



Tattoos?!

“Look, look! That person has tattoos!”

What do you think about Maui? What do you think about tattoos? Many people in Japan think that having tattoos means that a person is a member of the *yakuza*, the Japanese **mafia**. So, they think that maybe only bad people have tattoos. Most gyms, public baths (*sentō*), hot springs (*onsen*), and swimming pools in Japan stop people with tattoos from entering. I have also heard that people with many tattoos cannot get Japanese **National Health Insurance**.

Is this ok? Are all people with any tattoos, **criminals**? I do not think so! I want to show you that there are many different situations with tattoos all over the world. Maybe we shouldn't be so quick to **judge** people. Everyone is a human being with **human rights**. All people deserve basic **respect**.

Please read what I have to say. Then, tell me, what do you think?

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What is in
this issue:

Tattoo
Cultures
Around
the World

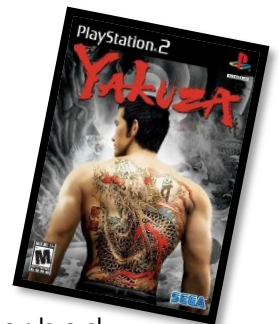


Types of Tattoos



Criminal Tattoos

Yakuza & Tattoo History in Japan



First, it is true that there are SOME types of tattoos for bad groups. For example, the *yakuza* are known to have traditional Japanese style tattoos called *irezumi* on their whole back. *Irezumi* is done by hand not machine. In the Edo Era (1603-1868), tattoos were used as a **punishment** for **crimes**. So, when a person did something bad, they might have to get a tattoo on their face or their **arm**. They might even get the *kanji* for 'dog' (犬) put on their face. There is a demon character in Demon Slayer: *Kimetsu no Yaiba* who was punished with arm tattoos as a human for **stealing**. In the Meiji Era (1868-1912) tattooing became **illegal**. It wasn't **legal** again until 1948, after **World War II**.





Gang & Prison Tattoos



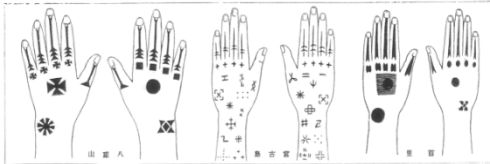
There are also **gang** tattoos in America as well. For example, for the very **dangerous** gang MS-13 in North, Central, and South America. These tattoos are very scary and hard to cover so you can never leave the group. There are also tattoos that are done in jail, called **prison** tattoos. These have bad symbols and are made in an **unsafe** way with **needles**. So, it makes sense that some people **fear** some tattoos.



Indigenous & Heritage Tattoos



Recently, many **indigenous** people from places all over the world are getting **traditional** tattoos again. Different groups have different styles, but they were **forced** to stop their special tattooing for a long time. This is because of the sad history of **colonization**. The **governments** of many countries like the U.S.A., Japan, and New Zealand stopped native people from doing their religious **ceremonies**, using their languages, wearing cultural clothes, and more. This **injustice** is still **painful** but indigenous people are getting their **sacred** tattoos now to show that they have always been strong and beautiful. Let's learn and **heal** together!



Okinawa Ryukyuan

Hajichi is a simple tattoo on the fingers, hands, and **wrists** for Okinawan women BY Okinawan women. It represents **womanhood**, protection from evil, beauty, growing up, and sometimes marriage. Each island had different designs. Okinawa has a **unique** culture from when it was the **Ryukyu Kingdom** (1429-1879) before becoming part of Japan in 1879 then being controlled by the U.S.A. for 30 years after World War II. *Hajichi* started in the 1600's but was **banned** by Japan in 1899. Nowadays, women with Okinawan roots want to show their culture, even from as far away as Hawaii and Brazil.



Hokkaido Ainu

The Ainu are the first people on the north island of Hokkaido and other nearby areas. They have a unique language, culture, and **religion**. They used to **farm** and **fish** and have **sacred** ceremonies with bears. Women received tattoos on their hands and lips for protection, beauty, and **preparation** for after death. However, Japan stopped this tattooing in 1871 to make the Ainu have a 'Japanese lifestyle.' They also took much of their land in 1899. In 2019, Ainu were finally recognized in the **law** as indigenous people of Japan by the Japanese government! I wonder if the tattoos will come back too?



The Keika Chronicle

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New Zealand Māori



The Māori are the native people of New Zealand which they call *Aotearoa*. You may have seen *haka*, a variety of **warrior** dances, which are very moving. The people almost lost the art of **traditional** Māori tattooing called *tā moko* by 1970. This was because of pressure and **discrimination** from outsiders. However, now people are bringing the **sacred** process back to life. Men receive face tattoos called *moko kanohi* and women receive marks around the mouth called *moko kauae*. Each design is unique to the person. It can show the person's **ancestry**, achievements, **responsibilities**, or place in their family. Now, the woman above named Oriini Kaipara is the first with *moko kauae* to host TV news. And the man named Te Kahautu Maxwell is a professor at the University of Waikato.

Native Americans & Canadians

The world-famous model and water & land **activist** named Quannah Chasinghorse has beautiful face tattoos. She received them from her mother who also has them. She is Raven **Clan** of the Hän Gwich'in **Tribe** from her mother. She is Sicangu/Oglala Lakota from her father. In **Alaska**, Hän Gwich'in women used to receive face markings (*Yidjittoo*) as a **rite of passage**. The tattoos are **lines** on the **chin** and lines or **dots** near the eyes. It is a very **meaningful** ceremony done by hand. Quannah is the first girl in 100 years to get these tattoos because U.S. **racism** was so strong.

Shina Novalinga is a TikTok star (@shinanova), a traditional **throat** singer, and an **environment** and **mental health** activist. She is Inuit and French Canadian and now lives in Montreal, Canada. You might know Inuit people as 'Eskimo' but that is rude. She and her mother received matching tattoos called *tunniit* in a traditional **process** called *kakiniit*. The tattoos are one line on the chin and two on each **cheek**. They represent beauty, womanhood, and can show **accomplishments**. It is rare and powerful to get these marks because for a long time they were **forbidden**.

Now both girls and their families are proud to show their **heritage** on their face everywhere.

Memorial Tattoos

Some people get tattoos to remember special events, dates, or family, especially people who have died. These are memorial tattoos. Sometimes people use religious **Christian** symbols like **doves**, **crosses**, or **angels**.





Religious Tattoos

There are many different **religions** in the world, and each has its own **opinions** on tattoos. For example, many **Catholic** leaders do not like tattoos, but many people have tattoos of **Jesus Christ** anyway. Some **Buddhist** monks in **Southeast Asia** receive **holy** writing as tattoos. So, each group and then each **individual** is different. However, be careful not to put **sacred** images on parts of the body that are 'not clean.' For example, do not tattoo a **Hindu** god on your foot.



Military Tattoos

Many people in the **military** get tattoos to remember their service. Maybe it is also because tattoos can help **identify** them if they die at **war**. Fighters have gotten tattoos for hundreds of years. Some people think that even the **Vikings** had tattoos. **Sailors** are famous for body art too. This is because they often got new tattoos when they visited new places on their **ships**.



Temporary Tattoos

Temporary tattoos are tattoos that do not stay forever. You can usually put them on like a **sticker** then use water to put the mark on your skin. Then, the design will stay for only a few days. This is a fun, easy, and safe way to try things out! **Henna** or **mehndi** is a traditional form of temporary tattooing from countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Afghanistan. People use a **plant** mixture to make designs that **stain** the skin for a few weeks. It is usually on women's hands for special occasions like weddings.



Fashion Tattoos

Last are fashion tattoos. These are tattoos that seem to be done simply for style. However, many people keep their tattoo meanings secret, so we don't always know. Many famous people from all over the world have these types of tattoos. For example: singers, idols, dancers, rappers, actors, and professional **athletes** in K-pop, Hollywood, and even **Bollywood**. Japanese **pop culture** is very popular for these tattoos. For example, Pokémon, Studio Ghibli, Sailor Moon, and Nintendo. Maybe it is easy to have so many tattoos because these people are in **creative** types of jobs. It still might be hard to have many tattoos at a **regular** job.



So now that you have read about many types of tattoos, what do you think?

