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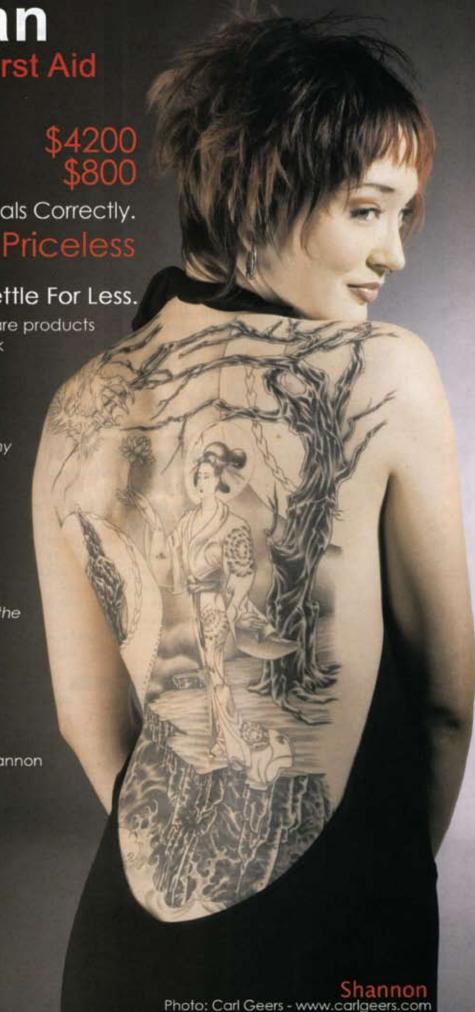
The tattoo healed in about half the time, it was amazing.

Now I use the lotion to keep my tattoo looking it's best. I highly recommend H,Ocean... I really do!"

~ Shannon



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#### COLUMNS

#### WHAT'S NEW IN AMERICA.

Here we take a look at reader submissions from across the US. Artists' can help promote themselves by sending in work that they think is worthy of being in a cutting edge tattoo magazine such as this!

## 2. COLLIN DELGADO TOP NOTCH ARTIST.

Collin has been practising Tattooing for over a decade and has achieved some amazing amounts of recognition for his efforts. Take a look at his Traditional Japanese Style and you'll be amazed.

#### 3. HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOO.

Japanese Tattoo has been around for centuries. Culturally Tattooing has walked a very different path than that of America. Take a look at this article to get an in-depth understanding of where tattooing originated, and how Traditional Japanese Tattooing was conceived.

ON THE COVER:
Jon Kramer was
photographed
exclusively for INK.
By Michael Thompson.





NORMAN "SAILOR JERRY" COLLINS AMERICAN TATTOO LEGEND 1911-1973 \$

SAILOR/

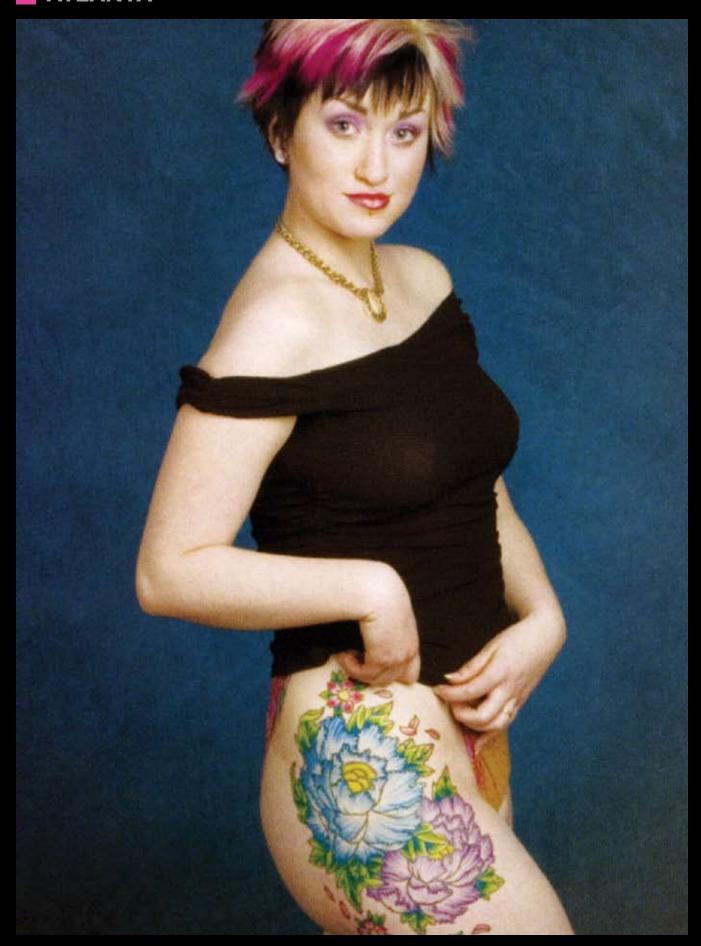


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# COLLIN DELGADO

Collin Delgado is a California native that is becoming more and more well know for his expertise in Traditional Japanese Tattoo. Collin first started tattooing over a decade ago and has developed his skills into a speciality art that he creates by appointment only. Collin runs his own shop in the International district of downtown Seattle with his college Jon Howell. Baraka Naga Art Co. has been in establishment for a few years now and recently opened a new website for appointment and portfolio purposes:

(www.barakanagaartco.com). Collin has also worked alongside well known tattooist, Grimey, in San Francisco, California. At right he is shown at his previous studio located in Pioneer Square, Seattle, Wa.





### **JON HOWELL**

Artwork By: Collin Delgado

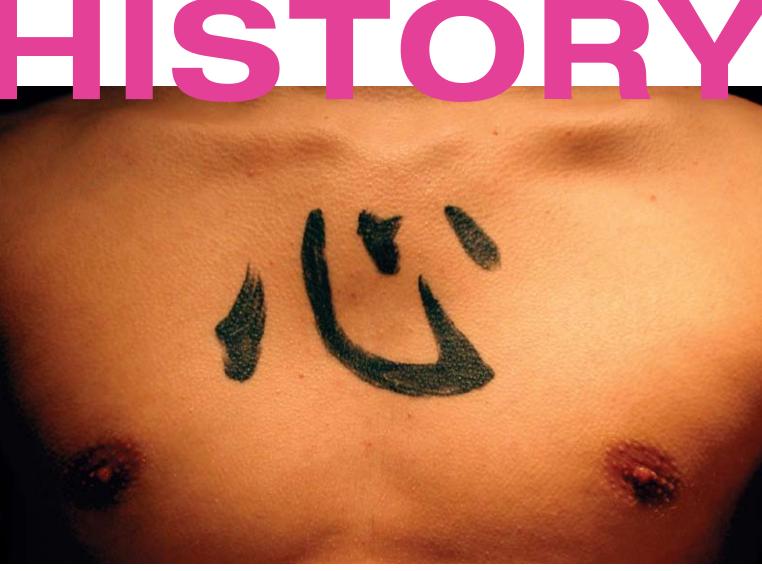


### JON HOWELL

Artwork By: Collin Delgado



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#### HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOO

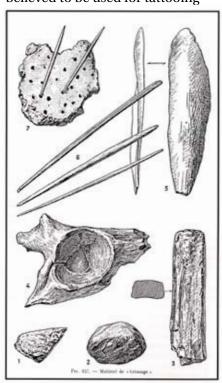
The word is traced to the Tahitian tatu or tatau, meaning to mark or strike (the latter referring to traditional methods of applying the designs). In Japanese the word used for traditional designs or those that are applied using traditional methods is irezumi ("insertion of ink"), while "tattoo" is used for non-Japanese designs. Most tattoo enthusiasts refer to tattoos as tatts, ink, art or work, and to tattooists as artists. tDespite the negative connotations typically associated with it, tattooing is slowly gaining more credibility as an art form in the West. As this occurs, Westerners look to Japanese tattoos as the pinnacle of the art. Westerners may be amazed with the detail and complexity of this centuries-old specialities, but in Japan, the tattoo

possesses a startlingly different position. The majority of Japanese people are strongly against tattooing. Tattoos hold a highly tabooed position in Japan. Due to this stigmatization, tattoos have strong effects on social standing and appearance. While current values and ways of thinking continue to influence the roles of tattoos in Japanese society, the strongest factor is the history of tattoos in Japan. History shapes modern opinions and fixes tattoos in their sociable niche.

#### ORIGIN

Injecting pigment into the skin for lifelong adornment has been identified as an ancient active practice of many cultures. In October 1991, a 5000-year-old tattooed man was found on a mountain between Austria and Italy. It bore several tattoos: a cross on the inside of the left knee, six straight lines 15 centimetres long above the kidneys and numerous parallel lines on the

ankles. Other archeological sites in Europe have yielded instruments believed to be used for tattooing





during the Upper Paleolithic period, and mummies unearthed in such distinct locales as Egypt, Siberia, and Peru feature various marks of tattoo. It was from Egypt that the tattooing art travelled across the world, to appear, disappear and reappear throughout recorded history. By 2000 B. C. the art had spread across Southern Asia as far as that part of China which lies south of the Yangtze Kiang.

### THE JAPANESE CONNECTION

Tattooing has a long history in Japan. From its earliest days, tattooing had a strong impact on society, whether organizational or religious. History seemed to have created many of the present-day attitudes towards tattoos. Tattoos can be traced back to the Jomon period in Paleolithic Japan (10,000 -B. C.) The people of the Jomon period were not ethnically Japanese. They were a race

of people who initially inhabited the islands. Most of what is known about the early peoples of Japan comes from Chinese records. The Chinese recorded information about their surrounding peoples. They trace the Jomon culture that could be linked to the Ainu, the indigenous people of Hokkaido. Ainu women have been documented with facial tattoos, especially around their lips.

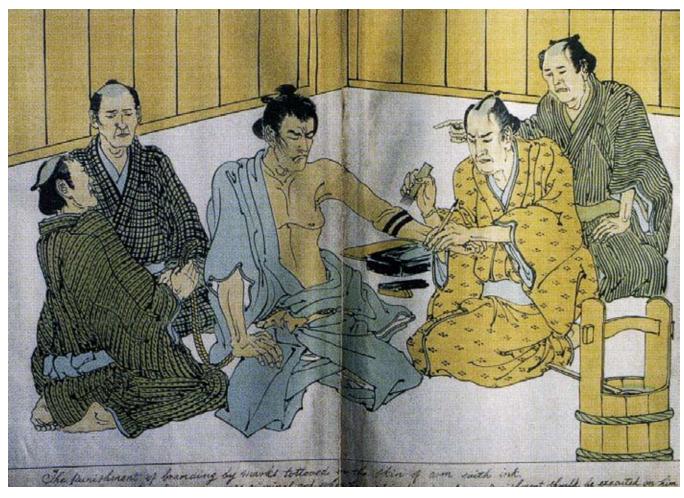
Following the Jomon was the Yayoi period (300 B. C. - A. D. 300). The Yayoi grouped themselves into tribes, with chieftains. Tattoos had their place in this society as well-to help ward off evil spirits and to delineate status. The Wa, who are fond of diving into water to get fish and shells, also decorate their bodies in order to keep away large fish and waterfowl. Later however, the designs became merely ornamental. According to this and other accounts in Chinese records, tattoos held an important position in Japanese society. Not only did the tattoos have a ritual

purpose, but also a hierarchical position. In order for the tattoos to assume ornamental or cosmetic roles, they had to remain an acceptable part of society. China on the other hand, believed that tattoos were marks of barbarism. Civilized Chinese would not submit their bodies to such desecration. Soon federations formed on the Japanese archipelago and they assumed the influences of China. With these federations and increased population came an insurgence of Chinese Confucian values. This period also marked a change in the opinion of Japanese tattoos.

The elite of central Japan, like the Chinese before them, were marking the eastern federations as barbarians because of their tattoos. Tattoos were beginning to assume a negative connotation in Japan, largely due to the influence of Chinese ideologies. The tattoo no longer had a religious meaning, but continued as a mark of social rank. Criminals were tattooed with symbols. People used tattoos not as marks of status and ornamentation, but as marks of retribution and punishment.

#### THE EDO PERIOD

Tattoos continued to receive negative implications up into the Edo period (1600-1868). It was during this period that tattoos really developed as an art form, largely due to the influence of wood-block print, or ukiyo-e, artists These print makers brought a great deal of complexity to tattooing. Tattoos came to take up all visible space on the body, particularly the back. This type of tattoo, called irezumi, took from two to five years to complete, and cost the equivalent of \$20,000-50,000. Images ranged from traditional themes and heroic characters to stylized and symbolic images such as carp, dragons, floral designs, and religious icons. Tattooing in this period was gaining popularity as an art but it was still viewed as a negative influence. In 1868, the Japanese government, being very sensitive to the way they were perceived by the West, banned tattooing. They feared that the West would associate tattooing with









barbarism. It was not until 1948, under the United States Occupation forces, that tattooing was legalized in Japan. This was largely due to the demand from U. S. military personnel. Many wanted souvenirs of the Far East. Tattooing was legalized to cater to their needs. Even though it was legalized, the Japanese government wanted nothing to do with the taboo subject of tattooing. Its negative connotations caused most Japanese to ignore it. Tattooing continued to exist quietly as an underground institution.

#### CURRENT ATTITUDES

With a firm understanding of where tattoos stand in a historical sense, it is now easier to examine current attitudes towards tattoos in present-day Japan. History is the overriding source effecting opinions towards tattoos in Japan, however, there

are other influences; namely religion and popular culture.

#### RELIGION

Religion in Japan has strongly opposed tattooing. Whether the Confucianism of Kofun or Tokugawa Japan, Buddhism, or the intrinsic folk belief system, religion considers tattooing wrong. Tattooing is seen as contaminating the body and destroying the pure symbol of good citizenship and filial youth. As mentioned above, Chinese Confucianism places certain restrictions on tattooing. Insiders further differentiate outsiders by associating them with tattoos. Only uncivil persons would mutilate their bodies.

Tattooing also breaches the Confucian ideas of the good citizen and good child. The body is a gift from one's parents, and desecrating it would be dishonourable. Tattoos are marks of barbarism and

punishment in Confucian society, and are used to distinguish bad citizens and criminals from the good. Tattoos not only branded one a criminal in Japan, but they also broke codes in the traditional folk belief system. Tattoos, associated with crimes and outsiders, were strictly taboo. Along with Confucianism, the folk belief system further thickened the stigma surrounding tattoos. Buddhism contributes towards this negative stigma as well. Tattoos are self-adornment, attaching one to the physical world. It also shows attachment to material goods by indulging in self-decoration. Nevertheless, Buddhism contains some practices similar to tattooing. For example, some monks, to complement their meditation, paint their bodies with the texts of sutras. Some Buddhists even underwent the tattoo needle to have ikebukuro, or tattooed



writing, inscribed on their bodies as promises to the Buddha. Religion casts a strong shadow over tattooing. It stabilizes various stigmas and attitudes towards tattooing. While religion associates tattooing with impurity, barbarism, pollution, infidelity, and self-indulgence, some aspects of religion might support a more positive outlook, namely Buddhism.

## POPULAR CULTURE

In the arena of popular culture, there are two areas that have had a tremendous impact on the role of tattoos in Japanese society; entertainment and organized crime. Both have led to further distinctions within the social definition of tattoos. Entertainment has popularized the current attitudes towards tattoos while organized crime has helped pull





tattoos further into the recesses of Japanese society. In the West, attitudes towards tattoos are slightly different, and this, too, could affect Japanese society. Organized crime is just as powerful as entertainment in moulding popular feelings towards tattoos. The yakuza, or Japanese organized crime syndicates, are symbolized by their full body tattoos and missing fingers. Because vakuza represent an underground, marginal, and dangerous sub-class, the majority of Japanese people have come to readily associate tattoos with crime. Japanese popular opinion links rogues and non-conformists with tattoos, for tattoos certainly lead to a life of crime.

### PRESENT DAY SITUATION

History, religion, and popular culture have all helped form the

image of tattoos for many Japanese. Because of this, tattoos continue to possess a very powerful social stigma in Japan. Magazine articles profess that tattooing is experiencing a powerful resurgence in Japan. They are wrong for the most part. Tattooing is still very much an underground activity. Tattooed people in Japan hide their decorations, and attempt to avoid the heavy burden society places on them. Tattooing is the activity of marginal people, and not the general populace. Tattooing is occurring more frequently among young Japanese nowadays. The types of tattoos that young Japanese choose to get, however, are quite different from the irezumi of traditional Japan. Irezumi still possess extremely negative connotations. The tattoos popular among young Japanese resemble American-style tattoos. The two types are referred to as "one-point"

and eccentric tattoos. One-point tattoos are small, single-sitting applications. The demand for such tattoos is clearly evidenced by the more than 100 one-point tattoo parlours in Tokyo alone. Typical one-point designs include samples from rock culture, animals such as butterflies and dragons, cartoon characters, roses, and various tribal patterns. Eccentric tattoos are for the more dedicated tattoo enthusiast. They are larger, highly detailed, and tend to reflect consumer input. They are a creative collaboration between artist and consumer. The images vary in size and design ranging from swirling tribal patterns to screaming demons and skulls.

Increasingly, young Japanese are seizing control of their bodies—they are not letting society control them. Tanning salons, body piercing, and tattoos are becoming more common at



alarming rates. Much of this action is due to change of attitudes caused by increased Westernization. As traditional stigmas are slowly forgotten, tattooing and other forms of individualization are becoming more accepted. But while this phenomenon is occurring, Japanese society still places a heavy burden on those who choose to partake in such individualism. Religion and images from popular culture and recent history contribute to the powerful taboo against tattoos in Japanese society. Above all, the slow assimilation of Chinese values into the distinctive culture of Japan has helped force tattoos into their lowly position.

Once a valued form of ritual and stratification, the tattoo has fallen to a symbol of crime, drugs, danger, and pollution. The events surrounding its own history have caused tattooing in Japan to receive powerful negative images. While this is slowly changing, tattoos have assumed a history—induced stigma in Japanese society.







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