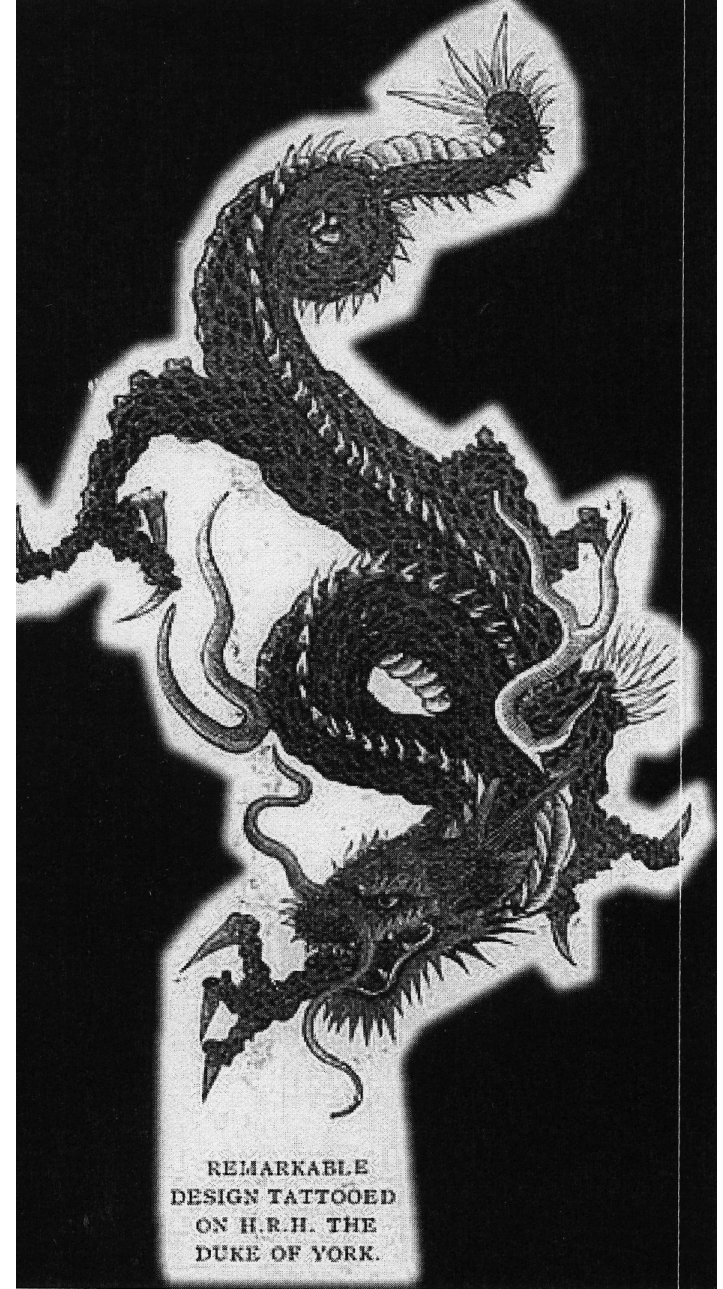


# The Japanese Tattoo and Britain during the Meiji Period

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# **The Japanese tattoo and Britain during the Meiji period**

1. Introduction
2. Tattooing in Meiji Japan
3. The tattoos of the British Royal family
4. Prince Alfred's visit
5. The two Princes are tattooed
6. The legend of Hori Chiyo
7. The real Hori Chiyo
8. The final Royal tattoo and after

# 刺青師(文身師、彫師) 幕末・明治時代

- Karakusa Gonta ( 唐草権太 )
- Daruma-kin ( 達磨金 )
- Chari-bun ( ちゃり文 )
- Iku ( 幾 )
- Yatsu-hei ( 奴平 )
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Hori-iwa ( 彫岩 )
- Hori-kane ( 彫兼 )
- Hori-uno ( 彫宇之 )

*Bunshin hyakushi* ( 玉林晴朗著「文身百姿」) より

# Henry Keppel, *A sailor's life under four sovereigns*

- ‘Japs making great preparations to receive the Duke of Edinburgh’
- ‘Suits of apartments completely furnished in European style, while the walls were covered with curiously painted Japanese paper’
- ‘H.R.H. took a quiet breakfast with us this morning[12th September], approving of our curry, and then went home to be tattooed’.

# Charles Beresford, *The memoirs of Admiral Lord Charles Beresford*

- [In Tokyo] I was tattooed by the native artificers, to the astonishment of Japanese officials and nobles; for in Japan none save the common people is tattooed. The Japanese artist designs in white upon dark, working upon the skin round the chief ornament in his scheme; whereas the English tattooer designs dark upon white, using the natural skin as a background. Both methods are beautifully illustrated upon my person.

Prince Albert Victor *et al.*, *The cruise of Her Majesty's Ship  
"Bacchante" 1879-1882*

- Oct. 27th. ... We came back quite hungry for breakfast, after which we were tattooed on the arms. At 9.30 A.M. we got into uniforms, and the Mikado came to call at the En-riô-kwan.
- Oct. 28th. ... Back to breakfast at 9.30 and then the tattooer finished our arms. He does a large dragon in blue and red writhing all down the arm in about three hours.
- The man who did most of our party was beautifully tattooed over the whole of his body, and the effect of these Japanese drawings in various colours and curves on his glistening skin was like so much embroidered silk. Like so many of their old customs tattooing has been abolished by law, but these two artists were allowed to come to us in our own room here.

- Two others went on board the *Bacchante*, where they took up their quarters for two or three days, and had their hands full with tattooing different officers and men.

*(The cruise of Her Majesty's Ship "Bacchante" 1879-1882)*

- 'some of the young men on board had chosen to undergo the operation of tattooing when they were in the ports of Japan'
- (‘Tattooing in Japan’, Illustrated London news)*



**Tattooing at Nagasaki, Japan (*Illustrated London news* )**

- ‘some of the young men on board had chosen to undergo the operation of tattooing when they were in the ports of Japan’. (*Illustrated London news* )



- Prince Louis of Battenberg 'sported the massive tattoo of a dragon across his chest and down his legs'.

(Hugo Vickers, *Alice: Princes Andrew of Greece* )

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- We have been Tatoed by the same old man that tatoed Papa & the same thing too the 5 crosses [the Jerusalem Crosses]. You ask Papa to show his arm.

(Harold Nicolson, *King George the fifth: his life and reign* )

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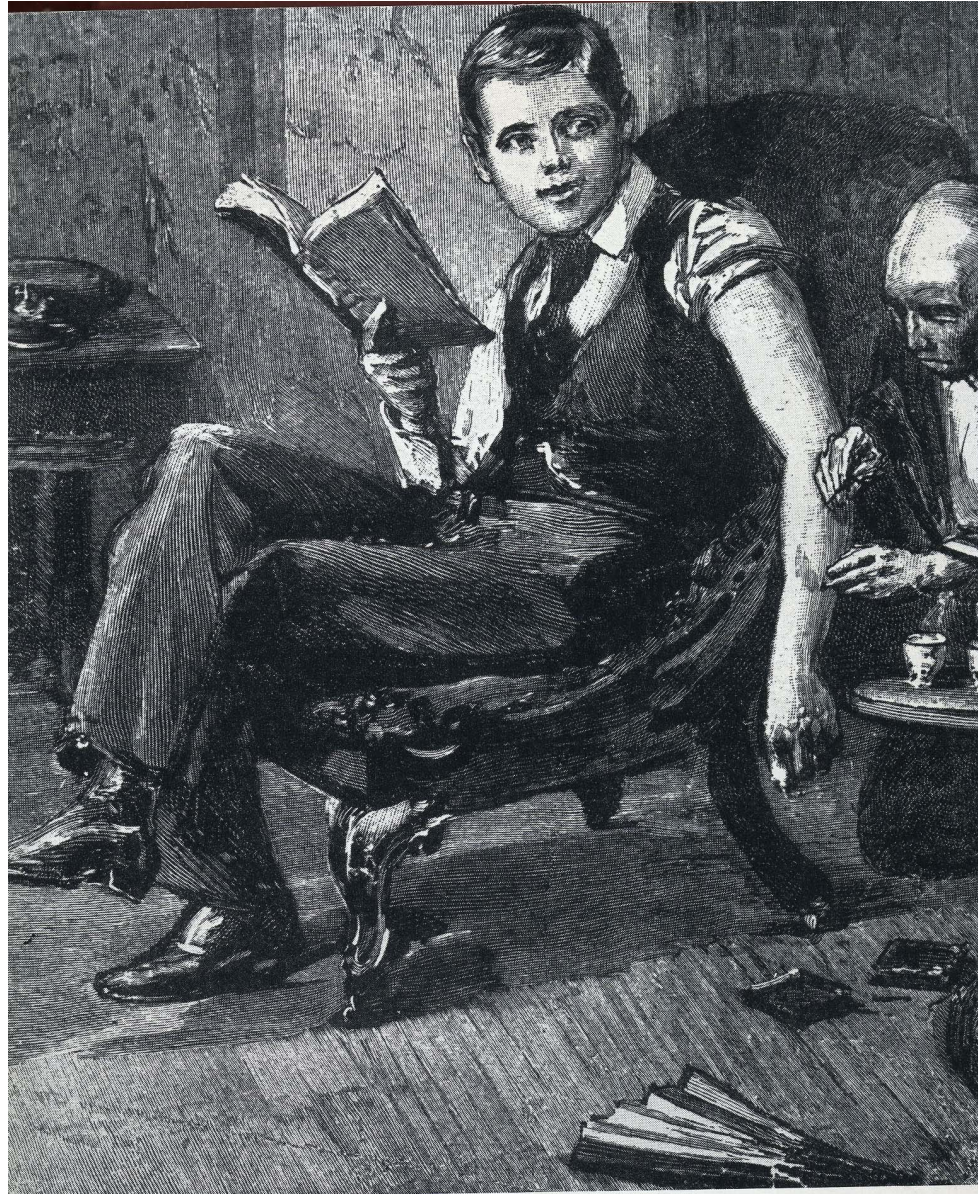
- Duke of York very affable. Asked after Laurie. & talked a good deal about his visit to Japan. He does not seem to have liked Japs. He took off his coat and showed us his tattooing.

(Ernest Satow'diary 11<sup>th</sup> August 1897, PRO.30:33/16/1)

## Hori Chiyo

- He was regarded as the 'emperor' among the various 'kings' of tattooing'.
- Albert Parry mentioned him as the Shakespeare of tattooing in his book *Tattoo* 'because none other approaches him'
- one is bound to admit that there is more or less of Art in the work done by Hori (i.e., the tattooer) Chyo, of Yokohama, who had the honour of placing several designs on the late Duke of Clarence, and his brother, the Duke of York. (Gambier Bolton, 'Pictures on the human skin', *Strand magazine*)
- He [*Hori Chiyo*] had tattooed many royal personages, including the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of York, who later became King George V, when the two brothers served as midshipmen aboard H.M.S. *Bacchante* which visited Yokohama in 1882 [1881].(George Burchett, *Memoirs of a tattooist*)

Prince George receiving a tattoo on his left arm from Hori Chiyo  
( George Burchett, *Memoirs of a tattooist* )



TATTOOING. *Hori Chiyo*.— The celebrated tattooer, patronized by T.R.H. Princes Albert Victor and George, and known all over the world for his fine and artistic work, is retained by us ; and designed and samples can be seen at the Tattooing Room

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TATTOOING.

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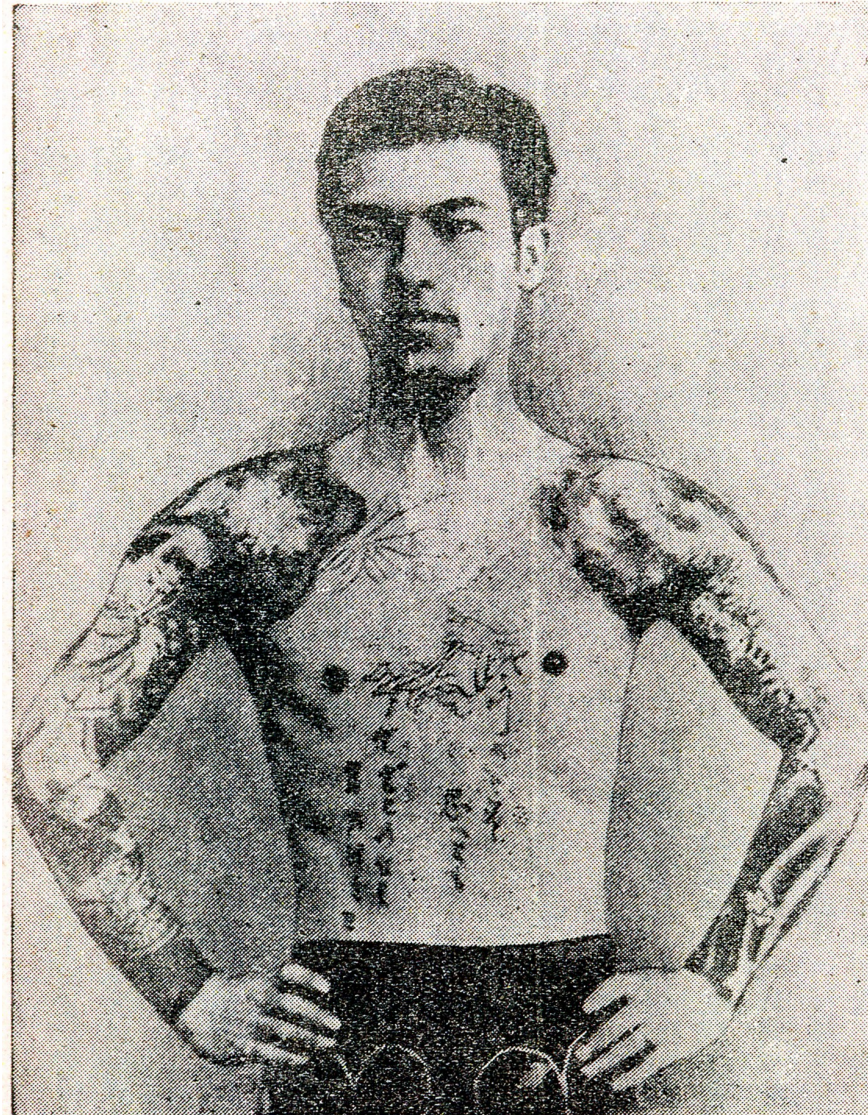
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- I [Hori Chiyo] had a taste of drawing from very young age. I entered the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy, and after graduating in the drawing course, I studied assiduously the art of tattooing. Being not satisfied with common crude works of the profession, I devised various new methods, and attained to the highest degree of profession, as to the minuteness and artistic effects, which will delight and surprise to behold.

(Charles M. Taylor, *Vacation days in Hawaii and Japan* )



Hori Chiyo  
( from *Fujin Sekai*, October 1924)



- My chief disappointment is not being able to get *tattooed* in Japan; but it seems that it's been made illegal, though I can't think why. Still, under these conditions, I've left it severely alone!!  
(Duke of Windsor, *A family Album* )

- In the 1890s two of the greatest exponents of the craft who have ever lived, men who put the word tattooing and art together for the first time in the West and who only needed to bow in mutual salute towards the Japanese, achieved fame and modest fortunes. They were Tom Riley and Sutherland Macdonald. (George Burchett, *Memoirs of a tattooist* )
- From Japan came the first lessons in the real art such as we know it to-day, and the suggestions that Japanese work carried were adopted by at least three popular British tattooists – namely, Mr. Riley (an Irishman), Mr. Macdonald (a Scotsman, we believe), and Mr. South (an Englishman). (Mulvy Ouseley *Marked for life* , *Royal magazine* )