

Body Language
--- paintings as...
self expression in
day to day life.

by Abbasi Suhail

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BODY LANGUAGE
AND
BODY PAINTING
AS MEANS OF
SELF EXPRESSION
IN DAY TO DAY LIFE.

(With special
reference to
TATTOO).

GUIDE:
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INTRODUCTION:

BODY LANGUAGE:

We all observe people at all stages of life everywhere, at home, out at the bus-stops, railway stations, markets....

By watching others almost every time, we learn a lot about them and eventually about ourselves.

At times we register a mental note of a certain gesture in our minds, we wonder how the gesture originated, but seldom do we make an attempt to go beyond that.

We feel differently in different companionships and our feelings change accordingly, but we don't know WHY.

For instance, we say - " I am relaxed in the company of Mr. Malhotra" OR " I feel uncomfortable in Mrs. Laxmi's house."

If only we get a bit curious, we can learn how feelings are aroused, how and why we act the way we do.

Just few years back an exciting science was uncovered and explored. It was called BODY LANGUAGE. Both, its written form and scientific study have been labelled as KINESICS. It is based on the behavioural pattern of non-verbal communication.

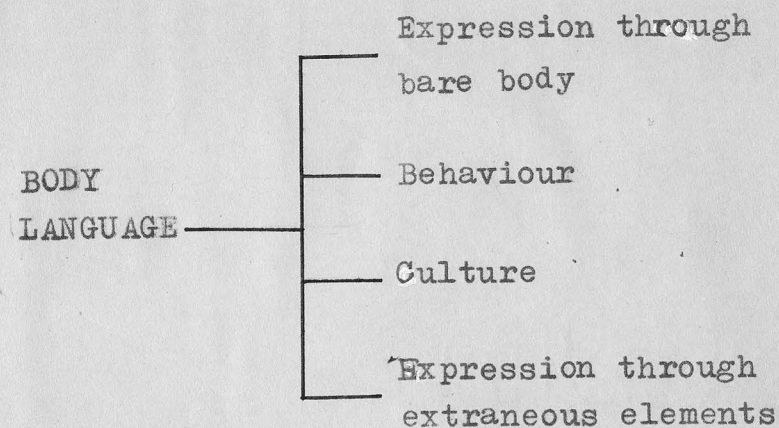
Each person develops a special behavioural pattern. If we study his behaviour clearly, we can understand him better in the next encounter. It is also possible to see beyond the surface of the event, when he meets or interacts.

By learning BODY LANGUAGE a keen observer, can utilize his knowledge to transform a boring conversation in to an interesting one.

THE PRIMARY AIM IS TO COME TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN INTERACTIONS AND OF THE REMARKABLE PREDICTABILITY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR.

In ancient times even when language was not invented, man communicated

through pictures. He expressed himself in various ways in order to get his message across. For this he took help of a few things which we can classify as follows:



These are the four factors which influence the communication through the body.

They appear in a detailed version in the chart attached alongwith.

INTRODUCTION:

BODY PAINTING:

Body being the physical representation of man, it is used by him precisely, to display the integration he has with the society he lives in.

Every individual tries to project himself different from others. He feels to free to exercise his choice in order to look individualistic or perhaps better than others. He projects himself in a style which would identify him even in a crowd and give him an exclusive look.

This practice of projecting the physical body in a particular or different get-ups becomes a kind of convention, which speaks of the values of any given society.

Material objects used as decorative items, painting the body (permanently/temporarily), surgical operations, circumcision rites, scarring the body, knocking off the teeth, painting the hair, and many such ways of expressions suggest

the different ways man tries to put his beliefs in to actual practice. Beliefs which man is ruled by are either ritualistic, traditional or religious.

The temporary adornments are little more than extensions of clothing.

The permanent adornments involve some form of body mutilation, which is typical of rigid societies where allegiance to the group is of massive importance. These badges can never be taken off and set their owners apart from all other groups until the day they die.

Tattoo being one of the permanent mutilations of the skin is essentially a badge of allegiance.

A tattoo is an indelible mark resulting from the introduction of particles of colouring matter in to the dermis (the area which lies immediately under the surface skin) where they will remain more or less indefinitely.



INTRODUCTION:

TATTOO:

Tattoo is a lifetime commitment.

"One should either be a work of art or wear a work of art" said, Oscar Wilde.

Tattooing is one of the most visually fascinating forms of body decoration. Although of obscure origins, tattooing is a primal art form which is continually being rediscovered and redefined by contrasting cultures throughout the world.

The ways in which we project our body in to the social world, establishes that identity we call, 'I', the human spirit which flourishes or withers in accordance with the approval or hostility of others. Appearance and gestures are often more subtly expressive of the structure and the values of the society we live in, than the spoken word.

Even from childhood we have a strong sense of how we are expected to look & how in our fantasies, we would like to



appear. Growing older, we become increasingly aware of accepted conventions of dress and behaviour, a complex code which signifies the unwritten laws, the permissions and taboos on which every society is based.

Today in the 'civilised' world which prides itself on its rationality, acceptance or rejection by a group still depends on as much on an instinctive wordless appraisal of appearance as it did in primitive societies governed by magic and superstition.

HISTORY OF TATTOO:

The practice of skin ornamentation is certainly as widespræd and as old as man himself. It may well have been one of his first curious arts which distinguished him from animals.

As origins of art are rooted in early cave paintings, so positive proof of tattooing is obtained from preserved human skins, but information and reliable sources are scanty.

Paint was used by primitive man as a means of camouflage when hunting for his prey or in order to make himself more terrifying to his enemies.

When man found that the colour had to be pærtually re-applied, his ingenuity produced a permanent effect by introducing the pigment in to the skin by puncturing methods.

There is some evidence that tattooing was carried out atleast as long as the Ice Age, i.e. prior to 800 B.C.

In rock strata and caves in many parts of the world including France, Portugal, Romania and Scandinavia, bowls have been discovered which show traces of black & red pigments together with sharp pointed flints and needles made from reindeer antlers and other bone splinters, as well as statuettes bearing marks strongly suggestive of tattoos.

Infact, tattooing is much more likely of its subsequent development, to have had a mystical significance, or to have been used as a status symbol.

African scarrification of women



TATTOO: The World Over:

AFRICA: Dark skin is not conductive to tattoo by the pricking in method. This is because the skin pigment is dense and superficial and is completely invisible.

The Africans therefore resort to scarification technique, in which after cutting or burning the skin, vegetable ash is rubbed in to the formation of lumpy scars.



The marks on this Yemeni infant's face are made with khidab. The letters across his forehead spell out 'Allah' to protect him from evil spirits

Men carried tattoo for tribal identification and demonstration of courage. Women wore scars which had a strong sexual connotation.

ARAB: As tattooing is prohibited in Koran, no orthodox Muslim would consider being tattooed. However, some members of the desert tribes still indulge in the practice, in belief of the magical marks.

In Libya 5 percent of young wives have a design in the shape of a cross pricked in to their chins, to indicate their married status.

AUSTRALIA: In Victoria, tattooing of all under the age of 18 was made illegal in 1966. The practice however, has remained popular as ever in Royal Australian Navy.

CENTRAL PACIFIC ISLANDS: Tattooing is widely spread & practised by both men & women. Body painting is carried out in New Hebrides. Facial tattoos are commonly

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seen in the Solomon Islands.

CHINA: The practice has never been common and seems to be largely confined to amateur efforts by teenagers.

DENMARK: The influence of sea is very apparent. 20 percent of male population are tattooed. A law passed in 1966 made it illegal to tattoo all persons under the age of 18.

EGYPT: Fortunately, the Egyptians, through their excellent techniques of mummification, has provided direct evidence that tattooing was undoubtedly carried out 4000 years ago. Tattooing in Egypt was probably confined to women such as concubines, dancing girls and singers.

FRANCE: In 1963, tattooing was regarded as a punishable offence because of acute medical hazards. The prison survey of

French: Prison tattoo



Lacassagne & Lombroso firmly established that only men of low intelligence with a tendency to criminal behaviour were likely to be tattooed. So with no recent naval custom, and a strong association with criminality, it is hardly surprising that the practice has declined in France. Hence no professional tattooing goes on today.

GERMANY: Tattooing is still popular in Germany. As in most countries tattooing predominates mainly among the less educated people, only about 10 percent of ratings in the German Navy are tattooed, a much lower incidence than in navies elsewhere. The incidence of amateur tattoos in prisons is very similar to that in other countries (up to 50 percent).

HOLLAND: The custom is still thriving, especially around the parts of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, where several artists work full time. Among the recruits for



Indian girl from Rajasthan,
Three tattoo marks on her
chin are a protection from
evil

the Merchant Navy about 10percent
are tattooed.

INDIA: In the remote rural areas,
tattooing retains its popularity with
both sexes, allied as it is with reli-
gion and magic, whereas in Bihar and
Orissa women only are tattooed and this
is purely in lieu of jewellery.

Baiga girls are decorated in stages,
from the triangular forehead mark in
infancy, via peacocks at puberty, to
multiple designs after marriage.

The Western influence has been most
obvious in military areas.

Professional tattooists still exist
in India, mainly in areas where the
colour of the skin is light enough to
justify the use of the usual colours.
Here, electric machines are employed as
in the Western world.

In more primitive regions, the car-
bon for the black designs is prepared
from frying oil (Andu), burnt coconut
shells (Burat) or oily rags (kajal).

ITALY: The situation in Italy is like that of France, and for similar reasons. The practice is rare in the Armed Forces. Official discouragement by the Church may again be a strong disuasive factor.

JAPAN: Tattooing in Japan was probably introduced by the Ainus. The custom of marking the skin seems to have been almost confined to women. They were tattooed along the mouths or the back of the hands.

NAGALAND: Among the traditionally head hunting tribes in the remote hill villages, tattooing was universally practised until quite recently, but appears now to be dying out due to the influence of the missionaries.

NEW ZEALAND: The disappearance of MOKO decoration among the indigenous population has not affected the amount of tattooing in New Zealand.

Amateur practice is so common today among teenagers that the authorities find it difficult to cope up with the problem.

NORWAY: The custom is regarded by most people as primitive, but not necessarily undesirable.

PHILIPPINES: Gang tattoos are popular, and these ensure recognition by rivals in other gangs. It is common practice for police suspects to be stripped before questioning to establish gang membership.

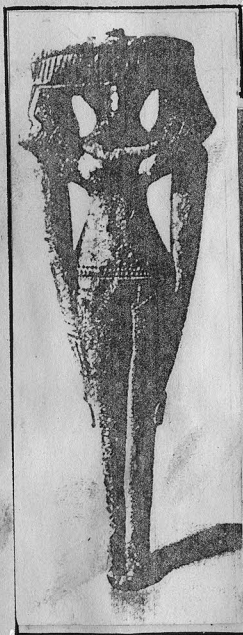
RUSSIA: Many soldiers in the war of Korea acquired tattoos, feeling quite reluctant towards the unpopularity they would receive.

SWEDEN: The tattooed figures are found in the more densely populated area along the West Coast. The nautical influence was seen in the tattoos.

A. Painted bone figurine
from Egypt (3000 B.C.)

B. Decorated Egyptian
figurine (4000 B.C.)

A.



B.



BELIEFS & COMMUNICATION:

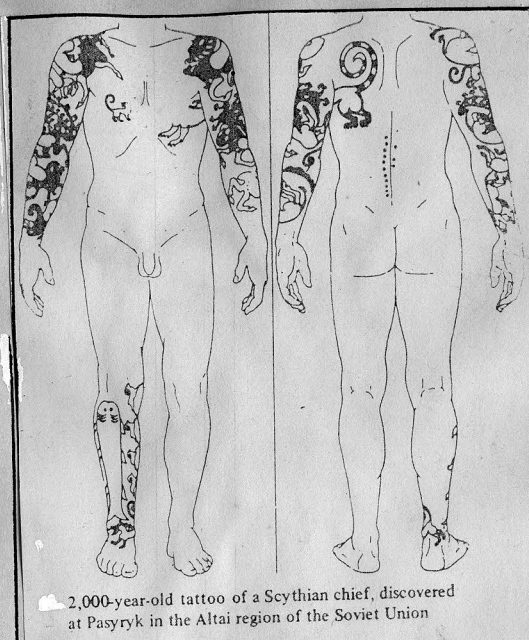
Many primitive tribes believed that after death the body kept a ghostly semblance of its living form. They therefore used tattoo marks as a means of identification, a passport to ever lasting life in the next world.

Initiation ceremonies involving tattooing gave not only a permanent mark of status, but drew blood which betokened life and fertility and at the same time demonstrated the initiates' ability to bear pain. Great emphasis was laid on the fortitude displayed.

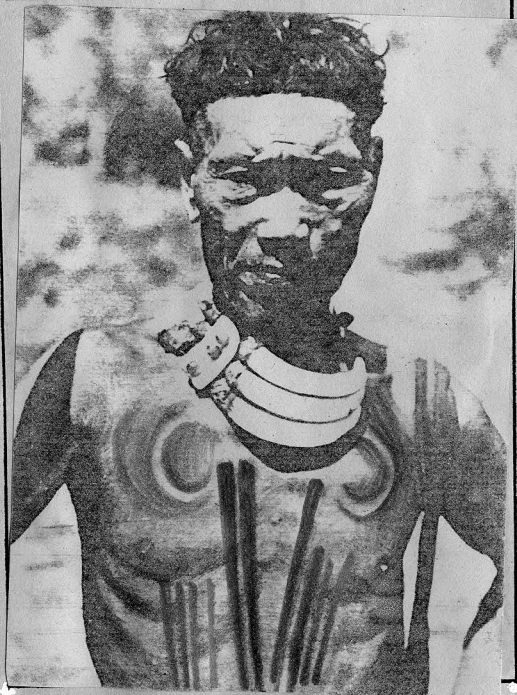
Clay figurines unearthed by Petrie & Quibell in 1895 from Naqada & Ballas on the Upper Egyptian Nile and dating from the 4th millennium B.C. show black zig-zag marks on red ochre are thought to represent water with its connotation of fertility and rejuvenation.

Numerous writers regarded tattooing as a sign of nobility in Ancient Greece.

- A. Scythian Chief
B. Assamese Chief



2,000-year-old tattoo of a Scythian chief, discovered at Pasyryk in the Altai region of the Soviet Union



In 1948, the body of a Scythian Chief was discovered which solved a lot of doubts about tattoos. The body was 2000 years old. The complex designs representing animals, birds and fish bear no resemblance to the simple marks on the Egyptian mummies

The early Christians seem to have been influenced by the Eastern Mediterranean Cult and to have used tattooed emblems in the same way as today's teenagers, to show that they belong to the same gang.

In Muslims circumcision was done but tattooing was prohibited, as animal or human images in any form, were forbidden by 'Koran'. This disobedience was tolerated on the grounds, that the marks were not decorative, but functional, being regarded as a cure for rheumatism and a guard against the evil eye.

In the Middle Ages in Assam it was noted that men and women who exhibited the greatest profusion of tattoos were regarded as most handsome.



Preserved Maori heads

It was a great ambition of men from New Zealand to have fine facial tattoos to render themselves attractive to the ladies & conspicuous in war. If killed by the enemy the heads of the people untattooed was treated with great indignity, while those conspicuous by their beautiful Moko were carefully cut off, stuck on a pole and preserved.

A man unmarked with Moko was regarded as a nobody. The very abstraction of pattern in Moko tattooing is what makes it so fascinating to us today.

For women Moko was restricted to their lips, because they thought that the moment they grow old their lips will shrivel up and would make them ugly. Tattooing of other areas indicated rank and in some cases chin tattoos denoted the married state.

Tattooing appears to have a connection with head hunting for the Ibans, in that the boys were tattooed with tribal patterns on neck and shoulder as soon as they were old enough to go maranding.



A typical Iban design

The Iban by his tattoo reveals his rank or social status, his identity and even his achievements.

Other tribes such as 'kajangs' decorate only the upper limbs. Before the operation, the Christian 'kenyahs' give a short prayer and offer a pig, chicken or some eggs. The prayer is a request for little pain, good work on the part of the artist and favourable conditions. The tattooing of women is strictly done by women.

Superstition was the primary motive for the ones being tattooed and it was believed that untattooed married women will be forcibly marked after death by the devil with a vast sword. Tattoos were deemed to ward off the demons of menstruation, to ensure good health in this life, and a happy sojourn in the one hereafter.

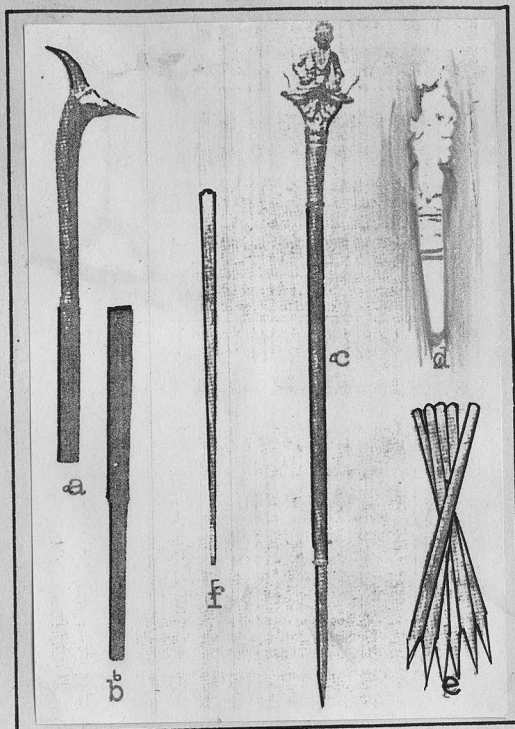
Faded tattoos were considered the cause of incipient blindness in old age and thus were refreshed from time to time. So firm were their beliefs that the



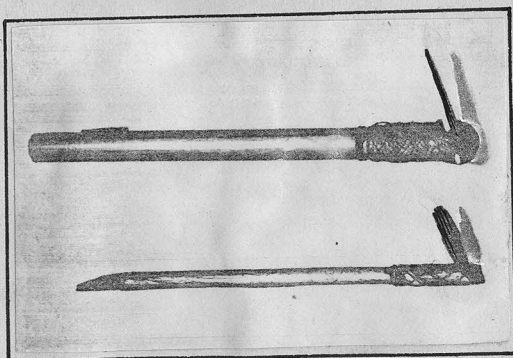
untattooed Japanese women were excluded from formal banquets.

In due course superstition superseded as a motive by the desire for ornament, much as make up is used today.

Presently tattooing has almost ceased and is to be found only among the very old.



1.



2.

ANCIENT TOOLS:

1. Tattooing instruments from S.E. Asia:

- a. Sarawak, Borneo
- b. A striker from Sarawak
- c. Burma
- d. Lead weight from Burma
- e. Needle opened out to show compound structure
- f. Needles mounted from Japan

2. Instruments to pierce the skin were made from bird bones, thorns, human bones, pieces of carved wood, the point was held against the skin and tapped with a small mallet. Occasionally the artist made notches in the handle to signify the number of people whom he had tattooed.

TECHNIQUES:

The international level of tattooing is becoming increasingly standardised, despite reluctance to abandon traditional methods.

Originally there were 3-4 basic techniques.

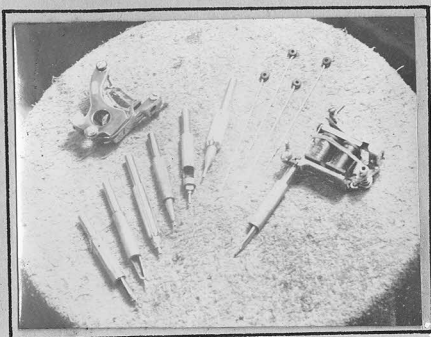
1. Primitive cutting or pricking manoeuvres, followed by the nibbing in the chosen dye. (TRIBES OF ASIAN YUNANUS) (PAINFUL).
2. Burning. (GREEKS) (INACCURATE).
3. The drawing of soot covered threads through the skin with needles. (GREENLAND, ESKIMOS).
4. The use of sharp pointed instruments dipped in the selected dye. (EGYPTIANS).

The degree of pain depends on the fineness of the pain.

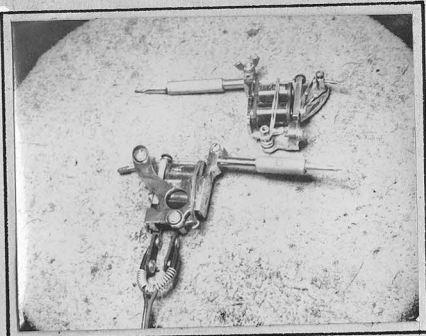
PIGMENTS:

In ancient times the colour used was always black, though at the same time red-ochre was used in body painting, because of the association in the primitive mind between blood and life. The black colour which was used, was carbon in some form, it was, 'smoke of an oily nut', 'charcoal', 'liquid suspensions' or 'extract of logwood'.

Colour was introduced by Japanese approximately 200 years back.



Needles & instruments



Instruments



The total kit

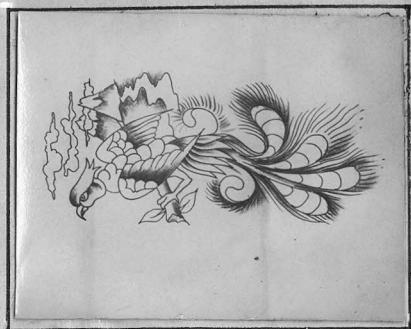
MODERN TOOLS:

In contemporary times an electric tool invented by Samuel O' Reilly in New York.

It consisted originally of three parallel needles in a brass tube as a result of impulses produced in an electromagnet powered by a small battery.

The modern instrument is a further improvement, partly because even more needles can be used at one time, partly because the operating depth can be better controlled.

The skilled tattooist controls the voltage by means of a rheostat, and by listening to the pitch of the make and break mechanism is able to judge the optimum speed at which to work (sometimes between 2,000 & 3,000 jabs per minute).



Original design



Traced design



Traced design on
the shaven arm.

MODERN TECHNIQUE:

Most modern tattooists first draw on the skin, the outline of the proposed design so that the recipient can have some idea of the ultimate effect before it is too late.

The less skillful employ stencils or transfers in order to reproduce as accurately as possible.

The common field of tattooing is the arm, upper or lower, the operation takes place at the table counter, the tattooist on one side, the customer the other.

Whatever part of the body is to be tattooed, it must be seen that it is free from hair, there are no large veins in the way.

The left hand has to hold the skin tight while you prick it with the right. By keeping the skin tight it allows the ink to go into the flesh more directly, and does not pain the patient quite so much, and you have a firmer surface to work on.



Design transfer-
red on the arm



Outlining the design



Cleaning the tattoo

The tattooist dips the tip of the instrument into the colour palette to get the ink into needles, switches on the current activator and rapidly runs it over the skin, replenishing the ink from time to time.

The needles do not contain the colour matter in the shaft of the instrument but colour is loosely spread on the skin surface and then tapped into the dermis by skin action.

The colour spreads hindering the clarity and providing impediments. Hence the necessity for excess colour clearance as he proceeds. To the recipient and the onlooker, the swabbing creates a mess, yet when the outline is complete and the mess is wiped off the embryonic tattoo becomes clear.

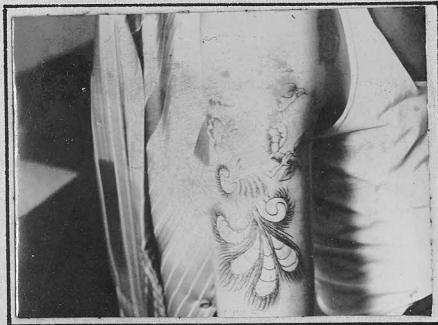
The second stage is that of filling colors. Multiple needles are used, anything upto a dozen. This is the least painful stage. More than five colours are used: red, yellow, green, brown and black which appears blue.



Shading the tattoo



Removal of extra ink



The complete tattoo

The needles are sterilized after each session.

A small tattoo may be completed in ten minutes, for a large tattoo on the arm or elsewhere can take anywhere between an hour to few sessions over the week.

When the tattoo is finished, the area is treated with an antiseptic cream, a dressing is applied and advice is given for after care and treatment.

The area tattooed is sore and sensitive to touch, particularly by clothing. This soreness persists for approximately 24 hours - subsequently it lessens and a week later no sensation is apparent.



TECHNIQUE OF MOKO PAINTING:

The instruments used in Moko technique varied. Those which were like chisels were called Uhi, it had a sharp edge made from the bone of a bird's wing, a shark's tooth, stones or hard wood, the average breadth of a blade being a quarter inch.

The incision was made by applying the edge to the skin and driving it in by means of a sharp tap with a mallet called HeMahoe. If the tap was a little too heavy, the chisel sometimes went through the cheek.

The operations invariably produced deep scarred furrows, which are very characteristic of Moko.

Later sharp iron chisels were introduced from England and the work became finer. Finally, pricking with needles replaced the cutting process and the operation developed in to a sort of tattooing. The pigment used in Moko was invariably Carbon.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK:

Q: How is tattooing done?

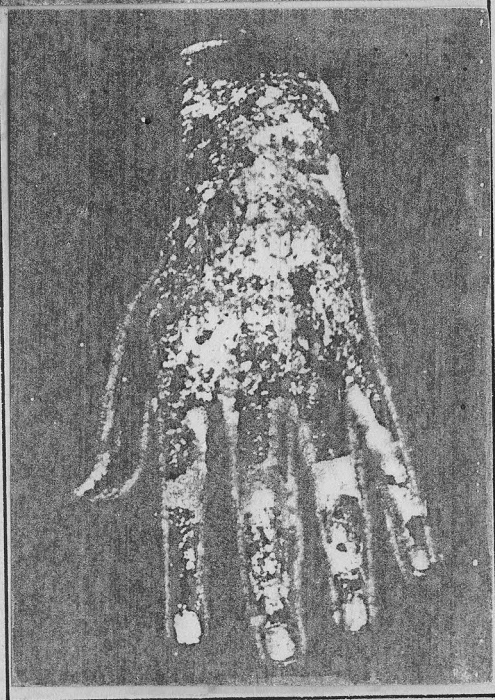
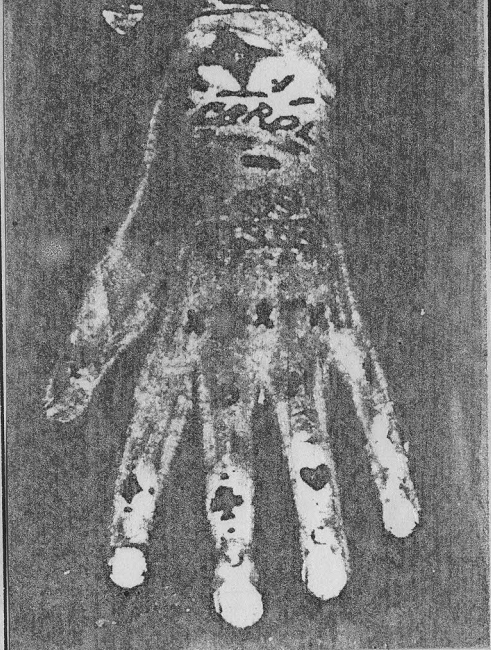
A: By pushing pigment under the skin to produce a permanent mark. The pigment is held in by a very smooth covering of scar tissue which can't be felt. There have been several primitive forms of accomplishing the process, but nowadays the use of metal needles and electrically powered instrument is practically universal.

Q: Does tattooing hurt ?

A: Having needles stuck in does, some people enjoy the process immensely- its completely a matter of psychological attitude.

Q: Which parts of the body cannot be tattooed ?

A: Hair, nails and teeth.



Removal of tattoo,
before and during

Q: What are the dangers of infection ?

A: If the tattooing is done correctly and the tattoo is cared for, there is no danger of infection.

Q: Can tattoos be removed ?

A: Yes, but the skin can never be restored to the original condition. For tattoo removal consult a dermatologist (skin grafting).

Q: Do tattoos fade over a time?

A: Yes, they grow old gracefully.

Q: Can tattooing be beneficial to health cares?

A: Many cultures used tattooing as one of the shamanistic tools for healing. Some of the communities used tattooing in case of rheumatism.

Q: Can tattoo have psychological value?

A: Definitely. Transformation in peoples attitudes is seen, they become self assertive.

It is healthy manifestation for people to do what they want with their bodies.

Q: How many colours can be used in tattooing?

A: The full spectrum.

Q: How long does a tattoo take to apply?

A: The average time for a 2"X2" tattoo in several colours is anywhere from $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to 45 minutes.

Q: Is it true that sailors get more tattoo than other group?

A: No not today, infact many sailors refuse to get tattooed.

Q: Can a tattoo damage health in any way?

A: No not, if properly done.

Q: Is there any licensing for tattooist?

A: Yes, some states & countries do issue licenses. However in many places tattooing is simply against the law. In most places where tattooing is

allowed there are very strict health laws & tattoo parlours are regularly inspected like restaurants.

Q: Are there any established schools of tattoo?

A: No.

The questions which appear here are asked by various people in different places. These people came from different walks of life.

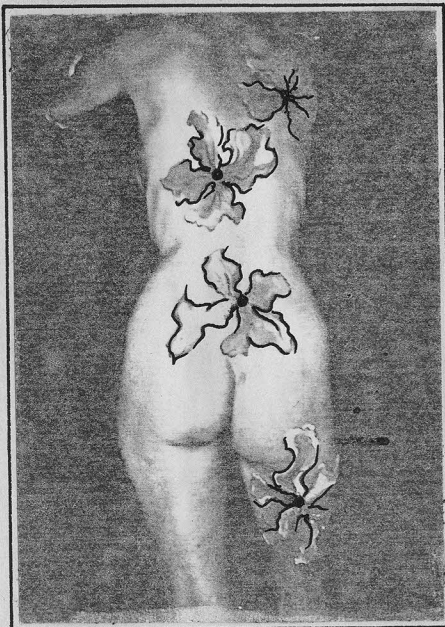
REACTIONS TO TATTOO:

Reactions to tattoo vary enormously. They range from curiosity, amusement, amazement and envy, to downright contempt, pity or disgust.

Reactions to tattoos provide a study in psychology alone, somewhat similar to people's reactions to, say... pornography.

Levels of approval, tolerance or disapproval usually depend upon the degree of understanding of the subject relative to the amount of information assimilated or available.

Sexually interesting



REASONS:

To camouflage an unclothed body while hunting - (Need).

To secure a place in heaven - (Belief).

To ensure an easy passage through difficult times such as puberty and pregnancy - (Belief).

To prevent disease and injury, and acquire fertility - (Belief).

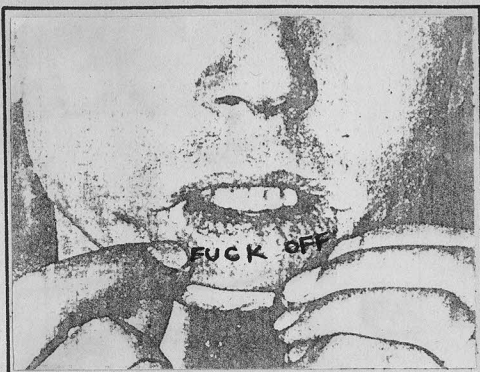
To acquire special characteristics through totemism and ancestor worship.

To acquire the special respect of the community - (Identification).

To terrorize the enemy on the battlefield - (Need).

To make the body sexually very interesting - (Desire).

To express sentiment - (Patriotism, Love, Friendship, anti-authoritarianism).



Non-confirmity -
Anti-Social

To register incidents of personal interest, like people he met, places he visited....

To achieve personal or group identity (Primitive tribes, gays, sailors...).

To make money - (Exhibitions awards).

To register important medical data - (Blood group.....).

These are some of the common reasons because of which some people have got themselves tattooed. Some of the reasons are not at all relevant to contemporary times.

TATTOO IN INDIA:

Tattoo still prevails in India in rural as well as urban areas. The tattooing in rural regions is still performed because of some beliefs or tradition, whereas tattooing in urban areas (though scarcely seen) has a Western influence, the reasons are other than traditional, and vary from person to person.

Road side tattoo artists are still seen in fairs in villages, they make tattoos which are badly designed and crudely done. They follow the age old method of tattooing and are unhygienic and unreliable.

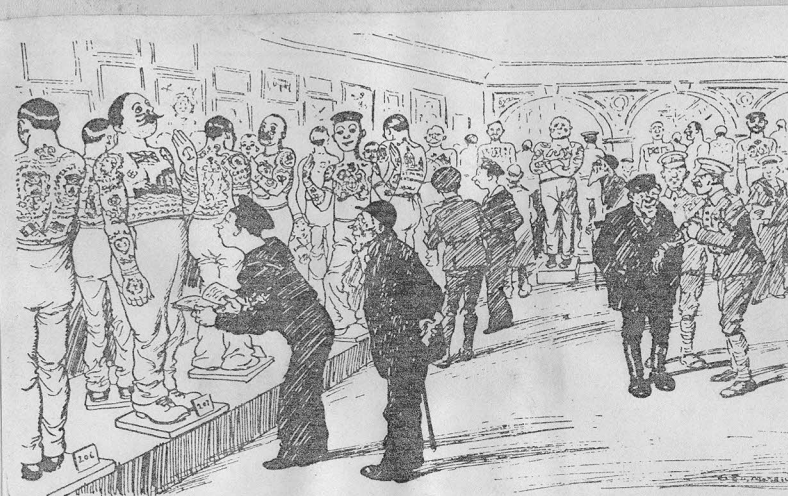
These artists carry an album of set designs and patterns, the prospective customer selects a form of his choice and the tattoo is performed.

People are fond of getting their names written on their arms, in case they disappear or die, they can be recognised & identified. Some of them

get the names of Gods & Goddess written which helps them in thinking that they are closer to God and would not encounter with problems in difficult phases of life. Some people get a few dots tattooed to ward off the evil eye.

Among teenagers in urban areas especially in Bombay tattoo is slowly becoming a fad. More and more boys (hardly any girls) are getting themselves tattooed. The forms which are popular among them are those noticed in western tattoos, i.e. eagles, snakes, lizards, dragons, leaves, flowers, and many others.

The reason for getting a tattoo varies from person to person.



'Simultaneously with the Private View of the Royal Academy, the Royal Society of Tattooists open their Annual Exhibition.' (George Morrow *Punch*, 5 May 1915)

Confirmism to a group
Nautical influence



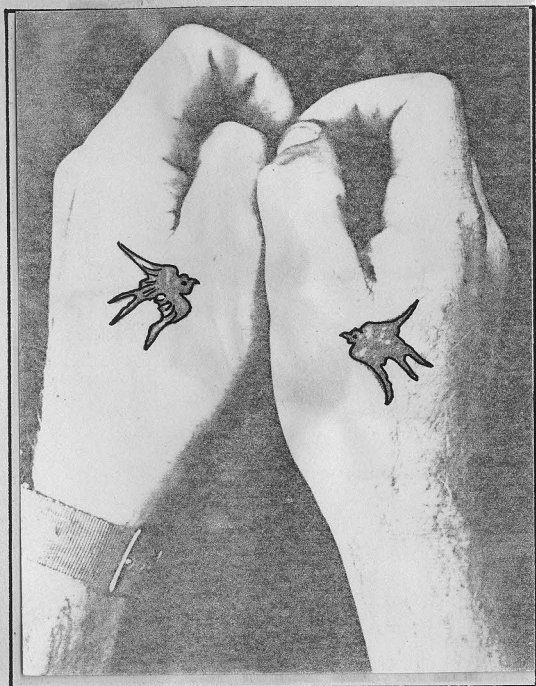
CONCLUSION:

Tattoo an indelible mark on the skin still fascinates a lot of people.

People in ancient times had specific needs and beliefs to go for a tattoo, but in today's world its most intriguing to note that people still like getting tattooed. The first question which flashes our minds is WHY?

After talking to two artists of Bombay (which cater to two very different sets of people) and their clients, it can be concluded that people have varied reasons to get a tattoo, they are as follows

Anil Yadav - a person working with the Merchant Navy, came to get tattooed, on being asked, why he wants a tattoo, reluctantly he admitted that he wanted a tattoo because his other friends have it. 'I feel I belong to them and even I should have one because they all have'.



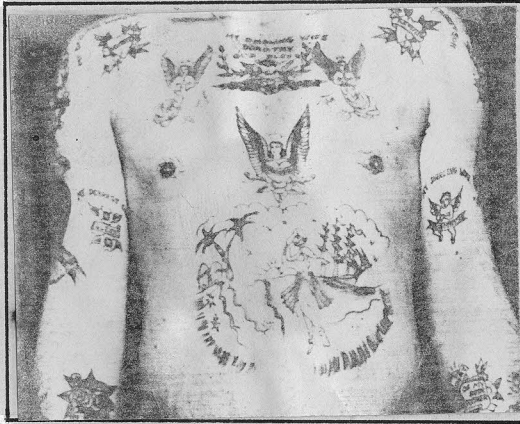
Beautification
and
Identification
Signal

This shows, that the motive of ~~people~~ the person is confirming to a group. The in question has no other doubts or fears but he wants to express his confirmity to a certain group.

Steven Coelho - a steward in a restaurant in a five star hotel of Bombay expresses - "I always saw those foreigners with tattoos on their bodies and I just felt I too should have one, it looks nice, doesn't it" and he too got a tattoo.

Steven's attitude represents the attitude of a lot of other people who accept tattoo as a beautifying element, and think that tattoos can make them sexually interesting.

It was noticed from the interviews that a lot of people had gained tremendous amount of confidence after getting a tattoo. These are the people ~~who~~ who want to express that they can bear a lot of pain and are a lot more enduring than the others. It makes them feel very



The undying devotion
to wife, father,
sons, angels & girl-friend

courageous, almost like a hero.

Adrian Marscarenhas a university student admitted frankly that he got himself tattooed again and again on the same places because the prick of the needle gives him a kick.

'It makes me feel haah !high yaar!

Besides those there are some people who wants to express their loyalty towards some people and hence they get the names of those persons tattooed. It is interesting to note in such cases that once there was a person who got the name of his girl friend tattooed on his arm and returned after six months to get that name rubbed off and tattoo another name on.

The tattoo artist could do nothing but cover the name with another flower pattern and wrote the new name below, only to notice after a year or so the same person in his cabin to be tattooed..

However the boys of India as yet haven't been able to muster enough

courage to get their total or major
portion of their body tattooed. Well!
who knows they decide to do so
tomorrow - lets wait and see.....

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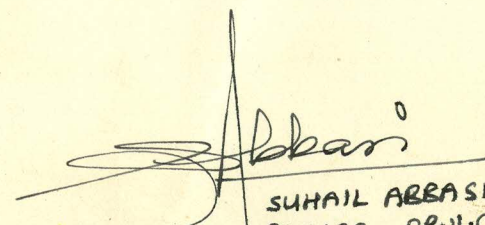
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