

Tattooing in Korea should be legalized

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Last January, Irang who is a Korean tattoo artist was standing in front of the National Assembly alone. He was demonstrating for legalization of tattooing in Korea. In Korea, tattooing someone is illegal. The law regulates that tattoo can only be performed for medical. If a person called 'tattoo artist or tattooist' tattoos other person, he or she gets caught and pays a fine.

Why is it illegal? There are some reasons. First of all, because of Confucianism, we think it's disobedient to our parents to get a tattoo on our body which was given from our parents. So tattooing is also regarded as going backward Confucianism. Second, we think that only gangsters get a tattoo. In the movies and news, we've seen many gangsters who get a tattoo. It makes you think that tattoo is gangsters'. When you see a person who has a tattoo on the street, you might think he/she is a gangster. And last, some think that tattooing is unsanitary and can cause disease like AIDS.

Tattoo artists help us expressing our personality. The world is changing and people are also changing. Now it's the age to express our personality. We're trying to be looked great and give good impression to others. Getting a tattoo is one of the ways to do so. And actually getting a tattoo is increasing in Korea. But Confucianism and the thought only gangsters get a tattoo make tattooing illegal. Those thoughts are old-fashioned. Well-designed tattoo can cover a handicap of our body. And we can give terrific impression to others by tattoo.

Tattooing is not just scribbling on our body. Each tattoo has a meaning. It could be a charm. Even when gangsters get a tattoo, it has a meaning which they want to threat others. I've seen news. It's about

a father and his daughter who has a mental problem. Sometimes she loses her way and forgets where to go. So the father asked a tattoo artist to tattoo the address, phone number of home and her name on her arm. The tattoo artist tattooed those and a butterfly. And he didn't get any pay. The tattoo will mean a address tag and reduce her parents' worry. People give meanings to their tattoo and they get power and courage by it. It's not just one of way to threat somebody any more.

Tattoo is art. It's not medical. Imagine doctors with a white gown tattoo their patients. How many doctors do you think have good sense of drawing? They who don't have good sense or like drawing wouldn't want to tattoo patients, even if it's just to draw eyebrows. It doesn't make sense at all. Doctors are busy enough. Just approve tattoo artists' right. Let's think about the English word 'tattoo artist'. Artist means a person who do art. People in English language countries think tattoo is kind of art and tattooists do art. When tatttoo artists trade, they tattoo their body. It goes forever and hurts a lot, but they stand. I saw and felt something from tattoo artists which I had felt from many artists in various parts when they tattoo. Art shouldn't be illegal. So the government should recognize tattoo as art.

If tattooing is legalized in Korea, problems about sanitation and cost of tattooing will be solved. First, tattoo shops are going to be safe from unsanity by some picky laws to open a tattoo shop which government can make. Now some underground shops are tattooing in bad conditions and being exposed from danger of unsanity. The laws will solve it. And the cost of tattoo is also going down. The cost of tattooing is various. It needs to be set. As tattooing is legal, tattoo artists will set. It'll be less than now.

As we saw above, tattoo is art and could be expressed our personality. When our thought changes, our act can be changed. We should respect tattoo artists working in Korea and give them legal right to express their artistic abilities freely. And people who want to have a tattoo won't have to spend lots of time to find a believable shop and more money. Some people have a tattoo when they are abroad. They won't have to do that. Now, it's time to change our mind. To tattoo artists, we give freedom of art and to people who want a tattoo, give freedom of expression.