**Bamboo Rod**

(12)

The collective perception of the term “**jook-sing**” has shifted from pejorative to endearing. For those of you unfamiliar with what a “**jook-sing**” is, it is slang used to express disapproval for Chinese individuals who have adopted a Western-centric identity (or a “**banana”** in pop-culture). Chinese for “**bamboo rod**”, the etymology of the word refers to the hollow and compartmentalized stem of the plant, implying the **disconnectedness** of the individual from both cultures.

The rejection of Chinese ancestry and culture is the ongoing struggle familiar to many children of Asian-immigrants. It is the **urge** to insert English into conversation after catching that glance from the stranger. It is the **reluctance** of letting on that I am a talented pianist. It is the **hesitation** of revealing that I am a competent mathematician. It seems that the more that my “**Asian-ness**” is stressed, the more that I try to push it away.

This involuntary reflex is rooted from growing up in two cultures. On one hand, I grew up in a culture believing that I must be White (or as close to it as possible) in order to attain social status, but **I am not White** inside or out because I actually prefer to eat with chopsticks. On the other hand, I am accused of “**abandoning**” a culture that was never really mine to begin with.

So despite the disparaging origins of the term, its premise is true. I am Canadian and I am Chinese, and because I am both, I cannot be exclusively either.