



## Translation Afrikaans

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Thu, May 4, 2006 at 1:24 AM

Hi Tian,

I tried to translate the article featured in that Afrikaans newspaper... I don't speak Afrikaans myself, but for Flemish/Dutch speaking persons, it's not so difficult to understand... You might want to edit it & check any mistakes I've made...

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It's so cool when Zorro leaves his big Z as a mark : the masked crusader was here!

But Chinese & Japanese letters are even more impressive than the massive Z. People that want to get a tattoo also discovered that. But don't even think that the guy who's putting the tattoo on your body, even knows what those letters really mean...

Britney Spears thought she had the Chinese character for 'mysterious'... well, it actually means 'weird'! American NBA-star Shawn Marion wanted his nickname (The Matrix) on his leg in Chinese... now he has something like "demon filled with mothballs" on his leg... His mom can be really proud J. David Beckham decided to have the name Victoria in Hindi on his arm... but now it says Vihctoria... oops!

Think before the ink!

TV-host Mark Pilgrim did hours of research before finally deciding on the symbol he wanted for his tattoo.

"My Japanese symbol is my life motto, I've checked it on different sites to get the right translation. In Japanese my tattoo means "....." but I translate it as "fun in life should have the upper hand on problems"...

Wrong translations or wrong ideas about a certain symbol have now become a worldwide problem. Tian Tang, a Chinese student in America has dedicated a website on this issue. He talks about the misuse of Chinese characters in Western culture(s).

On his site you'll find pics of messed up tattoos & lots of messages from readers wanting to know what their tattoo really stands for. One girl thought her delicate piece of ink-art meant Mamma, when it actually meant (don't understand this word, but you'll probably know J) ... ?

"Usually I shake my head in disbelief. I feel like a doctor doing an autopsy, trying to figure out what went wrong", said Tang in an interview with the Hiragana Times.

Hollywood-actress Angelina Jolie has a few tattoos, including some Thai letters on her shoulder. Charlize Theron has a tattoo on both feet.

Japanese & Chinese symbols are also popular in our tattoo shops. "I have a wall full of Chinese symbols from which my clients can make their choice", says Durban tattoo-artist Dave Edwards from Body Art. "I already did 5 symbols today alone", he says. Most people want their (or someone else 's) name tattooed. Dave has his wife's name – Renette – in Chinese characters.

"Kanji is a mixture of Chinese, Japanese & Korean and is over a century old, says Dave. Those symbols... even Japanese or Chinese will be able to read these.

To make sure his clients will be satisfied with the final result, Dave has the help of a Chinese calligrapher. He checks

& translates all the characters for him.

Tattoo-artist Kay Naidoo from Johannesburg insists that people do their own research first, to make sure the actual meaning of a character/symbol is really what they want/think. Do a Google search on 'Chinese tattoos' !

Don't think that you can express meaningful words such as love, peace or ... with one single, yet stylish Japanese or Chinese character.

"Chinese is easy to talk, but hard to write", says Kevin Liu, a journalist from Johannesburg, working for a Chinese newspaper.

Most of the time it doesn't make sense to use just one Chinese character as a tattoo. Two or three characters put together will give a much better result."

Another problem : if the Chinese character isn't correctly/neatly written, it can mean something else.

"So talk to a Chinese guy before having that Chinese tattoo", he says. It seems that our local celebrities are doing just this. Clint Brink – who plays the role of Tino Abrahams in Scandal – has 3 Chinese characters on his left arm, symbolizing music, love & truth.

"You have to do some research first" he says. "I think that if you're going to put something permanently on your body, you want to be a 100% sure of your choice"

Actor Colin Moss has a Japanese symbol on his back & a Zen-Buddhist & Japanese symbol on both sides of his belly. These symbolize love, lies & truth.

He also has a colorful dragon over the whole left side of his back. It's a traditional Japanese tattoo & it took 5 or 6 sessions to complete.

Tom Cruise & Katie Holmes recently told that the name of their daughter Suri, is 'princess' in Hebrew & 'red rose' in Persian.

Think again : the Hebrew name Sara means 'princess', but 'suri' is a term of abuse meaning 'go away'... Luckily Tom didn't have it tattooed on his body... yet. .

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That's it... there were a few words I didn't get, but anyway... now it makes more sense than before :-)  
take care,  
Jan

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