Dear Vicky,

Greetings!

I am sorry that my letter comes late. It was supposed to be sent before the Thanksgiving, but I was having many final exams. So I chose to wait until all exams are finished. I hope you can forgive me for this.

More than half of my college life has passed, among which I am idle for half of the time and busy for the other half. I have been feeling anxious recently, mostly because I feel I have spent 5/8 of my college time but I haven't learnt serious stuff. On a second thought, I don't know what the so-called 'learning stuff' is about. I started school when I was 5 years old, kindergarten, primary school, middle school, and university. Now I am thinking what on earth I have learnt. There must be some amount of knowledge, but I feel this is not the most important. Instead it is the growth of personality and increasingly mature outlook on life, society and value.

I grew up in the countryside, some of my friends dropped out in middle school not because their family was poor but that they were not good at it and did not want to continue. It gave me a deep thought that now when I reunite with them, I feel it is hard to get into the group, and there is even a large gap. This is not because I think of myself as educated. I understand that I am only reading a few more books and understanding more science, but I just cannot get along with them. I cannot understand or agree with many of their point of views. And similarly, they cannot understand or agree with my thoughts. I don't want to judge. For me, I am at school for so many years, where I am shaped to have ideas that are good for my development. For my friends, their thoughts are shaped by the society they are living in. I cannot say their values are wrong simply because I don't know the society. I am a student for so many years, and I am truly disconnected from the society. Anyway, I feel grateful that I keep studying and going to school. The improvement on my ability and value I receive from education and knowledge is irreplaceable. I am also grateful for people who have helped me. I cannot become what I am now today without their support both materially and spiritually.

I have the idea of going to graduate school when I started the college. At first this is only because I did not go to the top universities for my undergraduate. This is kind of embarrassing since my undergraduate degree is at a good university, but not a top one. Now my goal hasn't changed, but my reason has changed. I am studying environmental engineering. People in our department sometimes joke that our students will go out to sweep the street in the future. Once in a chemistry class, our teacher suddenly said that 'you always say that you will sweep the street, but have you ever thought that people who sweep the street need to get up at 5 or 6 am. People won't hire you university students to sweep the street anyway if you are not tough enough.' His words touched me a lot. Although sweeping the street is only a joke and we won't do that in practice, we did not learn enough knowledge so that we can get those positions with high salary. This is a practical question. I have great interest in this subject and would like to work on this subject. More specifically, I hope I could apply my knowledge in this subject to future work and life. So I think, in any way, I should fight for my dream and shoot for my dream school.

I wish you a happy and healthy new year!

Hao Liu,

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