

2 November 2004

Dear \*\*\*\*,

I found your work mostly easy to read, but I would suggest the following "do's and don'ts"

**DO NOT:**

- **Begin a paragraph with a conjunction, or by referring to "he" or "this".**  
A paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that tells the reader what the theme of the paragraph will be, and the whole paragraph should stand as a coherent argument on its own. You will find that I've frequently eliminated conjunctions that opened a paragraph.
- **Use sentences without actors.** That is, don't write in such a way that the reader can't tell who is performing the action, as in:

Throughout **the discussion** [what discussion?], **emphasis is placed** [by whom?] on the contrast between Japanese use of tattoos and Western use

- **Add a comma between the subject and the verb, as in:**

Belief in filial piety, promoted all action to be for the benefit of the family or associated group.

Michel Thévós, introduces the subject of Japanese tattooing

- **Isolate a subordinate clause:**

While the Confucian-based class structure and subsequent laws were used as a form of social control and a means of stabilising the economy. Family values and their associated loyalty were also paramount in maintaining social order through the Confucian concept of filial piety (xiao).

Rather, combine the subordinate clause with a main clause (one that has a finite verb, i.e. one that makes complete sense on its own):

While the Confucian-based class structure and subsequent laws were used as a form of social control and a means of stabilising the economy, family values and their

associated loyalty were also paramount in maintaining social order through the Confucian concept of filial piety (*xiao*).

Also, as in this example, use italics for non-English words. I have also used italics to standardise the titles of books, films and art works throughout.

## DO

- **Use an active sentence structure:**

In the Buddhist tradition, **tattoos have negative associations in that they are** adornment of the self and **therefore suggest** attachment to the material realm.

**rather than a passive one:**

In the Buddhist tradition, **negative associations may be seen in that tattoos are** adornment of the self and **suggestive of** attachment to the material realm.

- **Bear in mind** that "the likes of" is a dismissive phrase, bordering on contempt. It is better to write "Scholars such as..." unless you mean to severely attack them.

And one last thing – it's not until the section **Erroneous Dichotomisation: Thevoz and Atkinson** that you finally use "I". In your final draft, I suggest using it more often to replace some of the references to "this thesis", "the present discussion", etc. These can be very cumbersome and can even obscure the meaning. Don't be shy of using "I" from time to time – the argument is your own, after all.

Ozawa de-Silva uses a small with a hyphen, according to his entry on the website <http://www.anthropology.emory.edu/FACULTY/ANTCO/pub.html>

"P. Buck" [footnote, p. 33] is universally known as Pearl S. Buck.

Best wishes,

**Keith McLennan**  
**BetterEdit Editor**

# THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOO: TABOO OR TREND?

## INTRODUCTION

### *Introduction*

World surveys of body decoration ultimately posit the Japanese tattoo as the pinnacle – the final stage – in the evolution of the decorated body and consider Japanese tattooists the most skilful tattooists in the world (Buckland 1888, Hambly 1925, Kitamura 2000, Buckland 1888). The traditional Japanese tattoo, - recognised in this thesis as ~~the~~ that form of tattoo ~~that comprises~~ comprising integrated, multicoloured motifs ~~that extend~~ extending over the back, arms, chest and abdominal region ~~;~~ is a visual spectacle~~—~~, from the large, eye-catching display of colour to the intricacy of the designs ~~where~~, with their every detail ~~is~~ etched into the skin. ~~In the~~ The application of a traditional Japanese tattoo, ~~the physical body~~ transforms ~~the body~~ into a living, breathing work of art ~~as~~, with the tattooist ~~brings~~ bringing realism to a design through the manipulation of muscles and body shape. There is much adulation and emulation of the Japanese tattoo around the world. Yet, in Japan ~~today~~, this visual phenomenon goes uncelebrated and remains largely suppressed. Representations of the traditional Japanese tattoo, in academic scholarship as well as public sentiment, assert that tattooing ~~is taboo~~ in Japan ~~is taboo, and as such the~~. The physical display of tattoos elicits ~~sentiment of~~ strong social ~~prohibition~~ disapproval.

~~Nevertheless, an~~ An examination of Japanese history indicates ~~that~~ this was not always the case. Woodblock prints, kabuki, travel writings, and photographs by Western visitors to Japan depict the tattooed body as an integral part of the cityscape during the Edo period (1602-1867). ~~While the~~ The proud display of conspicuous ~~tattoo proudly displayed~~ tattoos on the streets of ~~historical~~ Edo, is a drastic contrast ~~from~~with the concealment ~~necessitated~~ the tattooed body ~~necessitates~~ today. ~~But~~ suppression of the Japanese tattoo has done little to curb ~~its~~ development or attraction, and the practice ~~still~~ continues ~~today~~. Essentially the traditional Japanese tattoo remains a fascinating phenomenon, in both its visual mastery and its social aberration.

### *Central Question and **Rationale***

~~In current~~ Current scholarship on traditional Japanese tattooing, ~~there is recognition of~~ recognises its popularity amongst specific groups of people, and ~~allusion~~alludes to the normative values of the tattoo within these tattooed groups. However, the overall trend is ~~for~~ ~~the representation of~~ to represent the traditional Japanese tattoo, as inherently taboo. Notions of identification and disidentification through ~~eriminal~~ criminal association, group exclusion, and prohibition are the themes most commonly emphasised in both academic scholarship and visual media representations.

~~Paradoxically, the~~ Three elements are cited as grounds for ~~the~~ taboo ascription ~~are given as~~ ~~three elements~~ in relation to tattoos: Confucianism, punitive associations, and religion, ~~and~~.

Paradoxically, however, further examination of these three elements ~~indicate~~indicates that they were in fact catalytic in both the development of the tradition itself and its undeniable appeal to specific groups of people. ~~In recognising the~~ If it is recognised that the origins of ~~both~~ taboo and trend ~~in the same~~ lie in these elements, ~~there is implication~~it follows that the

tattoo was in fact more normative than is recognised in the current literature. – Moreover, ~~it suggests~~ such a recognition would suggest that the traditional Japanese tattoo needs to be read as *both* a trend and a taboo. ~~Thus raising~~ This raises the question, ~~which is~~ at the centre of this thesis: ~~what~~ *What is the traditional Japanese tattoo: taboo, or trend?*

In order to ascertain whether the traditional Japanese tattoo can be categorised as trend or taboo, two specific interrelated areas need to be examined. Firstly, to clarify the hypothesis that the nature of Japanese tattoo is actually both trend and taboo, ~~the origins by which it is necessary to examine how~~ the Japanese tattoo ~~is~~ came to be seen as characteristically taboo or trend, ~~need to be examined~~. And secondly, *if* the Japanese tattoo is read as both taboo and trend, and current scholarship on Japanese tattooing does not comprehensively account for the *simultaneity*, what alternative explanations or understandings of the Japanese tattoo can account for both the taboo and trend characteristics, ~~based on the understanding that current scholarship on Japanese tattooing does not comprehensively account for the simultaneity?~~

Recognition of the Japanese tattoo as a ‘trend’ ~~undermines~~ would undermine the current assertions of an inherent, **historicised** taboo, ~~necessitating~~ and so necessitate a reconsideration of *when* the taboo characteristic was actually formulated or popularised. This is based on the understanding that ~~contemporarily,~~ the contemporary stigmatisation and suppression of the traditional tattoo is clearly ~~stigmatised and suppressed~~ based on ~~the historically ascribed taboo sentiment~~ of ~~taboo and thus, these~~. These factors must be considered in any discussion ~~on~~ of the nature of the traditional Japanese tattoo.

In addition, since current scholarship refers to the taboo on today’s traditional-style tattoos in the same light as the Edo tattoo, questions of *how* or by what means ~~has~~ the Japanese tattoo