yang. That keeps me fit and gives me inspiration from nature.

I was born and was raised in the P. R. of China, but was educated in the “standard” western way, with the ancient Greek philosophical base and natural scientific view of the world, as well as the Marxism which politically occupying mainland China. However, I grow up in an atmosphere of Chinese culture, the true oriental one. Our present civilization is mainly western, so there will be more vitality once oriental culture emit its own light upon modern society. I am so lucky as I have the chance to take deep, at least reasonable, study of both the western and oriental culture, and gain some ideas not available elsewhere that might make breakthrough in natural puzzles and/or guide the trend of civilization.

At present, expecting to finish my undergraduate program. I want to carry on with professional study and research, armed with hacker’s technique and traditional Chinese culture.

It is my dream to introduce advanced computing technology and the essence of Chinese culture, if possible, to the community of natural science, and to promote Chinese civilization with my own scientific contributions. With such ambitions, I advance courageously without fear.