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## **Council Kiss-and-Tell**

Jennings places ads proclaiming his love for Chinese dancer

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Many Chinese-Americans in Queens are scratching their heads, wondering why a city councilman exposed details of his love life in advertisements in two Chinese-language papers.

The ads, in which Allan Jennings (D-Jamaica) professed his love for a Chinese folk dancer while denouncing his estranged Taiwanese wife, caught several people off guard because of their intimacy and what many saw as the objectification of Chinese women.

The ads, which proclaimed him a "Councilman with a Chinese Heart," featured three pictures, including two with Jennings and a woman he identified as his girlfriend. Below the photos, Jennings thanked the Chinese community for accepting him and sharply attacked his wife and her family, saying they would not embrace him because he is black.

"My ex-wife explained this to me by saying she felt that other people in the Chinese community would not accept her because of her marriage to someone of African descent," the ads read in Chinese. "My ex-wife would never admit that I was her husband, and because of her view of things, we decided last year to divorce."

Jennings defended the ad yesterday, saying it was meant to show his strong ties with the Chinese community and his love for Li Yiling, a folk dancer.

"Anyone that is offended by that ad needs to see a psychiatrist," he said. "... And you should be careful, because if you are questioning the ad, then you are really saying there is something wrong with a tall and dark handsome guy who happens to have a Chinese girlfriend. That is sick."

Li, featured in the March 16 ads, told Chinese reporters this week that she broke up with Jennings "a long time ago." She could not be reached yesterday.

Jennings' wife, who spoke on the condition that her name not be used, said she was angry and shocked to see the half-page ad in two of the largest Chinese-language newspapers, the World Journal and the Sing Tao Daily.

"I was so upset," she said. "I was shocked and scared, because I just want a normal life."

Asked about the possible motivation behind the councilman spending \$1,800 for one ad, she said: "Hard to predict, maybe fund- raising. It's good for the public image, being close to Chinese people."

Jennings also proclaimed his love for Li, saying he was sad that they couldn't be together on Valentine's Day because he had to go to Albany. "On Feb. 13, we were together on the eve before Valentine's Day," the ads read. "A few days after I returned we were together enjoying our beautiful love."

Councilman John Liu (D-Flushing) said he has received several dozen phone calls from Chinese-Americans who expressed "serious concerns" about the ads. He said the reaction ranges from blushing because of the personal nature of the ads to a sense of outrage.

Liu, who represents the largest Asian-American community in the city, said the ads also portray Chinese women as a "commodity."

"I personally do find it somewhat offensive," Liu said. "This ad basically objectifies women."

A prominent Taiwanese-American businessman in Flushing, who asked not to be named, said Jennings is sincere in his outreach to Chinese-Americans, but added, "It's such a strange ad; nobody will put an ad like this with a picture and article."

Jennings, who says he has a Chinese stepfather and a stepbrother and stepsister who are half Chinese, said he placed the ads as a "bridge between the black and Chinese community. ... I have received nothing but a positive response from both communities."