

# Sanskrit and Buddhist tattoos offer hope in tough times

## 景氣差 梵文佛像刺青求改運



In these tough times, tattoo parlors have experienced a huge increase in the number of people asking for tattoos of religious symbols. Because of the **lackluster** economy and the bad job market of late, there has been a 20 percent increase in the number of people requesting tattoos of Tibetan Buddhist, Sanskrit and other Buddhist symbols. At the same time, many young people have chosen to get their tattoos removed to aid them in gaining employment.

The "tattoo street" in Taipei City's Ximending district has had many people recently asking for tattoos of religious symbols in the hope of changing their luck for the better. Kevin, the boss of a tattoo studio, says that there are certain tattoo designs that people can get done during slack economic times, with the Six Syllable Mantra (Om mani padme hum) written in Sanskrit, mantras from the Diamond Sutra and Guardian Deities that represent different star signs and animals of the zodiac in Tibetan Buddhism all being popular.

Kevin said that people who request tattoos of

religious symbols are on average older and aged in the 25 to 30 age group with some of them having specific religious beliefs. Kevin said that the majority of them get tattoos in the hope of turning their luck around because they are experiencing hard times and having trouble finding a job. He also said that a young person once wanted to have the characters for "luck" and a mantra designed into one pattern for a tattoo in the hope of gaining better luck for wealth and fortune. Kevin has a tattoo of the **auspicious** Tibetan Buddhist symbol of a parasol tattooed on his arm and believes that the tattoo helps and protects him and that it is up to each individual if they want to believe in the tattoos or not.

A tattooist at a tattoo parlor in Zhonghe said that the slack economy is a factor that influences people's willingness to get tattoos and that there has been a recent increase in the number of people getting their tattoos removed to make it easier for them to find employment. The tattooist said that in the past, people got tattoos removed because they did not like them or because they broke up with

their boyfriend or girlfriend but that people are now getting them removed to avoid giving employers a bad impression.

Sheng-hen, a tattooist at another tattoo parlor said that those who are worried about giving their employers a bad impression can choose to get tattoos done in areas that are easily covered up by clothing. He also suggested that people think twice before getting a tattoo so they do not regret it further on down the road and get left with **hefty** tattoo removal costs.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY DREW CAMERON)

Above left: A man shows off a tattoo of the Six Syllable Mantra (Om mani padme hum) written in Sanskrit on his back earlier last month.

Above right: A man shows a recently inked tattoo of the Chinese character for luck surrounded by auspicious Sanskrit symbols earlier last month. PHOTOS: CHIU SHAO-WEN, LIBERTY TIMES

上圖左：上個月，一名男子秀出背上的六字梵文藏言（唵嗎呢叭咪吽）刺青。  
上圖右：上個月，一名男子展示日前紋刺的圖案——梵文咒語圍繞中文「旺」字。  
照片：自由時報邱紹雯

### 生

活難過，刺青店宗教圖案翻紅！近來尋求密宗梵文與佛像刺青的消費者平均增加兩成，原因是景氣差、工作難找，同時不少年輕人選擇除去舊刺青，重回原貌，也是為了找工作。

台北市西門町的紋身大街上最近出現不少上門刺青的客人，紛紛要求刺上宗教圖案尋求改運。「Kevin紋身工作室」負責人Kevin說，景氣不佳也有「景氣不佳」的圖案，其中以六字箴言的梵文（唵嗎呢叭咪吽）、金剛咒、密宗代表不同星座與生肖的守護神等都是熱門圖案。

他說，會上門尋求宗教圖騰的人平均年齡較高，約在二十五至三十歲，部份有特定宗教信仰，大多認為生活不好過，工作難找，希望藉此扭轉運勢。曾有年輕人上門表達希望財運「旺來」，便以旺字與咒語設計成圖案。Kevin手上也有個密宗的大白傘圖形，他認為「有刺有保佑」，信不信看個人。

「雕瓜紋身世界」的刺青師傅說，肚子填不飽，自然影響客人紋身的意願，但最近為了找工作來去除紋身的人數反而增加，以前去除紋身最多的原因是不喜歡圖案或男女朋友分手，現在則是為了避免給老闆不好的印象。

「驚駭空間」的刺青師傅聖痕說，擔憂身上的刺青圖案影響雇主觀感，不妨選擇衣服能遮掩的部位，同時也建議在刺青前考慮清楚，以免日後反悔還得再傷荷包。

(自由時報記者邱紹雯)

### TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字



#### 1. **lackluster** /'læk,lʌstə/ adj.

無生氣的 (wu2 sheng1 qi4 de5)

**例：**Michael was criticized for his lackluster performances on the soccer field. (麥可因為在足球賽中表現有氣無力而受到批評。)

#### 2. **auspicious** /ɔ'spɪʃəs/ adj.

吉兆的 (ji2 zhao4 de5)

**例：**According to the lunar calendar, this could be an auspicious time to ask your boss for a raise. (根據農曆，現在是適合向老闆要求加薪的時機。)

#### 3. **hefty** /'heftɪ/ adj.

重的 (zhong4 de5)

**例：**Jenny was saddled with a hefty credit card bill after her weekend in Macau. (珍妮的澳門週末之旅換來可觀的卡費帳單。)