

Okayama Insider

No. 213
FREE

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The fourth month of the 19th
year of the Heisei period.

2007

卯月 平成19年
(Uzuki)

Published by the Okayama Insider Group

Paper and printing supplied by the Okayama Prefectural International Exchange Foundation

E-mail: OkayamaInsider@hotmail.co.jp

"The rabbit month" takes its name from
the 'rabbit's paw' flower, now in bloom

Tattoos and Irezumi

By Tomoko Ueyama

The word "tattoo" is used in many languages, including English and Japanese but to purists in Japan, the word "tattoo" has a different meaning to the Japanese Irezumi.

Irezumi is a traditional Japanese art, like calligraphy, origami, traditional pottery and ukiyoe prints. The word means "inserted soot" and is used for traditional designs or designs applied using traditional methods, while "tattoo" is used for non-Japanese designs and methods.

In recent decades, tattoos have come to be considered a fashionable art in many parts of the world, especially in North America, Europe and Asia. The growth in tattoo culture has seen an influx of new artists into the industry, many of whom have technical and fine art training.



designs you may be familiar with include dragons, koi (carp), flowers and images of Buddha.

A "tattoo" is a mark made by inserting pigment into the skin. In ancient times, the Japanese used tattooing for spiritual and decorative purposes. During the Edo period, tattoos were used to permanently mark criminals and were therefore not considered an art form. However, the role of tattoos changed during the Edo period and decorative tattooing began to develop into the advanced art form we know today. Traditional

Traditional irezumi artists train for many years under a master. Apprentices often spend years cleaning the



studio, observing, making the needles and other tools required, mixing inks, painstakingly copying designs from the master's book and practicing on their own flesh before being allowed to work on clients. After training under their master,

the artist then acquires all the technique and forms required. As a result of this long training, irezumi artists are world renowned for their art, which is drawn freehand, without a stencil, and which uses a unique shading technique. It takes about one hour to create a very simple design, while shading and coloring of the tattoo takes more than a week to finish. Irezumi is truly one of this country's historic forms of art.

In Okayama, there is a famous irezumi parlor, "Ink Magic Tattoo Studio." All their artists are well trained and would be pleased to give you this unique form of personal expression. If you would like to know more about Japanese tattoos, please stop in for a consultation or call to make an appointment.

INKMAGIC TATTOO STUDIO:

Main Studio Ph. 086-256-0432 Ekimae Studio Ph. 086-227-0228