

## Snap Shot | Transcript

### 2 “Becoming Chinese” – a new social media fad

#### 2 d A Chinese jacket going viral

 Track 1

Suddenly, we’ve all entered “a very Chinese time in our lives.”

If you’re chronically online like me, you’ve probably heard that phrase before and seen hundreds of Chinese-related posts. More importantly, you’ve likely come across the viral Adidas Tang jacket on your Instagram feed. Unsurprisingly, Adidas China skyrocketed in popularity across the world from social media trends, causing young people to take international trips to secure the region-exclusive jackets. Naturally, I had to get one for myself.

As someone born and raised in Hong Kong, I took great pride in the new piece of clothing that hung in my closet. Its unique blend of traditional design elements with modern fashion can also be attributed to the essence of my home, a city that celebrates the past and present. It was a jacket that allowed me to champion my upbringing authentically, both figuratively and literally.

Yet, the next week, my algorithm presented me with the harsh reality. The rise of the Adidas Tang jackets led to a new wave of fashion trends that leaned into the Chinese “aesthetic,” rebranding Tang jackets inaccurately as a “Mandarin jacket” on Western fashion websites and selling them for profit without proper credit to the traditions that made it famous in the first place.

Exploiting Asian-inspired designs is not new in Western fashion history, and neither is the impact of microaggression. This expands far beyond the clothes we wear and post about. After years of anti-Asian racism, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, transitioning to the sudden influx of content creators’ acceptance of the Chinese lifestyle brought up mixed feelings for me. On one hand, I am relieved my identity as being Chinese isn’t something I have to hide, though it remains uncomfortable and tiresome to keep critiquing without any change, especially in terms of embracing cultural diversity.

Cultures are not temporary means to use when desiring 15 seconds of fame. They are meant to be appreciated through proper education and open acknowledgement of their origins. I’m excited that my culture is being viewed around the world in a more positive light now. However, claiming ownership over tradition and consuming cultural habits mindlessly is a step backward from creating an inclusive, supportive global community.

There is more work to be done collectively, but I am optimistic that the trend of “Being Chinese,” when treated with more kindness and understanding, could build long-lasting influence in how we appreciate culture appropriately. So, if you see me wearing my wine-red-colored Adidas Tang jacket around campus, please ask me about it. I would love to tell you more.