

Making the Chinese Face

When I was little, it was not uncommon for kids to make the “Chinese face.” By this I mean they would pull back the skin on the sides of their faces, stretching their eyelids back, and say, “look at me! I’m Chinese!”

That was a long time ago. At that time, “Chinese” still meant “Asian” to us. Since then, I’ve learned that that kind of behavior is considered rude and offensive. I’ve also grown up.

Recently, though, something made me think of that offensive “Chinese face,” and I started to wonder... what would Chinese people think of it? So I explained to my girlfriend that it was something that American kids used to do, although now it’s considered racist (for good reasons). And then I did it for her.

She thought it was hilarious. She couldn’t stop laughing for a minute or so. When she did stop laughing, she asked me to do it again. And then promptly erupted into laughter again.

My point is **not** that Asian Americans are uptight. Even though my Chinese experience is very different (and much easier) than that of an Asian American growing up as a minority in the USA, I can now much better appreciate how it feels to be a minority. You become super sensitive to every little way you are treated differently, but at the same time, no one takes much notice of jibes aimed at the majority.

I think that this little experiment also demonstrates that my girlfriend wouldn’t even recognize a lot of the more subtle ways that people are racist towards Asians. Growing up in China among all Chinese, she just never came into contact with it.

Da Xiangchang Says:

Asian Americans—in fact, ALL minorities in America—can at times be hypersensitive about anything they consider racist.

However, the Chinese face IS troubling. There’s an underlying message there: “slanted” eyes are not as good as “round” eyes. After all, you don’t make fun of something you consider BETTER—i.e., thin people make fun of fat people for their fatness, but it’s never the other way around. By making the Chinese face at an Asian, a white person is saying, “My eyes are better than yours.” This will lead to a

logical conclusion: “I, as a white person, am better than you as an Asian.”

Of course, Asians make fun of, say, Caucasian hairiness too, but let’s face it, it’s not the same thing. Again, you have to link everything to history: white people and not Asians created the modern world. So, of course, Asians, when being criticized by whites, would feel a more painful sting than whites being criticized by Asians. And whether he knows it or not, a white person, whenever he makes the Chinese face, is gloatingly reminding an Asian person of his “inferior” status in the world. Thus, the Chinese face is an exercise in asserting white supremacy. That’s why it’s insulting.

The solution, though, is not be hypersensitive about it. Ignore it for racial protests are incredibly imbecilic. Instead, for any Asian person, what he—or she—should do is try to become as successful as he can be. Cause only when everyone’s on the same level worldwide will racism—and the Chinese face—truly die.