

Chinese People and The Expression of Love

華人和愛的表現

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One of the criticisms leveled by Westerners and, far more vehemently, by Westernized Chinese at Chinese people in general is that they don't "show love". In fact, this theme is enlarged upon in a very unflattering manner in more than one novel written by Chinese-Americans about Chinese-Americans. The gist of the criticism is that traditional Chinese culture doesn't value love and that therefore Chinese people are cold and incapable of feeling love.

西方人對華人的批評之一，就是華人“不表示愛”，而西化的華人對一般華人這批評更尤為激烈。事實上，美籍華人寫的、關於美籍華人的小說，非常不贊揚地提及華人怎樣不表示愛的，不只一本。批評的中心是，華人傳統文化不重視愛，所以華人冷酷，沒有能力感覺愛。

Sigh! That is not so! Traditional Chinese culture does value love, and Chinese people are capable of feeling love! It's just that first, traditional Chinese culture considers obligations, which are objective and are defined by the objectively existing relationship, to come before love, a subjective feeling, and second, because of the foregoing, Chinese people don't need to express love in the very demonstrative ways that Westerners express it. Traditional Chinese culture makes Chinese people secure in that should one day the subjective feeling of love towards them not be felt by the other party in the relationship, that doesn't mean the relationship will come crashing to an end. The relationship continues as long as one continues to fulfill one's relationship-defined obligations. Thus one expresses love by fulfilling one's obligations with all one's heart and soul. In traditional Chinese culture, in the novels, plays, and stories, what is sung in praise to is the behavior of fulfilling one's obligations with all one's heart and soul regardless of difficulty or sacrifice, while the subjective feeling of love is included in and expressed by the objective behavior. Traditional Chinese culture puts objective behavior first and subjective feeling second.

唉！並非如此！華人傳統文化確實重視愛，華人也有能力感覺愛！只不過是：第一，華人傳統文化認為客觀的、由客觀存在的關係而規定的義務為先，愛這個主觀的感覺為後，第二，正因如此，華人不需要像西方人那樣，用很富於表達性的方法來表示愛。華人傳統文化讓華

人們很放心，如果跟他們有關係的對方，有一天對他們不感覺愛，關係並不會因此就突然完蛋。只要堅持完成自己由關係所規定的義務，關係就會延持下去。因此，愛是用全心全力完成自己的義務來表示的。華人傳統文化裡，小說、戲劇、故事等歌頌的就是這種不管困難或犧牲多大都用全心全力來完成義務的行為，而愛這主觀的感覺，是包含和表現於行為之中的。華人傳統文化把客觀的行為放在前，把主觀的感覺放在後。

Therefore, Chinese don't need to always say "I love you", to always kiss and embrace in front of others, like Westerners do. On the contrary, Chinese feel that such things are creepy, like they are phony, part of an act. Chinese people fulfill their obligations and duties every day with whole heart and soul, with an attitude that's both reverent and joyful, and such is their expression of love.

因此，華人不需要好像西方人那樣，常說著“我愛你”，常在人家面前接吻、擁抱。相反地，華人覺得這些東西肉麻，好像是假的、演戲般的。華人們帶著恭謹喜悅的心情，聚盡全心全力來完成每天的義務、責任，這就是他們愛的表示。

So, yes, in traditional Chinese culture love is important, indeed very important; it's just that love is not supreme, not important above all else, the way Western culture has it. Traditional Chinese culture puts love in its proper place.

所以，愛在華人傳統文化裡的確重要，而且很重要，只不過，愛不是至上的，不是好像西方文化那樣，比任何事情都更為重要的。傳統的華人文化把愛放在適當的地位。

It's not just traditional Chinese culture that's like this; traditional Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese cultures are also like this, in a word, all the Asian cultures that have revered Confucius are like this.

不僅華人的傳統文化如此，韓國、日本、越南的傳統文化也如此，總之，亞洲文化凡是曾敬奉過孔子的都如此。