



Sacred Skin
Thailand's Spirit Tattoos
Tom Vater
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Text by Tom Vater / Photographs by Aroon Thaewchatturat

- A beautifully photographed book featuring the sacred tattoos from Southeast Asia which are considered to be the essence and 'key' to individual identity

Sacred tattoos, called 'sak yant' in Thailand, have been around Southeast Asia for centuries and afford protection from accident, misfortune, and crime. Young women get tattooed with love charms in order to attract partners, while adolescent men use the protective power of their yants in fights with rival youth gangs. For most though, the tattoos serve as reminders to follow a moral code that endorses positive behaviour. During the application of a sak yant, the tattoo master establishes a series of life 'rules' that need to be closely adhered to, starting with Buddhism's first five precepts. Failure to observe the master's instructions will cause the sak yant to lose their power. Beautifully photographed these are tattoos that are the essence and 'key' to individual identity, a philosophy for living, the translation of soul to skin, as complex as the leaves of an autobiography, the story of a life.

"An essential book that shows us that (a) tattoo still today is not simply a decoration for the body but a re-interpretation of the soul." **Miki Vialletto, Tattoo Life**

"Stunning photos and exuberant writing... Sacred Skin will further popularise a centuries-old tradition." **Andrew Marshall, TIME Magazine (Asia/Europe Edition)**

