

Tourist deported for Buddha tattoo

25th April, 2014



Sri Lanka will deport a British tourist for having a tattoo on her arm of the Buddha seated on a lotus flower. Naomi Coleman, 37, was arrested at Sri Lanka's international airport on Monday. She is currently at a centre in the airport waiting for a flight back to the U.K. Airport officials told Ms Coleman that her tattoo was disrespectful to Sri Lankan culture. A police

spokesman said she was arrested for "hurting others' religious feelings". Most Sri Lankans are Buddhist and have deep respect for images and statues of Buddha. They would think anyone with a Buddha tattoo is culturally insensitive. Coleman said she practised Buddhism and did not think her tattoo would upset anyone.

This is not the first time that tourists have got in trouble for misunderstanding Sri Lankan culture. Another Briton was deported last year because he spoke disrespectfully when passport officials asked him about a Buddha tattoo on his arm. According to the BBC, three French tourists got prison sentences for kissing a Buddha statue. Britain's Independent newspaper reports that in 2010, R&B star Akon was told he could not get a visa to visit Sri Lanka because of a video for his song Sexy Chick. The video showed a pool party in front of a statue of Buddha. A British government website warns people who visit Sri Lanka not to pose for photos in front of statues of the Buddha.

Sources: *The Hindu* / *The Mirror* / *The Independent*

Writing

Having tattoos is just like wearing jewellery, accessories or clothes. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

deport / lotus / airport / flight / disrespectful / religious feelings / statues / insensitive / not the first time / passport / prison sentences / newspaper reports / visa / pose

True / False

- The tattoo was of Buddha sitting on top of a lotus flower. T / F
- The woman is waiting for a flight back to her last destination – India. T / F
- Officials said the tattoo showed no respect for Sri Lankan culture. T / F
- The woman practises Buddhism and thought the tattoo was OK. T / F
- This is the first time Sri Lanka has deported someone over a tattoo. T / F
- French tourists got prison sentences for kissing a statue of Buddha. T / F
- The R&B star got a visa for Sri Lanka to shoot a video for a song. T / F
- A British website said it's OK to pose for photos with a Buddha statue. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. seated | a. great |
| 2. currently | b. spend time in |
| 3. disrespectful | c. anger |
| 4. deep | d. presently |
| 5. upset | e. questioned |
| 6. trouble | f. cautions |
| 7. asked | g. sitting |
| 8. prison | h. rude |
| 9. visit | i. jail |
| 10. warns | j. difficulty |

Discussion – Student A

- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'tattoo'?
- What do you think of tattoos?
- Why do people have tattoos?
- Is it wrong to have a tattoo of religious icons?
- Was Sri Lanka right to deport the woman with the Buddha tattoo?
- Have you seen a tattoo you really didn't like?
- Do you think you are culturally sensitive?
- Have you had a misunderstanding with another culture?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. seated on a | a. to visit Sri Lanka |
| 2. waiting for a flight | b. statues of Buddha |
| 3. hurting others' | c. got in trouble |
| 4. images and | d. lotus flower |
| 5. culturally | e. back to the U.K. |
| 6. the first time that tourists have | f. sentences |
| 7. he spoke | g. for photos |
| 8. prison | h. insensitive |
| 9. he could not get a visa | i. disrespectfully |
| 10. pose | j. religious feelings |

Discussion – Student B

- How can countries make sure tourists know how to behave?
- What are big no-no's in your culture?
- Should airplanes show culture videos for passengers?
- Should countries be more understanding with tourists?
- Which countries do you think it is difficult to visit because of the culture?
- What would someone do to your religion to upset you?
- Are you surprised Akon could not get a visa?
- What questions would you like to ask the woman?

Spelling

- seaedt on a lotus flower
- waiting for a hfilgt back to the U.K.
- esulrfdctespi to Sri Lankan culture
- she was tadrrsee
- images and essatut
- traylllucu insensitive
- got in trouble for rsneidanigtumsn
- passport iaoisclff
- cigacdnor to the BBC
- French tourists got prison nsntescee
- A British revegmtnon website
- espo for photos

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. h	4. a	5. c
6. j	7. e	8. i	9. b	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Spitting

You think spitting is the biggest cultural no-no. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): kissing in public, being drunk or being late.

Role B – Kissing in public

You think kissing in public is the biggest cultural no-no. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): spitting, being drunk or being late.

Role C – Being drunk

You think being drunk is the biggest cultural no-no. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): kissing in public, spitting or being late.

Role D – Being late

You think being late is the biggest cultural no-no. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): kissing in public, being drunk or spitting.

Speaking – Cultural No-No's

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest cultural no-no's at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- chewing gum
- shouting
- being drunk
- being late
- spitting
- touching people's head
- asking someone's age
- kissing in public

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.