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# Inner Demons From Around The World

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People sometimes ask me, “Are you a half?”. I reply with a simple “Yes”. Most of the time it would be that simple, but recently I’ve begun to question myself and my international preference. Am I half-British or half-Japanese? I feel like I will eventually have to choose one nationality and live by their culture’s rules. Through this essay, I will break down my life experiences and find out what puzzles me so much.

First of all, I will explain why I am being troubled by a matter others may think to be insignificant to their daily lives. I first noticed this problem when I listened to myself speaking English and Japanese. When speaking in English, for example, with my friends and father, I talk with a confident tone and a rather cynical manner. “Outgoing” wouldn’t be the exact word for my personality, but I feel much confident than when I speak Japanese. When I speak to my mother and my neighbours, I talk in Japanese, or should I say I hardly talk at all. I don’t feel comfortable while talking Japanese, and I don’t know why.

As I’ve just explained, my personality switches with what language I speak. This worries me, as I am afraid of what effect this will have on who I am and what my future will be. From how I have worded my problems, I’m sure you think I think myself to be very much British. But my manners, habits and way of thinking have been molded by my time in Japan. For example, when I enter a house in England, I immediately remove my shoes, because that is common manners in Japan. Also, when eating, I feel much more comfortable using chopsticks, instead of western utensils such as knives and forks. Like this, I feel like a Briton inside, but what I project to the outer world is very Japanese.

How would a Japanese student reply to his teacher? He would reply with certain words that are established and accepted to sound polite to his superior; respect language. This is another major factor that divides Japanese and English, and for me, one of the biggest differences. There is no distinct respect language in the English language, therefore blurring the line between senior and junior and making everyone feel that bit more equal. In the Japanese language, however, there is a big difference between casual and respect language, even more so when using honorifics. This large gap between me and my superiors is something else that has bothered me from the start. In England, I had no hesitation when talking to teachers at school, but in Japan, there seems to be an unnecessary tension between student and teacher. While the teachers in Japan don’t necessarily expect more respect from their pupils than English teachers, but the Japanese

education system reminds students about the gap between senior and junior too many times to make it glaringly obvious.

Something else that kept coming back to me was the difference between two culture's sense of humour. While I have many Japanese traits, my sense of humour is very much British. I find sarcastic jokes about politicians funny, but when I seem to tell them to others they are often confused, as Japanese comedy is a lot more slapstick. For example, *The Mighty Boosh*, a British comedy series and one of my personal favourites, is a hilarious mixture of slapstick and witty jokes, so I think many people who are into Japanese comedy would enjoy it too. On the other hand, *Monty Python*, a famous British comedy show, would not catch on in Japan due to its heavy reliance on funny dialogue and mockery of political issues. This has molded my personality in more ways than I once thought.

The more I kept thinking about these pressing problems, I got increasingly lost. I'm molded by both British humour and Japanese etiquette, and that confused me to no end. The more I thought, the more I was grabbing through the fog, expecting to reach out and wrap my fingers around an answer in an epic realisation. Then, one day, I did realise. It was quiet, nothing too dramatic. My life was only just beginning, so who said I needed to control anything yet? I would keep living my life and learn to control my inner demons. I am still on a learning curve, and my life was still spread out before me. I still think over my problems to do with international preference, but I remind myself that instead of becoming one person, I will become two. When people ask me "Are you a half?", I want to be able to reply "No, I'm a double". So I'll let these demons within me fester and swell within me, and build up the willpower to control them. I have only to wait.