

Abstract:

The following text concerns itself with the description and analysis of the position of tattooing in contemporary Japan, with regard to differences we see in comparison to the western countries. The first part provides a brief overview of relevant historical development which further serves as a context for the explanation of current attitudes of the social majority to tattooing and nonconforming appearance. The aforementioned social consensus is firstly analysed by its impact demonstrated by describing recent incidents and codified legal limitations, and secondly contrasted with self-reported testimonies of the members belonging to the subculture of tattooing and body modifications. The conclusion of this text offers a possible interpretation of presented tendencies; that the core problem tattooing is facing within Japanese society is not a priori caused by historical associations tied to it, but rather by the inherent communicative function it necessarily lends to the body.