

[Global Histories]

A student journal

The 'Bodyscape': Performing Cultural Encounters in Costumes and Tattoos in Treaty Port Japan

Author: Hui Wang

Stable URL: <http://www.globalhistories.com/index.php/GHSJ/article/view/109>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/GHSJ.2017.109>

Source: Global Histories, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Apr. 2017), pp. 85–107

ISSN: 2366-780X

Copyright © 2017 Hui Wang



License URL: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Publisher information:

'Global Histories: A Student Journal' is an open-access bi-annual journal founded in 2015 by students of the M.A. program Global History at Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. 'Global Histories' is published by an editorial board of Global History students in association with the Freie Universität Berlin.

Freie Universität Berlin
Global Histories: A Student Journal
Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut
Koserstraße 20
14195 Berlin

Contact information:

For more information, please consult our website www.globalhistories.com or contact the editor at: admin@globalhistories.com.

The ‘Bodyscape’: Performing Cultural Encounters in Costumes and Tattoos in Treaty Port Japan

HUI WANG

Hui Wang is a M.A. student at Heidelberg University’s Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” at the Center for Advanced Transcultural Studies. Transcultural Studies in Heidelberg deal with the transformations and entanglements of cultures following contacts and relationships between agents, concepts and institutions of various backgrounds. Hui Wang has received her Bachelor’s degree in Russian Studies. Her research interest is global visual and popular culture and its infrastructures, including both visual as well as material performances and digital cultures, with a current regional focus on the interactions of Japan and China with the rest of the world..

This essay explores the ‘cultural performativity’ of costumes and tattoos in the encounters between Europeans as well as Americans and Japanese in the treaty ports of Japan after the Meiji Restoration. The purpose is to illustrate how cultural encounters in the treaty ports, most importantly Yokohama, were performed visibly and how this performativity reflected and stimulated cultural flows in multiple directions. It generated transformations through the ‘bodyscape’, the use of the human body as a scene for performative actions that include cultural, aesthetical as well as identification meanings. The paper focuses on tourism in Yokohama and its commodified manifestation, namely Yokohama costume photography and the tattooing of ‘Western’ visitors at a time when the Meiji government discouraged traditional Japanese ways of life, including traditional clothes and prohibited Japanese to be tattooed. In particular, the story of the legendary tattooist Hori Chiyo will be traced who was patronized by the New England elite as well as European royalty. The essay thereby illustrates the sometimes contradictory dynamics of Japan’s radical transition in the late 19th century, rendering them palpable through the use of very concrete examples.

Introduction: Transcultural Performativity in Costume and Tattoos in Yokohama¹

Firstly, ‘Treaty Port Japan’ refers to the treaty port system that existed in Japan between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century. This term also includes the transitional processes that occurred in Japan through the treaty ports. The consequences of the Opium Wars led to the opening of port cities in China, Japan,

¹ I would like to thank Marvin Martin, Paul Sprute and Alexandra Holmes for their patience to read through this article and their comments and advises that greatly contributed to the article’s refinement and improvement. I would also like to especially thank Professor Takagi Hiroshi of Kyoto University for his kind suggestions on the Japanese sources that have inspired this research.

Korea and Taiwan to foreign trade through a system of unequal treaties with the Western powers. These “particular transcultural contact zones [of treaty ports] became crucibles for commercial, cultural, and political experimentation.”² This essay sets to explore the “cultural performativity”³ in these ports from the perspective of costume and tattoos as practices directly applied onto the human body that people from different cultural environments voluntarily conducted in their encounters with other cultures. ‘Cultural performativity’ refers to the voluntary or involuntary performative actions of certain cultural manifestations by humans. As will be discussed below, one example is the adoption of local traditional costumes and Japanese tattoos in the treaty port of Yokohama by foreign Euro-American settlers, tourists and other types of temporary or long-term visitors. These actions contributed to the process of the formation and conceptualisation of an authentic traditional Japanese culture as well as the transformation of pre-modern folk culture and artisanship into the imported category of fine arts. Meanwhile, the actions taken by the Japanese upon their encounter with modern Western (material) culture and the emergence of professional costume photography studios and tattooists corresponded and consolidated the process of transferring ideals together with the increased amount of imported materials, and the Japanese conceptualization of the West as being advanced and pioneering. Cultural encounters in the treaty port context were performed visibly and this performativity stimulated cultural flows in multiple directions, and generated transformations within the ‘bodyscape’ – the usage of the human body as a stage for practices of cultural and aesthetic meaning.⁴ The focus of this article is centered around, but not limited to, the late-nineteenth century Yokohama tourism industry and its commodified manifestations, in the interaction of Western globetrotters and local service providers on the one hand and between Japan in its radical transition and the vast world outside on the other hand.

Dressing-up and portraying native costumes is a long-established method for tourists to commemorate their experiences in exotic lands throughout the world. This phenomenon is not exclusive to any region: Europeans in Bedouin turbans have posed in front of the Grand Pyramids on the back of camels and Asians in dirndls are pictured with beers on the *Oktoberfest* during their tour through Europe. In the nineteenth century, international travels between Europe and the Far

² Harald Fuess, “Treaty Ports in East Asia: Connections, Comparisons and Contrasts” (research overview, Heidelberg University, 2016).

³ The concept of ‘cultural performativity’ in this paper is derived from its original meaning in the linguistic sense proposed by Austin, Derrida, and Butler’s theory on the construction of gender; John Langshaw Austin and James Opie Urmson, *How to Do Things with Words [the William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955]*, 2. ed. [repr.] (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

⁴ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

East required more effort and devotion; the possibility itself also was available to much fewer people. Still, Western visitors during the nineteenth century who went to the newly opened land of Japan for their Oriental adventure were not different from those of today who wander around the streets of Kyoto in yukatas⁵ (浴衣, a Japanese garment of casual summer wear). In the 1870s, commercial photography studios of Yokohama already kept a stock of ready-to-use costumes from which visitors could select the particular exotic identity they desired.⁶ Such portraying of Westerners dressed in traditional Japanese garments, holding fans, posing for a tea ceremony with a background of tatami (畳, a type of mat used as a flooring material in traditional Japanese rooms) and painted screens deceptive enough to give the illusion that one was in a real Japanese living room, was commonly practiced among all kinds of visitors. Still, it is frequently criticised today for its 'tourist gaze', especially the notorious imperialist connotation of being able to domesticate, to appreciate, and to represent the 'timeless Orient'. The Yokohama photographers, either foreign or Japanese, were not suspicious or concerned at the time. For them, the souvenir photography industry was a straightforward business transaction through which they could profit from booming tourism driven by the growing number of expatriates, merchants, diplomats, missionaries, and so-called globetrotters. The promising commercial reward can be deduced from the high quality of the exquisitely lacquered and inlaid covers, the delicately hand-coloured finish, and the fierce competition among photographers and studios.⁷ The sheer quantity of photos produced and exported also reflects the importance of this industry – according to the records of the Japanese Trade Bureau, 24 923 photographs were exported to the US and 20 242 to Europe from Japan in 1897 alone.⁸

If a costume could be considered a changeable second skin that is adopted by the body to perform and express one's inner characters, alter egos, beliefs, cultural and identity orientations, then tattoos are even more closely connected with this performativity because of their character of permanence and intimacy, which is carved on the skin and cannot not easily be altered or removed. Having been exempted from the utilitarian function of clothing, tattoos are perceived on a more

⁵ Explanation on the use of Japanese/Chinese language: The Japanese words used in this article are translated into a roman pronunciation with the original Japanese words and meaning in English provided behind. Japanese/Chinese names follow the order of surname before given name as in their original appearance.

⁶ Christine Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo: Cultural Cross-Dressing in the Colonial Context," *East Asia Cultures Critique*, Duke University Press 8, no. 3 (2000): 605–36.

⁷ Mio Wakita, "Sites of 'Disconnectedness': The Port City of Yokohama, Souvenir Photography and its Audience," *Transcultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013), 77–129; Luke Gartlan, "Types or Costumes? Refraining Early Yokohama Photography," *Visual Resources* 22, no. 3 (2006): 239–63.

⁸ Philbert Ono, "Photo guide Japan," accessed March 27, 2017, http://photoguide.jp/txt/PhotoHistory_1868-1919#1894_28Meiji_27.29.

metaphysical level for their spiritual and aesthetic connotation. Considering that tattooing has been practised among the ancient and aboriginal societies, prisoners, and rebels, the discourse of tattooing is accompanied by a sense of depravity, individual heroism, and a certain primitive, unbridled sexuality of peoples perceived to be barbaric.⁹ In order to make a tattoo visible, the body has to be exposed. However, being naked, such as in the case of displaying a full-body tattoo, was not acceptable by the standards of most ‘civilised’ societies of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the playfulness of possessing a tattoo rests exactly on this space of being between the ‘civilised’ and the ‘barbaric’. By dressing down to dress up, revealing and concealing the tattoos, one acquires control of the own body for the self-expression of identity, class-status, and individualism. Through this theatrical dramatization in the form of a pictorial narrative, it is not as crude as simply exposing the naked body, but in a more sophisticated and aesthetic way it is related to ‘art’. Art, as defined by Shiner’s¹⁰ and Warhol’s¹¹ claims, is a purely modern concept that is based on its relation to taste, aesthetics and intellectual capability, as well as wealth. It is this potential artistic quality that Western travellers sought in Japanese tattoos even before they landed on the ports. Tattooing in Yokohama was related to the concept of fine arts, and was promoted by the effect of celebrity, elaborated through the words of feverish intellectual orientalists, and spread from mouth to mouth in the transcontinental tourism business. This led to the replacement of former sailors and soldiers as clients by higher-classed leisure tourists, globetrotters, and aristocrats who enthusiastically joined the practice and became agents forming the ‘bodyscape’ of cultural exchange between Japan and the West.

The numerous souvenir photographs, illustrations, and textual descriptions of Japan and Japanese people circulating in Europe and America did not only contain the quiet scenery of Fuji-san and kimono girls, but also male nudes of mailers, firefighters, jinrikisha drivers, coolies, and carpenters. In the eyes of Westerners, all existing social hierarchies and structures had been eliminated in this encounter with Japan to give way to its subjective aesthetic appreciation for ‘art’ imposed on human bodies and the visual reproductions of them. The reception of these images does not necessarily mean that bodies of lower-class Japanese people were prominently interesting, but social status surely lost its relevance in the eyes of Western observers to give way to aesthetic judgments. In this regard, these bodies unintentionally constituted a part of the ‘bodyscape’ that connected Japan to the West. Although depicting anonymous lower-class labourers, these photographs

⁹ Guth, “Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo”; Dag Joakim Gamborg, “Japanese Traditional Tattooing in Modern Japan” (Master thesis, University of Oslo, 2012); 宮下 規久朗 Kikurō Miyashita, *Irezumi to nūdo no bijutsushi: Edo kara kindai e*, NHK bukkuusu 1109 (Tōkyō: Nippon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2008).

¹⁰ L. E. Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

¹¹ Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).

were similarly hand-painted to highlight the detailed lines and rich colours of the tattoos that covered large areas of their bodies (**Figure 1**).



FIGURE 1. FELICE BEATO: TATTOOED JAPANESE FIREFIGHTERS. HAND-COLORED PHOTOGRAPH, CA. 1870.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Before John La Farge visited Japan, he wrote that Japanese tattoos “are the most simple means of expression in art”, and even connected “with the designs of Michel Angelo!”¹² La Farge’s comment confirmed that the West regarded Japanese tattooing as a form of artwork that celebrated the beauty of the male body, strength and masculinity similar to Michelangelo’s masterpieces of the Renaissance. Was he trying to transport the same Renaissance to Japan, by unearthing art of Western eternity to rediscover the Far East? His education as an art historian perhaps skewed his view. As has been pointed out by Guth, this Western response to Japanese tattoos and tattooed bodies also challenged the view that women were the exclusive focus of the male gaze in Japan.¹³ Japanese tattooing also conveys a close connection with ukiyo-e 浮世絵, the woodblock prints of the ‘floating world’ which had already gained massive popularity in the Western world at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris held in 1855.

¹² Ernest Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan: An Inner History of the Japanese Reformation* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1983), 25.

¹³ Christine Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2004), 143.

Meanwhile, legends of Hori Chiyo (彫千代) of Yokohama, known as the “Emperor of tattooists”, were repeated and circulated in both, the Western world and Japanese treaty ports. This name was recorded in memoirs, travelogues and guide-books to describe the “Emperor of tattooists” as the master artist of the ‘Orient’ who tattooed several European aristocrats as well as members of the New England elite.¹⁴ The business cards,¹⁵ circulars and advertisements of Hori Chiyo described him as a hospitable professional service provider, an enthusiastic, devotional artist and shrewd businessman. These printed materials were cautiously designed to appeal to the tourists with already established knowledge of him.

At that time, costume portraits as well as tattooing became top attractions of Yokohama as part of the most popular souvenirs and recreational experiences for the fast consumption of globetrotters during their short stays, together with the jinrikisha (人力車 the pulled rickshaw) rides and visits to curio shops. Through these staged illusions of feeling able to travel back through time, to escape the restlessness and noise of Western modern city life and its bourgeois materialism, Japan – on its far eastern islands with its far away legends – had enchanted the Western world with such imagination and impression, thus tempting people to moor in the Yokohama harbour. Meanwhile, the scheduled trans-Pacific steamship service became available with shortened travel distances and durations facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal and the completion of the Trans-American railway by the end of the 1860s. This greatly stimulated the market demands from not only the diplomats, merchants or missionaries, but also leisure travelers.

However, Westerners were occasionally disappointed when they finally set foot on these Far East islands because their encounters in post-1870s Yokohama failed to meet their expectations. The Meiji Restoration had started a dramatic revolution that would change the entire appearance of Japan. Contrary to the Westerners, who went after pre-modern costumes, artifacts, and tattoos, the Japanese were forced to get rid of them. Since 1871, Japanese people were encouraged to adopt Western costume, and tattooing was banned in 1872.¹⁶ Answering to the absence of the expected exotic spectacle, photographers and tattooists of Yokohama catered to the desire of Western visitors to perform ‘authentic old Japan’ by offering a temporal connectedness to the timeless Orient by means of costumed portraits and images on the skin, thereby reinventing Japanese heritage.¹⁷ Within the same ‘bodyscape’, Japanese themselves were fervently learning and imitating the lives

¹⁴ George Burchett and Peter Leighton, *Memoirs of a Tattooist: From the Notes, Diaries and Letters of the Late “King of Tattooists”* (London: Oldbourne Press, 1958).

¹⁵ Charles M. Taylor, *Vacation Days in Hawaii and Japan* (Philadelphia: G. W. Jacobs & co., 1898).

¹⁶ 山本芳美 Yamamoto Yoshimi, *イレズミの世界 Irezumi no sekai* (Tattoo: the Anthropology of Body Decoration) (東京: 河出書房新社, 2005).

¹⁷ “Perseverance: Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World,” Exhibition at the Japanese American National Museum, The Japan Foundation, last accessed March 28, 2017, <http://www.janm.org/exhibits/perseverance/>.

and styles of Westerners, for the purpose not to seem old and timeless, but modern and significant, reflecting goals of the Meiji government.

The Body Tattooed

My object is not making money by the work, but I covet to spread the art [of tattoo] all over the world, and promote my reputation. All tourists who come to Japan from Europe and America are solicited to patronise my work, as it may serve as a memento of pleasant sojourn or visit to the fair land of the 'Rising Sun'. – Hori Chiyo 彫千代, 1896

Danbara Terukazu 檀原照和, a Japanese contemporary writer, described the port, the sailors and the tattoos as a trinity. In a romanticizing fashion, he dated the tradition of tattooing to the beginning of seaports, when Western sailors and soldiers would come on shore to have themselves tattooed as a souvenir – patterned with exotic motifs and pin-up girls, and even as lucky charms for the blessing of a safe voyage – engraved on their skin during the short stays of visit.¹⁸ With their hidden implication and connection to the spiritual power and wish for good luck, prosperity, strength, love and fortune, these ritual-like practices related with eternity, the necessity of going through pain and the satisfaction of enduring it. In the nineteenth century, there also was the high chance of getting a disease from the communally used needles, a further risk to be accepted.

At the opening of the port in Bakumatsu (幕末, at the end of the Tokugawa period, around 1853 to 1868), the craft of irezumi (入れ墨, literally translated as 'ink in-carving') had reached the highest level that the rest of the world had ever known. Although some researchers have traced the legacy of tattooing in Japan to the ancient Jomon and Yayoi periods (14 000 BC – 250 AD),¹⁹ and the tribal culture of the Ainu (アイヌ, an indigenous people of Hokkaido, North-Eastern Honshu as well as Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and the Kamchatka), what made the Japanese irezumi spectacular was the development of the 'full-body suits' from the late eighteenth century onward. This tattoo covered the entirety or large areas of the body and allowed big-scaled pictorial designs and narrative motifs to be carved permanently on the human skin. Tattooist in Japan used the hand-carving technique known as tebori (手彫り) or wabori (和彫り, literally Japanese carving). Tebori is distinguished from Western tattooing, because tebori carves out sophisticated pictorial designs such as the scenes of ukiyo-e (woodblock prints)

¹⁸ 檀原照和 Danbara Terukazu, レッドライト (2012), accessed March 28, 2017, <http://yokohama-now.jp/home/?p=6655>.

¹⁹ Gamborg, "Japanese Traditional Tattooing"; Donald McCallum, "Historical and Cultural Dimensions of the Tattoo in Japan," in *Marks of Civilization: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, ed. Arnold Rubin. (Los Angeles: Museum of Cultural History, 1988); Willem R. van Gulik, *Irezumi: The Pattern of Dermatography in Japan, Mededelingen van Het Rijksmuseum Voor Volkenkunde* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982).

and other symbolic combinations. The development of irezumi paralleled that of the ukiyo-e but also of urban entertainment, theatrical performances as well as the growing number of workers in the city. Most tattooists were trained ukiyo-e designers who tattooed as a side job.

The earliest tattoos in the Edo period were penal tattoos, which were engraved on the bodies and faces of criminals as a punishment similar to the cases in Ming China (1368–1644). At the beginning of his reign, the first Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398) regulated corporal punishments by stating that “the corporal punishments include face tattooing, body tattooing, tendon-cutting, and finger-cutting” (肉刑有墨面文身挑筋去指, 大詔).²⁰ The earliest Japanese record which indicated tattooing as a punishment was found in *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 (Prince Toneri 舍人親王, 720), according to the Japanese writer Senoo Kappa 妹尾河童.²¹ In 1720, Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗 (1684-1751) enacted the regulation of tattoo punishment 入墨刑 which buried the negative root of irezumi that connected it to the exiles, criminals and yakuza (ヤクザ, members of the Japanese organized crime syndicates). To distinguish tattooing in general from negative connotations, the term Horiomono (literally translated as things that are carved) was also used to describe the voluntary expression of body art.²²

One remarkable factor that deeply influenced the development of large scaled tattoos as body decoration in Japan is the Chinese novel the *Water Margin* 水滸伝 (Shi Nai'an, 1589), which tells the story of a group of 108 outlaws, former criminals and social rebels who formed an army to resist the central government and were then amnestied by the government to march against foreign invaders and other rebel forces. Since the early-eighteenth century, the *Water Margin* was introduced to the Japanese public through picture books of Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 (1797-1861), Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849) and through the novels of Takebe Ayatari 建部綾足 (1719-1774) and Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848). The *Keiseisuikoden* 傾城水滸伝 (Kyokutei), published between 1825 and 1835, was illustrated by Utagawa Toyokuni 歌川豊國, Utagawa Kuniyasu 歌川国安 and Utagawa Sadahide 歌川貞秀. These illustrations were made into woodblock prints, which gained phenomenal popularity²³ In the original Chinese narrative, the outlaw protagonists have tattoos that highlight their unique character traits using fierce animal symbols like dragons, tigers, leopards and Buddhist iconography such as yakshas (a broad class of nature-spirits in Buddhism who are caretakers of the natural treasures hidden in the earth and tree roots), in

²⁰ 範炯 Fan Jiong, 歷史的瘋狂: 嗜血的年代 (知書房出版集團, 2002), 222.

²¹ 妹尾河童 Senoo Kappa, 窺看日本 Kappa Ga Nozoita Nippon, trans. 陶振孝 (台北: 遠流出版社, 2006), 101.

²² 妹尾河童 Senoo Kappa, 窺看日本 Kappa Ga Nozoita Nippon, 101.

²³ 曲亭馬琴 Kyokutei Bakin, 傾城水滸伝 (1825-1835); 建部綾足 Takebe Ayatari, 本朝水滸伝 (1773); 歌川国芳 Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 通俗水滸伝豪傑百八人之巻, “Popular Suikoden 108 Heroes,” (woodblock prints, 1827), accessed March 30, 2017, <http://www.geocities.jp/shinzogeka/SuikodenKuniyoshi.htm>.

the form of coloured engravings 花繡. Most characters only have the metal stamp 金印 — the face tattoo punishment as a marker of their identity as former criminals. However, in Kuniyoshi's depictions of the 108 popular Suikoden Heroes (通俗水滸伝豪傑百八人之壱人, 1827),²⁴ based on his accumulated style in the samurai designs, the tattoos of the Suikoden (which is the Japanese translation of the *Water Margin*, from the original Chinese Shuihuzhuan) characters acquired a moving posture (**Figure 2**).

The enlarged and elaborated depictions of tattoos on the exposed bodies became the most eye-catching site of these pictures. Since then, Kuniyoshi's prints were used as models for tattoos in Edo Japan. After World War II, when the ban on tattooing was repealed, the tradition of using ukiyo-e as tattooing designs has been revitalised, with the promotional appraisal of irezumi as the “living ukiyo-e”.²⁵



FIGURE 2. UTAGAWA KUNIYOSHI: *TSUZOKU SUIKODEN GOKETSU HYAKU-HACHI-NIN NO HITORI*. PIGMENTS ON MULBERRY PAPER, CA. 1827-30. BALTIMORE, WALTERS ART MUSEUM.

²⁴ “Popular Suikoden 108 Heroes (通俗水滸伝豪傑百八人之壱人)”, accessed March 30, 2017, <http://www.geocities.jp/shinzogeka/SuikodenKuniyoshi.htm>.

²⁵ 宮下 規久朗 Kikurō Miyashita, *Irezumi to nūdo no bijutsushi: Edo kara kindai e 刺青とヌードの美術史 江戸から近代へ*, NHK bukkusu 1109 (Tōkyō: Nippon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai 日本放送出版協会, 2008), 168-178; 大貫 菜穂 Naho Onuki, “歌川国芳 通俗水滸伝豪傑百八人之一個 におけるほりものの分析と考察 An Analysis and Consideration of Horimono : In Relation to Tsuzoku Suikoden Goketsu Hyakuhachinin No Hitori by Utagawa Kuniyoshi” 立命館大学大学院先端総合学術研究科 *Core Ethics* コア エシックス 6 (2010).

With the connotation of *Suikoden* that was similar to the one of Robin Hood, tattooing soon became part of a subculture related with resistance to authority, social rebels and noble outlaws. Originally, tattooing might have been a way to cover the appearance of criminal marks with pictorial motifs, but over time, a tattoo evolved into a popular performance of self-expression of individual pursuits and rebellious beliefs on one's own body in Ming Chinese popular fictions. This new layer of meaning and connotation of tattoos was adopted by the Japanese translation and interpretation of own interest, and was visually refined and exaggerated. At the same time, tattoos are more casual and mobile than paintings, and more intimate and permanent than any costume. Although the choice between concealing and revealing tattoos gives their bearers enough freedom for this expression of the self-made willful person, once tattooed, the intention was to keep it forever and at all time, in both public and private spheres. This character of tattooing gained special popularity among the urban lower classes. Before people from the West discovered tattooing in Japan, it had been casually practiced among prostitutes and their clients as a pledge of love,²⁶ among labourers and craftsmen as declarations of their physical strength, pride of occupation and alternative aesthetic opinion, and among the organised criminals as markers of their semi-underground identity. The commitment of loyalty and faithfulness to this career and to the expression of masculinity, brought courage and belief in supernatural forces.²⁷ These traditions of myth have been reinvented in the present in popular narratives as part of a ritual performed by the yakuza, together with finger cutting. In any case, as Yamada has argued, tattoos in Japan acquired a sense of *iki* (い き, roughly translated with 'chic- or stylishness', describing a specific aesthetic ideal) that is opposed to the interest of the superior samurai class, and a spirit of competition among commoners.²⁸ The performativity of large scaled pictorial tattoos arose with the *chōnin* (町人, townsmen) culture that ripened in eighteenth century's Edo Japan. In order to understand how Japanese traditional tattooing was increasingly identified with 'fine art', it is necessary to recall briefly the influence of Western art over Japanese arts and crafts in general. The gradual import of Western artistic materials, visuals and concepts of art before the Edo period, and the radical restructuring in the Meiji period not only gave birth to *Yōga* 洋画 (the Japanese adaption of the Western style of painting), but also led to drastic changes in Japanese painting itself which engendered *Nihonga* 日本画, the so-called new Japanese style of painting, which was based on traditional painting but also

²⁶ Gamborg, "Japanese Tattooing", 27; M. Yamada, "Westernization and Cultural Resistance in Tattooing Practices in Contemporary Japan," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 12, no. 4 (2009): 319–38.

²⁷ David E. Kaplan and Alec Dubro, *Yakuza: Japan's Criminal Underworld* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁸ M. Yamada, "Westernization", 319–38.

absorbed Western painting techniques.²⁹ These two schools constituted the main dichotomy in the categorization of Japanese art since the Meiji period. Irezumi was considered to be a part of the Nihonga movement, since it was closely related with the Nihonga painting, especially the ukiyo-e (woodblock prints), traditional watercolor painting and religious iconography. Irezumi acquired a more vivid visual quality through the use of new colors.³⁰ Additionally, because of the impact of Western paintings, photography and prints, the visual style of Irezumi acquired a more sophisticated and realistic appearance marked by enriched volumes and shadow layers.³¹ By the end of the 19th century, both hori – that is carving and tattooing masters in Japan – as well as their foreign clients measured the quality of tattoos through their lifelikeness, flamboyance and dynamic motions.

Danbara has pointed out several reasons why the master Hori Chiyo became especially famous among Westerners. For example, Hori learned English, managed his business well and had a market-oriented attitude. Furthermore, he also put an effort in the adaptation of new colors and designs to appeal to the preferences of foreigners.³²

To make the situation at this historical moment clearer, it could be concluded that, the ritual performance of tattooing, which involved souvenir collecting, spiritual divination, and the demonstration of masculinity through pain-endurance and gambling with the chance of getting a disease allured sailors and adventurers with romantic pursuits to walk into the tattoo shops of Japanese ports. On the other hand, its high pictorial quality and consensus with traditional art forms of Buddhist iconography, folklore symbols, kabuki (a Japanese traditional performing art), popular literature and ukiyo-e, made Japanese tattooing charming and comparable to any fine art in the eyes of its foreign advocators among the European or American elite,³³ who were obsessed with the fashion of *Japonisme* at the time.³⁴

However, the destiny of tattooing within Japan tells another story: The connotation of tattooing as both an escapement from and protest against the social rule and the ruling power resulted in its continued rise and suppression throughout the Edo and Showa periods (1603-1989) until today. In 1872, the Meiji government enacted the Decree of Tattoo Prohibition (文身禁止令), which lasted until 1948 when the prohibition was lifted during the US-American occupation. As part of the 'civilisation and enlightenment' campaign which enforced the change

²⁹ Chelsea Foxwell, *Making Modern Japanese-Style Painting: Kano Hōgai and the Search for Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

³⁰ 檀原照和 Danbara Terukazu, レッドライト (2012), accessed March 30, 2017, <http://yoko-hama-now.jp/home/?p=6655>.

³¹ 宮下 規久朗 Kikurō Miyashita, *Irezumi to nūdo no bijutsushi: Edo kara kindai e* 『刺青とヌードの美術史 江戸から近代へ』, NHK bukkuusu 1109 (Tōkyō: Nippon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai 日本放送出版協会, 2008), 182-186.

³² 檀原照和 Danbara Terukazu, レッドライト.

³³ 宮下 規久朗 Kikurō Miyashita, *Irezumi to nūdo no bijutsushi*.

³⁴ *Japonisme* is a French term coined in the late nineteenth century to describe the craze for Japanese art and design in the West.

of clothing, tattooing was banned together with public baths of men and women together, the display of full public nudity as well as exposing the body from the waist upwards. According to Yamamoto, the purpose of such prohibitions was political: [T]o avoid occupation by Western countries, Japan needed to appear ‘civilised’³⁵ and tattooing was understood by the Japanese government as what “foreigners would regard as backwards or barbaric”.³⁶ Moreover, the need for the “centralisation of power from a world that was divided into feudal domains to create a civilised nation” was a primary concern of the Meiji government and “ever since the opening of Japan to the world, [the government] strengthened control over the people’s appearance and customs” as one means of this mission.³⁷ The enforced unification of physical appearances was designed to demonstrate to Western powers that the Japanese people were under firm Japanese rule, homogenising them into the Japanese Empire. These policy and attitude changes further marginalised tattooing to an even more underground status.

The Legend of Hori Chiyo

Under these circumstances, one of the most dramatic scenes in Japanese tattoo history took place: It was the myth of the legendary tattoo master Hori Chiyo. While tattooing had been pushed to a more marginal deviant status by the Japanese government as part of its pursuit to be seen as equal among the ‘civilised’ nations, the underground practice of tattooing still prospered in the treaty port of Yokohama, especially among Western visitors. Despite the habitual practice of tattooing among sailors and marines, Western tourists came to Yokohama and requested service of the well-known hori masters by name. During his two trips to Japan, Charles Appleton Longfellow (1844-1893), the oldest son of the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), firstly had a giant carp ascending a waterfall carved on his back between 1871 and 1873 and Kannon, a Buddhist deity, seated in the mouth of a dragon on his chest in 1885.³⁸

³⁵ 山本芳美 Yamamoto, Toshimi, “文身禁止令」の成立と終焉 — イレズミからみた日本近代史,” 治大学政, 政治学研究論集, 5 (1997), 93-97; 山本芳美 Yamamoto Yoshimi, イレズミの世界 Irezumi no sekai (*Tattoo: The Anthropology of Body Decoration*) (東京: 河出書房新社, 2005), accessed March 30, 2017. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/06/08/reference/whether-covered-or-brazen-tattoos-make-a-statement/#.WNFI93eZNn4>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos*, 142; Julie Joy Nootbaar, “Charles Longfellow’s Twenty Months in Japan: A glimpse at the Journals, Letters, and Photographs of the Poet’s son, and their Significance among other Writings in our Understanding of the Euro-American experience in Meiji Japan,” 大分県立芸術文化短期大学研究紀要 第52巻, 107-121, 118-119; for images see: Christine Guth, “Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo: Cultural Cross-Dressing in the Colonial Context,” *East Asia Cultures Critique*, Duke University Press 8, no. 3 (2000), 618–19.

Japanese tattoos also became popular among the European aristocrats, who gained a reputation for being interested in collecting tattoos and whose tattoos were widely imitated by other travelers.³⁹ In the travelogue of a royal British cruise on the H.M.S. *Bacchante*, it was recorded that on October 27th and 28th, 1881, during their stay in Tokyo, Prince Albert Victor and Prince George (later King George V) were tattooed by two Japanese tattoo artists in the En-riô-kwan (the official guesthouse for foreign dignitaries located in Hama Palace, Tokyo) despite the princes' awareness that tattooing had been abolished by law in Japan.⁴⁰ Among the crew was Prince Louis of Battenberg, who supposedly "sport[ed] the massive tattoo of a dragon across his chest and down his legs."⁴¹

In his memoirs, the British tattooist George Burchett (1872-1953) attributed the tattoos of the British princes, and other naval officers of the H.M.S. *Bacchante*, to a certain Hori Chiyo of Yokohama. The same Hori Chiyo was described to have decorated Charles Longfellow and Czar Nicolas II of Russia.⁴² He was regarded as the emperor among the kings of tattooing.⁴³ An advertisement of the famous curio shop Arthur & Bond's in Yokohama further confirmed the popularity of Hori Chiyo among the Western travelers with the written announcement:

TATTOOING. Hori Chiyo - The celebrated tattooer, patronised 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 designs and samples can be seen at the Tattooing Room (Arthur & Bond's, Yokohama, 1893).⁴⁴

Writing in 1897, Bolton made the same claim that it was Hori Chiyo who tattooed the Princes and he confirmed the artistic values of Chiyo's works. He went on to describe his experience seeing Chiyo's shop: "[A] visit to Chiyo's charming bungalow on the Esplanade at Yokohama is one of those things that most travelers to that fascinating country perform almost as soon as they land." There they were welcomed by Chiyo and his pupils in excellent English. The visitors were offered a cosy environment, luxurious cushions and even cigarettes and cooled drinks.⁴⁵

³⁹ R. J. Stephen, "Tattooed Royalty, Queer Stories of a Queer Craze," in *The Harmsworth Monthly Pictorial Magazine* (1), 1898.

⁴⁰ Prince Albert Victor et al., *The Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship 'Bacchante' 1879-1882*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1886).

⁴¹ Hugo Vickers, *Alice: Princess Andrew of Greece* (London: Penguin, 2001).

⁴² Burchett and Leighton, *Memoirs of a Tattooist*, 100-103.

⁴³ Dambala Tell-Kaz, "Noble Tattoo and Forgotten Tattooist," accessed March 30, 2017, <https://www.scribd.com/document/109352620/Noble-Tattooee-and-Forgotten-Tattooist>.

⁴⁴ "Advertisement, Arthur & Bond, Yokohama" (1893), accessed on March 30, <http://925-1000.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=24259&start=20>.

⁴⁵ Gambier Bolton, "Pictures in the Human Skin," *The Strand Magazine* no. 4 (1897), accessed on March 30, 2017, http://www.vanishingtattoo.com/tattoo_museum/pictures_in_the_human_skin_bolton_1897.html.

As an image of a tattoo shop in Nagasaki in the *Illustrated London News* shows, sometimes geisha performances were offered and sake was served as well.⁴⁶

Bolton added more details to his observation of the legendary tattooing master of Japan by stating that Chiyo lost the sight of one eye due to the constant straining stare on small works required in his work.⁴⁷ The excitement of this exotic experience was enhanced by a sense of violating the local regulation – perhaps another sort of fun derived from a colonialist attitude. Bolton described Chiyo’s negotiation with the Yokohama police court and how he had to state that he never tattooed any Japanese but only did his business with “foreign noblemen and millionaires”⁴⁸ since he tattooed a dragon on the Russian heirs left arm some years before. Chiyo seems to have been aware that tattooing was known abroad as one of Japan’s fine arts and claimed that “so long as he [*Chiyo, H.W.*] does not operate upon Japanese, he commits no violation of the law.”⁴⁹ The police eventually closed his business and charged him with a small fine. Bolton’s story became even more legendary because of his description that Chiyo was later paid by a certain Mr. Bandel to work for three years in New York for an annual salary of 2,400 pounds of gold.⁵⁰

Another globetrotter, Charles M. Taylor, also recorded a visit to Hori Chiyo’s shop in Yokohama in 1886.⁵¹ Taylor seems to have been well informed of Chiyo’s worldwide reputation, but nevertheless spent two pages describing the business card and the circular of the tattooist, which read: “patronised by H. R. H. Albert Victor and George, and having testimony of Marquises, Counts, and other particular families.” This reference was followed by Chiyo’s promotional declaration: “[M]y art of tattooing has been frequently noticed in the American and European press. I had a taste of drawing from very young age.”⁵² Chiyo, who claimed to be a graduate of the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy, sought according to Taylor to devise new methods and innovate fresh designs to perfect the artistic effects of tattooing, seeking to distinguish himself from other tattooists because he was “not satisfied with the common crude works of the profession.”⁵³ However, this statement did not seem to meet the Westerner’s expectations of ‘authenticity’. For them, the skills of the legendary Oriental tattoo master could not be rooted in the art academy as an imported Western institution with the potential to contaminate the ‘authentic Japanese’. But he tourists and writers seem to have overcome the initial desire to find an ‘authentic Japanese culture’, the tourists were less adven-

⁴⁶ For the image see: John Mitchell, “Loved Abroad, Hated at Home: the Art of Japanese Tattooing,” *Japan Times*, March 3, 2014, accessed April 7, 2017, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2014/03/03/issues/loved-abroad-hated-at-home-the-art-of-japanese-tattooing/#.WOeK12dCTIU>.

⁴⁷ Bolton, “Pictures in the Human Skin.”

⁴⁸ Gambier Bolton, “Pictures in the Human Skin.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Taylor, *Vacation Days*, 146–147.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

turous and relied much more on the known. At that time, the decreasing interest in tattooing within the Japanese society itself and the fast consuming treaty port business caused a decline in quality. Regarding the fact that this business was positioned in a semi-underground status and there was barely any regulation or authority to conduct quality control, both Japanese service providers and Western tourists had to accept that the training of the newly established Academy of Arts represented at least some guarantee against charlatanry. Thereby, the old artisan system of pre-modern Japanese visual culture was replaced by a new one based on Western conceptions of fine arts.⁵⁴ In this context of well-polished advertising, Chiyo did not only regard tattoos as art and delight that should be taken with professional care, but also emphasised the precaution he took with his needles, which he promised would not be re-used. This highlighted the professional awareness of the Yokohama tattooists to use the concept of fine art for marketing among the Western consumers as well as their adapted customer-oriented professional standards as possible advantage in the competition for customers. In order to serve the demands of Western tourists better, the tattooing masters of Yokohama quickly reinvented themselves as modern professionals according to Western criteria of aesthetics, service and hygiene. These tourists were driven by popular narratives, legends and celebrity effects to chase after special holiday experiences, but were nevertheless mass consumers in a mass business.

Despite all the legendary encounters with this Japanese 'emperor of tattooists', Danbara and Koyama have revealed that Hori Chiyo was a myth based on several different anonymous figures.⁵⁵ The non-existence of Hori Chiyo demonstrates the disparity of Western expectations for an 'authentic Japan' in the Meiji period and a reality that was largely created by tourists and utilized by Japanese tattooists. In the travelogues of the Bacchante's cruise, no specific names of tattooists were mentioned. It is highly possible that the royally praised anonymous tattooists of the Far East acquired a collective name, persona and fine art standards in later popular imagination and interpretations of the Anglo-Saxon literature. Yokohama curio shops and Japanese tattooists adopted similar standards to attract Western travelers who were well informed of the Hori Chiyo legends only then. Tattooing itself changed into a commodity, well-facilitated service and hospitality which could be packed and bought as a souvenir and almost obligatory experience of the visit to the Far East. Through this 'bodyscape', tattooists carved a new dimension of Japan on the encountered bodies but also left their mark on the transformation of Japanese culture itself. Outside Japan, represented by the name Hori Chiyo, the tattoo became a cultural brand that allured visitors with its 'mysterious primitiv-

⁵⁴ Dōshin Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011), 66–93.

⁵⁵ 檀原照和 Danbara, レッドライト; 小山 騰 Koyama Noboru, 日本の刺青と英国王室 (明治期から第一次世界大戦まで) *Nihon No Irezumi to Eikoku Ōshitsu: Meijiki Kara Dai-ichiji Sekai Taisen Made, Shohan* (Tōkyō: 藤原書店 Fujiwara Shoten, 2010).

ism and barbarism'. Interestingly, this Western myth eventually traveled back to the tattoo-banned Japan. In 1924, the writer Ikuma Arishima 有島生馬 wrote a novel *Hori Chiyo* 彫千代 which was published in the Japanese magazine *Women World* 婦人世界, with the illustration of Chiyo as an existing person.⁵⁶

As noted by Guth, Japanese tattoos are polysemic.⁵⁷ The aesthetic values of the Japanese context – the connotations of daring, strength, and virility – can still be read even when they are displayed and given new meanings on American and European bodies. Through these bodies, certain aesthetic spirits travelled across national boundaries, as piece of Japan and markers of trips to the country. It was to perform these heroic fantasies that Longfellow and others adopted Japanese tattoos.⁵⁸ The motivations behind tattooing remain various and complex, no matter what the specific meanings and ideals are that have been transmitted through the 'bodyscape'. These ideals and meanings of tattooed bodies transcend different cultural contexts of various backgrounds, classes, races, and occupations.

The Body Costumed

The photography studios of nineteenth century-Yokohama were an imported business as well, started by foreign photographers who came to settle and later taken over and mastered by their Japanese apprentices. Among the many commercial photographers who came to Yokohama in search for new market appeal after the opening of the port in 1859 was Felice Beato (1832-1909) who became prominent in Yokohama. Before he came to Japan in 1863, Beato had already established a reputation as professional photographer noted for his works on Crimea, in India and China in the fields of war, portrait, architecture and landscape photography. Together with Charles Wirgman (1832-1891), the cartoonist and illustrator of *Japan Punch* and *Illustrated London News*, he formed Beato & Wirgman, Artists and Photographers in 1864.⁵⁹ This was one of the very first commercial studios in Japan, and Beato himself soon became the most renowned entrepreneur of the Yokohama souvenir photography industry. His products, which included studio-based scenes and elegantly hand-processed colors and portrayed Japanese people in their traditional costumes, were purchased and circulated around the world by naval officers, diplomats and travelers, but also by his working partners and clients in the printing industry who reproduced these motifs in their illustrations and lithographs.⁶⁰ These portraits of costumed people and genre scenes were such a popular commodity in Yokohama that Beato had a separate category of *costume*

⁵⁶ 檀原照和 Danbara, レッドライト.

⁵⁷ Guth, *Longfellow's Tattoos*, 158.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Alona C. Wilson, "Felice Beato's Japan: People – An Album by the pioneer Foreign Photographer in Yokohama.", accessed March 30, 2017, https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/beato_people/fb2_essay03.html.

⁶⁰ Gartlan, "Types or Costumes?" 239–63.

on his price-list by the mid-1860s. Beato's offer of costumes was adopted by both Western and Japanese photographers in Yokohama and costume portraits became such an attraction that advertisements of Yokohama photographers were found in many English language newspapers and guidebooks.⁶¹ Gartlan has argued that the interest toward costume photography moved beyond mere touristic pleasure to the extent that the popularity of images of costumed local people was driven by "an amateur enthusiasm for ethnography" in an "era obsessed with the classification of humanity".⁶²

Foreign visitors did not only purchase images of Japanese people in their traditional costume, they also put themselves in these costumes to cross the boundaries of "ethnographic classification".⁶³ As suggested by Guth, it was a common practice for Yokohama photography studios to have Japanese traditional costumes and genre background screens and scene sets for the selection by Western clients to have themselves pictured with such performed identities of their choice.⁶⁴ During his trip to Japan between 1871 and 1873, Charles Longfellow sent home a portrait of himself guised in a full-set Japanese samurai outfit, accompanied by the following message: "I send you the photo of a gentleman of Kioto, who I met several times in the streets, particularly in the evening".⁶⁵ Other souvenir photos of Yokohama trips of Western tourists in the treaty port period also include pictures of them in Japanese traditional costumes (**Figure 3**).



FIGURE 3. K. YAMAMURA, CABINET CARD, YOKOHAMA, CA. 1870.
MONTREAL: PERSONAL COLLECTION OF JOHN TOOHEY.

⁶¹ Gartlan, "Types or Costumes?" 239–63.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo," 605–36.

⁶⁵ Charles Appleton Longfellow and Christine Wallace Laidlaw, *Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871-1873* (Cambridge, Mass: Friends of the Longfellow House, 1998).

The motivation and psychology behind these performances of disguise were not only intended to commemorate a trip to the Far East, as the temporal escape from the bourgeois society at home, but also the playfulness of an outsider's pretension to be a cultural insider. The pleasure was dependent on the immediately recognizable ethnicity as well as to the items used to represent the Japanese environment. Through this staged performance, the Western stranger claimed his access and thereby his dominance over Japanese culture – a common practice in the colonial world based on asymmetries in relationship. Dressed in Japanese traditional costume made of silk and chintz, sitting in a Japanese family setting – where females, mostly missing from the public spheres, would be approachable in the tourists' imagination of the pre-modern Eastern world – the whole scene acquired a softened female implication that was different from the male community of treaty port expatriates and business travelers. Although Japan was never de-facto colonized, the ethnical and cultural gap and hierarchy between Japanese and Europeans or Americans was pervasive due to the colonial situation in large parts of East and South Asia. This is especially true among the colonial officers and soldiers who rotated from post to post in all of East and Southeast Asia.⁶⁶ In a less critical sense, it seemed important to show the capability to afford the means required for long distance travel from Europe or North America to Japan.

In a few cases, such as Longfellow's, the engagement with Japan through costumes was more complex than the short-term touristic visit and involved an aesthetic belief in cultural authenticity – the 'authentic and true' Japanese culture as it was perceived as not contaminated by the influence of the West. Through dressing-up in Japanese traditional costumes and being tattooed in Japanese traditional style, Longfellow recognized himself as a cultural preserver and informed expert. This sentiment and belief was shared by other intellectual figures of the same time, including Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908)⁶⁷ and Okakura Kakuzo (岡倉覚三 1862-1913).⁶⁸ By comparing Longfellow's and Okakura's cross-dressed portraits, Guth has drawn the conclusion that they represented an alternative consumerism that sought expression of re-invented artistic alter-egos, essentially a pursuit for a "personal transformation in the form of a de-ethnicized, transcultural identity."⁶⁹ In this 'bodyscape', they became agents and practitioners of their own artistic and humanistic cultural beliefs beyond racial and national boundaries.

⁶⁶ The operating area of the China Station of the British Royal Navy included for example China, Japan, Korea, and large parts of the Northwestern Pacific coastline and Southeast Asia, see: "Map of Foreign Stations", accessed March 17, 2017, <http://www.naval-history.net/xDKWW2-3909-04RN.htm#4.2>.

⁶⁷ Ernest Fenollosa was an American collector of Japanese artefacts who participated in the establishment of the discipline of Japanese art history, altering the concept of traditional cultural objects into examples of fine art.

⁶⁸ Okakura Kakuzo was famous for his activities in the representation of Japanese and Asian art and culture in the Western world; Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1956).

⁶⁹ Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo," 605–36.

This sense of cultural authenticity was also found among the mass tourists of late-nineteenth century Yokohama, who deplored the nascent institutions of industrial modern society and the mimicry of Western civilization and praised instead Japanese 'aboriginality' absent in their own society. In order to support the view that the touristic experience in Yokohama was 'missing real Japan', a Welsh tourist's travelogue may be cited:

It seemed very strange to be suddenly surrounded by Japanese, and I could not help feeling sorry that so many had donned our ugly and unbecoming garments; but it was glorious fun being beset by real jinricksha men in real Japanese costume (little of it though there was), and being crushed upon by real jinrickshas, which looked like leggy Bath-chairs.⁷⁰

As they were disappointed by the absence of an 'authentic' Japan that was supposed to be performed by local Japanese people, Western visitors dressed themselves up in dramatic, starched Kamishimo (袴, the set of clothes consisting of the Kataginu, the sleeveless top and Hakama, worn by Samurai and courtiers during the Edo period) and Hakama (袴, clothes similar to loose trousers, secured by straps). In doing so, they performed as the Samurai of tales which served as the source for their imagination of 'authentic' Japan.

Another type of Western 'performers' in Japanese costumes were the long-term Western settlers in the treaty ports of East Asia who distinguished themselves from the temporal visitors and tourists by calling the latter "globetrotters".⁷¹ The assumed diminished quality of the touristic experience in 'culturally impure' treaty ports drove some long-term settlers and so-called 'experts' like Longfellow to dress themselves up in Japanese traditional garments and accessories, to participate in activities such as kabuki shows, tea ceremonies, calligraphy writing and Buddhist practices.⁷²

They were obsessed with Far Eastern culture and occupied with 'more serious missions', rather than leisure seeking, and did not regard Japan as merely one of the many stops during their *grand tour* around the world.⁷³ These acts were meant to display an international humanistic pride, based on their closer intimacy and deeper engagement with the Japanese culture with the goal to understand the philosophy of the East and to appreciate its arts. Their dressing acts were supposed to

⁷⁰ Sydney Henry Jones-Parry, *My Journey Round the World* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1881), accessed March 30, 2017, <https://archive.org/details/myjourneyroundw01parrgoog>, 280; Wakita, "Sites of Disconnectedness," 98.

⁷¹ William Elliot Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890), 339, accessed March 30, 2017, <https://archive.org/stream/mikadosempire00grifrich#page/n5/mode/2up>.

⁷² For images see: Guth, "Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo," 615-16.

⁷³ In the case of Longfellow, for example, he was part of an exploratory expedition into the inner Japanese land organized by the American consul; and Ernest Fenollosa was invited to teach at the Imperial University of Tokyo.

express an intellectual connectedness beyond the momentary performance which money could buy. However, this idea of ‘essential Japaneseness’ attached to pre-modern costumes was not shared by the Japanese government and the wider public. As part of the modernisation reforms, Japanese people were required to shed their traditional clothes and change into modern Western ones. In 1871, Emperor Meiji issued a proclamation stating the adoption of European uniforms for himself and his court officials, followed by the military and the police.⁷⁴ This action was intended to transform the appearance of the country through a top-down policy, but eventually it had only a limited effect on urban port towns and uniformed professionals and elites.⁷⁵ The choice of Western costumes was related with the imported modern concepts of comfort, health, and convenience, even morality.⁷⁶ Emperor Meiji’s European military uniform (**Figure 4**) represented a political intention seeking to revert the impression of a pre-modern, soft and effeminate backwardness into a modern, assertive, militant and masculine progression.⁷⁷



FIGURE 4. UCHIDA KUICHI: PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR MEIJI. PHOTOGRAPH, 1873.
THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART.

⁷⁴ Toby Slade, *Japanese Fashion: A Cultural History* (New York: Berg, 2009), 54-55.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Kramer, “‘Not So Japan-Easy’: The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Textile History* 44, no. 1 (2013): 3–24.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; 福沢諭吉 Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Seiyō Ishokujū 西洋衣食住,” 福沢全集, 5 2 (東京: 時事新報社. 国立国会図書館, 1898), accessed March, 30 2017, <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/898728/17>.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Ives, “The Body Politic: Victorian Fashions as Agents of Social and Political Change in Meiji Japan,” accessed March 30, 2017, <https://afashionableexcuse.wordpress.com/articles-and-papers/the-body-politic-victorian-fashions-as-agents-of-social-and-political-change-in-meiji-japan/>.

After his experience of being viewed as an 'exotic spectacle' during his travels to the West as part of Japanese delegations, Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉 1835-1910) proposed wearing European-style clothing as an essential component of presenting Japan as equal to the 'civilised' nations of the West.⁷⁸ In 1867, he published a guidebook entitled *Seiyō ishokujū* (西洋衣食住 *Western Clothing, Food and Homes*),⁷⁹ in which he provided the Japanese public with illustrated introductions of Western costumes and accessories. Photos produced in Yokohama's commercial studios commissioned by local Japanese clients also included Western accessories such as pocket watches – one of the most popular accessories among the Japanese in the treaty ports.⁸⁰ The pocket watch was also found in Fukuzawa's guidebook, together with a detailed explanation of the Western division of time into days, hours, minutes and its relatedness with the face of the watch. Fukuzawa commented that "in the West, they know the time not by the boom of a temple bell but by a watch they always bring with them. Recently, it is getting popular that people here wear the foreign-made watch. Sometimes they do not know how to read it."⁸¹ It could be assumed that, instead of a practical function, pocket watches carried by Yokohama Japanese performed a cultural function as markers of their treaty port identity, their superiority and endorsement of Westernisation and modernisation. In contrast to the Westerners who walked passed them on the docks, the treaty port was not a temporary escapement for the Japanese, but a frontier to meet the world beyond their familiar islands. The port was a transitional space where Western developments could be observed that seemed to defeat the grand East. In the treaty ports, not only the fantastic instrument of the watch, the stiff uniforms and laced dresses were adopted, but also the sense of a globally uniformed measure of time as well as a uniformed space for business, trading and modern politics. New ways of life gradually replaced the past. Japanese people who lived and worked in the treaty ports became the first ones to taste the new fashions, and naturally became agents to introduce the new fashions, products, and ideals to the whole country. The treaty port itself served as a third space, a space of contact between Japan and the Western world: It was shaped by desires on both sides, as the suited Japanese saw off the kimonoed foreigners.

The Western response to this costume change in Japan, besides the disappointment of tourists, problematized the issue of 'fitness': Western media argued that Western costumes did not suit the Japanese body and mocked Japanese dressed in ill-fitting Western costumes or the failure to correctly produce these clothes. A sense of irritation and claim to one's own authenticity was presented in these

⁷⁸ Yukichi Fukuzawa, Eiichi Kiyooka, and Carmen Blacker, *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

⁷⁹ 福澤諭吉 Fukuzawa, "Seiyō Ishokujū 西洋衣食住."

⁸⁰ Kramer, "Not So Japan-Easy," 3–24.

⁸¹ 福澤諭吉 Fukuzawa, "Seiyō Ishokujū 西洋衣食住"; Olive Checkland, *Japan and Britain after 1859: Creating Cultural Bridges* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 11.

mockeries, which regarded the Japanese adoption as clumsy mimicry. In any case, costumes did play a central role in the performances of identity and its mutual recognition, ideological pursuit and cultural authentication.

Conclusion: the Bodyscape of Culture Flow

The costumed and tattooed bodies acquired plural meanings under the circumstances of crossing cultural boundaries. Dressing up and tattooing practiced among residents and travelers from Europe and America in Japan was an expression of various motivations and interests playing a role in cultural encounters within the 19th century treaty port system. On both, collective and individual levels it represented preferences and concepts of what was modern, suitable, authentic and beautiful. Since the beginning of the treaty port era, Japan had striven for modernisation along a Western model. Reform led to drastic changes in all aspects of daily life, the Western costume was adopted as a sign of a modern centralised state and as a civilised practice putting Japan on the same level as Western empires. This assumed imitation irritated the Western sense of authenticity and disrupted the Western ideal regarding the national and cultural identity of Japan. Such attitudes were represented in Western writings that stated the unfitness and clumsiness of Japanese in Western costumes and criticised Japan's continuous declining cultural value.⁸²

At the same time, with its connotation of barbarism, individual heroism and resistance to the central ruling power, tattooing was officially prohibited by the Meiji government, but left to an underground existence through the patronage of foreign travelers in the treaty port cities. This resulted in a contradictory picture in the West where images and descriptions of Japanese costumes and tattoos in the forms of photographs, illustrations, travelogues, and works of fiction constructed a popular, but illusionary concept of 'authentic Japan'. Such impressions not only generated a fascination for Japanese culture in the Western world, but also attracted international tourists to land in Yokohama - who were then soon disappointed by the Westernised 'inauthentic' appearance of this port city.

It is improper to press the discourses of costume and tattoo into a single narrative and ignore its plural meanings for different groups and individuals, even among the Western travelers who had a multitude of different reasons for dressing up and being tattooed in traditional Japanese styles. For most temporal visitors, leisure travellers and the so-called globetrotters, the kind of service provided, in commercial photography studios, curio shops and tattoo studios in the treaty ports was a fast consumable touristic experience compensating for a missing 'old Japan', that was artificially reconstructed for the desired self-performance of a domesticated 'Orient'. The stereotyped tourist gaze was stabilised and authorised by

⁸² Kramer, "Not So Japan-Easy," 3–24.

the development of mass tourism, the grown profit of the market, the publication and circulation of travelogues, guidebooks and souvenir photographs exported in large numbers as new 'documentation' and 'evidence' for ethnographic analysis.⁸³ In other cases, like those of Hori Chiyo, Japanese tattoos gained metaphysical relatedness with modern concepts of culture and aesthetics, as well as Japanese tattooing became a part of the world's visual art history. Still, it remains questionable if the practitioners themselves were conscious of the power asymmetry involved that was later criticised in the postcolonial framework. It seems that the Yokohama tourism industry in the 19th century, led to the adaptation of products and services by Western and local Japanese service providers according to the Western-oriented idealized imagination of Japan, appealing to the demand of the market. For the cases of other visitors, like Charles Longfellow, Guth has pointed out that the portraits in Japanese costumes and tattoos suggested that "dressing up and down was a kind of performance through which [they] sought to negotiate [their] masculine identity."⁸⁴ Such individual aesthetic value was out of the framework of colonialism, but suggests that travelling (to Japan) in the 1870s could have been tied to a new culture of individualism and hedonistic adventure. Dressed in kabuki costumes and carved with Japanese tattoos, Longfellow also intend to display a deeper understanding and closer intimacy with this culture beyond a superficial tourist gaze.

The treaty port era was also the period when a certain idea of Japanese cultural authenticity was being established within and outside Japan. Through the described 'bodyscape', dressing-up, costumed photographs and tattoos Westerners performed a 'Japaneseness' that shaped components and representations of modern Japanese culture and its conceptualization of the past. On the other side, the Japanese took the human body as one of the frontiers to strive for modernization and global civilization. The two conflicting flows encountered and coexisted in the nineteenth century Treaty Port and formed its unique scenery, from where the 'ancient Orient' started its journey into the age of modernization and globalization, marked by the struggles over a binary understanding of the West and the East, modernity and tradition, looking for a distinctive path into the future.

⁸³ Gartlan, "Types or Costumes?," 239–63.

⁸⁴ Guth, *Longfellow's Tattoos*, 158.