

Military Intervention in Pre-war Japanese Politics

Admiral Katō Kanji
and the
'Washington System'

Ian Gow



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MILITARY INTERVENTION IN PRE-WAR JAPANESE POLITICS



Admiral Katō Kanji during his period as C-in-C Combined Fleet, paying a special visit to Asahi Primary School in his beloved home town of Fukui, 1928.

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Contents

<i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i>	ix
Introduction	1
PART I: KATŌ'S FORMATIVE YEARS	
1 The Early Years	15
Fukui	16
Katō's Father	20
Katō's Mother	22
Hashimoto Sanai	23
Kato's Childhood and Early Education	24
Early Formative Influences: A Reassessment	25
2 1882–1921: Naval Career, From Student to Naval Academy President	33
Naval Education in Nineteenth-century Japan	33
Katō Enters the Naval Academy	37
Katō Joins the Fleet	39
From England to the Russo-Japanese War	42
From Navy Ministry Duties to WW1	45
Katō and World War I	51
Vladivostok and the Siberian Expedition	54
The European Tour and Presidency of the Naval Academy	60
3 The Road to the Washington Conference	68
Potential Enemies	68

The 8–8 Fleet	70
The 70% Ratio	72
From Naval Arms Race to Naval Arms Limitation	73
The League of Nations and Naval Limitation	77
The Japanese Navy and Naval Limitation	77
The Call for a Conference at Washington	80
The Navy Prepares for Washington	82
The Tri-ministerial Preparatory Committee	86
Selection of Delegates	90

PART II: KATŌ AND NAVAL LIMITATION

4 Katō at Washington, 1921–22	97
Katō's Appointment as Chief Technical Adviser	97
Katō's Thinking Prior to the Conference	100
The Washington Conference	107
Naval Limitation	107
The Sub-Committee of Naval Experts	111
The Three-Nation Naval Experts Committee	118
Existing Strength	119
Basic Calculations	121
The Tokugawa Incident	127
The Two Katōs	132
5 From Washington to London: The Years 1922–29	150
The Geneva Naval Conference of 1927	159
Katō's Role in the Geneva Conference	168
6 The Road to the 1930 London Naval Conference	176
The Anglo-American Position	180
Japan's Position Prior to the Conference	183

	Katō Kanji's Position Prior to the Conference	192
7	Katō Opposes the 'American Compromise'	204
	Katō and the 'American' Plan	208
8	Katō and the Treaty Ratification Issue	249
	Katō and the Diet	251
	Katō and Takarabe's Return	255
	The Naval Strength Issue	258
	Katō's Resignation	260
9	Katō as Supreme Military Councillor, and Treaty Ratification	267
	Katō and the Supreme Military Council	267
	Katō and the Privy Council	281
10	Katō's Final Years	293
	Katō and Naval Politics 1932–34	300
	Preparing for the next Naval Conference	304
	Katō, the Fleet Memorial and the Premiership	307
	Katō and the 'February Incident'	314
	Conclusion	325
	<i>Bibliography</i>	342
	<i>Index</i>	363

FOR KATIE

Preface and Acknowledgements

My interest in military intervention in politics began during my undergraduate studies at Edinburgh after leaving the Royal Navy. My MA thesis dealt with the subject of military (army) intervention in politics in the 1930s. At the time I was greatly influenced by the work of James Crowley. My conclusion, however, was that the 1920s, and especially naval intervention in politics over arms control, held the key to understanding the nature of civil-military relations and military role expansion in Japanese politics.

I was fortunate to be accepted as a doctoral candidate at the centre for Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield, where I began my language studies as well as the study of Japanese political history. A Japanese Ministry of Education scholarship for language training took me to Osaka University of Foreign Languages, which was followed by a year at Doshisha University under the supervision of Professor Asada Sadao. Subsequently, I was awarded an Economic and Social Science Research Council scholarship, which enabled me to continue my studies at Sheffield under the guidance of Dr Gordon Daniels, followed by a year at the Social Science Institute at Tokyo University where I was privileged to come under the guidance of Professor Banno Junji.

The research for the thesis and this book has gone on for many years. During this time I have benefited greatly from advice, comments, assistance and encouragement provided by a great number of scholars, too many to mention by name. I hope those not mentioned won't be offended and will understand if I thank them all silently and yet still single out a small number of people to whom I owe a special debt. In particular, I owe a great debt to my supervisor Dr Gordon Daniels. I would also like to thank especially Mr Graham Healey and Dr (now Professor) Janet Hunter for their generous help whilst I struggled with the difficulties of both modern and classical Japanese.

I have continued over the years to benefit from the insights into Japanese diplomatic and naval history provided by the pioneering research of

Professor Asada Sadao. It was his seminal essay on the Japanese navy in Borg and Okamoto's *Pearl Harbour as History* which greatly influenced me in the selection of my thesis topic. His subsequent corpus of work on the Japanese Navy and the interwar naval limitation conferences has continued to provide me with insights even though we may disagree on interpretations of Katō Kanji himself.

I owe a tremendous debt to Professor Banno Junji, a truly great scholar and a most generous mentor. He not only provided brilliant insights but spent many hours helping me with difficult handwritten materials and facilitated access to all sorts of important sources. Professor Nomura Minoru of the Military History Office, Tokyo, also provided generous advice, support and access to materials as did Hirose Yoshihiro of the National Diet Library and Unno Yoshiro at the Foreign Ministry Archives. Professor Mikami Kazuo shared with me his tremendous knowledge of Fukui history and Professor Itō Takashi of Tokyo University facilitated an introduction to Katō Kanji's son, Katō Hirokazu who gave generously of his time and supplied me with hitherto inaccessible materials. I was the first foreign scholar to see, let alone use, the Katō Kanji diaries.

I have been indebted over the years, too, to Professor Ikeda Kiyoshi, Professor Hosoya Chihiro, Professor Ian Nish, Professor Roger Dingman, the late Professor David Evans, Dr Stephen Large and Professor Hamish Ion for their helpful comments and encouragement. I must add a special thank you for the considerable linguistic help I received from my old friend Sakamoto Yasutoshi whilst completing the thesis and my other dear friend Lola Okazaki-Ward for similar assistance when completing the book. I would also like to thank Paul Norbury for his personal and professional support in the making of this book.

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IAN GOW
Nottingham
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Introduction

Admiral Katō (Hiroharu) Kanji (1871–1939) was a key figure in the development of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN). His naval career spanned the formation, growth and maturation of that remarkable organization prior to the Pacific War. His roles and influence within the IJN, in terms of naval development, in the areas of education, technology, naval engagements, institutional change and internal naval politics and naval diplomacy alone merit him worthy of serious attention.

Katō Kanji occupied all the major educational and ‘command’ posts in the prewar Japanese Navy. He emerged from his naval training as a classic member of the *toppubatsu* (‘top of the class clique’). This marked him out as destined for high rank at a time when ascriptive *hanbatsu* (‘feudal domain origins’) criteria were being replaced by achievement criteria (performance at the Naval Academy and Naval War College). He went on to serve as Chief of the Gunnery School, Commandant of the Naval Academy Etajima and President of the Naval War College. He occupied all the major ‘command’ posts in the navy including Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff, C-in C Combined Fleet and Chief of the Naval General Staff. He had a distinguished war record, serving in all the major wars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He also witnessed key naval-diplomatic events; for example, he directly observed, as a junior naval officer, the American accession of Hawaii in the 1890s. He participated directly as a middle-ranking officer in complex renegotiations over the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Later, he served as naval attaché to Britain prior to World War One, commanded a squadron in joint operations with the Royal Navy and on escort duties for Anzac Forces during World War One and commanded the Japanese squadron at Vladivostok that landed the first troops during the Siberian Expedition in 1919. During the 1920s he occupied all the leading command positions ashore and afloat culminating in his promotion from Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff to C-in-C Combined Fleet and then

in 1929 becoming Chief of the Naval General Staff. During the 1930s he served as a member of the Supreme Military Council.

Katō also was associated very much with Japanese naval traditions as well as Japanese traditional values in general. He was closely linked with great naval heroes of the Russo-Japanese War such as Tōgō Heihachirō, the ‘Nelson of Japan’, serving with distinction as his Chief Gunner aboard Tōgō’s flagship the *Mikasa*. He was also a very close friend and classmate of Lt Hirose Takeo. The latter’s death in the first encounters at Port Arthur earned Hirose a place alongside Tōgō at Etajima Naval College in the Japanese pantheon of war heroes/gods (*gunshin*) of the IJN. Katō’s advocacy of the Japanese fighting spirit, (*yamato damashii*), combined with a close personal identification with the great heroes of the Russo-Japanese War endeared Katō to traditionalists and those who emphasized spiritual as opposed to materiel power within the IJN and indeed the Imperial Japanese Army. In the 1920s Katō himself became a strong advocate of fierce and relentless training, especially night training. This was largely in order to substitute the Japanese fighting spirit for technological deficits in terms of ships - a direct consequence of Japan agreeing to accept lower ratios at the Washington Naval Conference of 1921/22. Katō’s traditionalist image found sympathetic support amongst many Japanese, inside and outside the IJN, as Japan wrestled continuously with retention of innate Japanese values and approaches versus the increasing adoption of Western ones. This dilemma was especially marked within a military, especially a navy seeking to compete with the leading Western Naval Powers, a process which at times seemed to lead inexorably to mirror-imaging, which almost demanded divesting Japanese traditional values. However, Katō, like so many of his generation, was no mere traditionalist. His contributions to and advocacy of technology provided a subtle Japanese-influenced blend of tradition and technology so clearly advocated by his great mentor Hashimoto Sanai who famously stated ‘We shall take the machines and techniques from them but we have our own ethics and morals’.¹ Biographies of Katō were clearly intended to provide a suitable military role model for the youth of Japan on the eve of the Pacific War. More importantly, Katō’s influence on IJN officers led the distinguished military historian Tsunoda Jun to label the interwar naval officer corps ‘the Katō Kanji Generation’.²

There do not appear to exist any academic book-length studies of leading Japanese naval figures in English.³ Remedying this omission is therefore important when one considers the significance of the IJN in Japan’s recognition as a Pacific and then World Power prior to World War Two. The lack of biographical studies of Japanese naval/political figures compares very

unfavourably with the greater detail available on Army figures such as Yamagata Aritomo, Saigō Takamori, Ishihara Kanji or even Tanaka Giichi.⁴ Again, there exist in English no detailed scholarly institutional studies of the IJN to compare with the work of Leonard Humphries on the Imperial Army.⁵ However, the work of Dull on battle history and the more recent work by the late David Evans and Mark Peattie on naval strategy, as well as a number of book-length doctoral theses, are clearly a significant contribution to our knowledge of the IJN in general.⁶ In fact, the major contribution in this area has come not from monographs but essays on the Japanese navy and arms limitation, especially a series of seminal essays in English over more than three decades, by Asada Sadao, focused mainly on interwar naval arms limitation.⁷ These works whilst throwing very considerable light on institutional developments all tend to portray Katō Kanji in an extremely negative light. Indeed, Tsunoda's reference to a 'Katō Generation' was less than flattering and focused essentially on an interpretation of the perceived negative consequences of his role in the politicization of the naval officer corps of the 1920s and especially 1930s, an issue closely linked with the politics of naval limitation.

Thus, in terms of naval history alone, narrowly defined, a study of Katō's role would be a useful addition. However, it is Katō's high profile and controversial role in naval limitation negotiations in the 1920s and 1930s and in particular the political crisis over the signing and ratification of the London Naval Treaty of 1930 which elevates Katō from a key figure in specialist naval history into a significant political actor and ensures that he has not been relegated to an important if brief historical footnote in Japanese political history in the early twentieth century.

Katō's pivotal role in these interwar naval limitation agreements placed him, at certain crucial junctures, on centre-stage in Japanese international relations and domestic politics as these naval agreements put major strains on the fragile and arguably flawed fabric of Japanese civil-military relations. He was closely involved in a series of political upheavals that have continued to fascinate political and international historians of Japan and students of the IJN. Japan participated in naval limitation agreements at Washington (1921) Geneva (1927) London (1930) and then withdrew from the agreements at the Second London Conference (1935). The acceptance of the 5:5:3 ratio in capital ships at Washington, the unsuccessful attempt to extend these ratios to auxiliaries at Geneva (1927) and the acceptance of these ratios overall at the London Conference of 1930 created major political tensions which saw the gradual emergence within the IJN, but also in wider political circles, of a major schism. This is often described in terms of two groupings or factions.

The first of these, and the one to whom historians have been kindest, comprised those who, despite some obvious disadvantages to Japan, were in favour of signing up to treaty agreements rather than risk the rupturing of negotiations, the so-called Treaty Faction (*Jōyaku-ha*). Ranged against them were those who on the one hand wished to push again for better terms or who were prepared to see the conferences fail rather than, as they saw it, back down to the Americans, and who ultimately favoured blocking the signing and ratification of those treaties, especially the London Treaty of 1930. This group of hard-liners (*onken-ha*) who eventually pressed for Japan to abrogate the Washington Treaty agreements, and to whom historians have been less than kind, are generally known as the Fleet Faction (*Kantai-ha*). The domestic opposition to the signing and the ratification of the Washington Treaty and more especially the 1930 London Treaty was to polarize the Japanese political community and indeed the naval establishment spawning a major political crisis involving the throne (the so-called Supreme Command Crisis). The intensity of this political crisis in domestic politics and its repercussions for civil-military, intermilitary and intra-military relations arguably makes the London Treaty crisis of 1930, rather than Manchurian Crisis of 1931, the pivotal point in Japan's descent into the dark valley (*kurai tanima*) of the 1930s together with the ensuing massive, overt role expansion in politics, by the Japanese army and navy; and at the same time it marked deterioration in relations with the Anglo-American Powers, especially for the navy and its relations with the USA. This 'treaty crisis' or 'supreme command crisis' of 1930 contributed greatly to Japan's eventual withdrawal from the Second London Treaty negotiations and secession from the entire 'Washington System'.

Moreover, the political repercussions of naval limitation agreements exacerbated differences within the IJN itself and triggered major institutional and personnel change within the navy. Whether one sees naval limitation as the cause of this or merely as a symptom of the growth of a dual command system within the navy, it resulted in bringing to a head the competition between the older Navy Ministry and a younger Naval General Staff organization. This resulted in major reforms granting the Naval General Staff parity with the Navy Ministry and in addition parity with their more illustrious army counterparts the Army General Staff. This power shift affected both peacetime and wartime intermilitary as well as intra-navy arrangements and increased problems of coordination within the navy and between the navy and the army, especially in wartime Imperial Headquarters. Further-more, these struggles spawned a personnel crisis

leading to the Osumi Purge of 1933 whereby many talented officers who had been seen as pro-Treaty or pro-Navy Ministry were forced to retire.

Thus naval limitation issues and these personnel purges reflected significant institutional power struggles that came to a head during and immediately after the signing and ratification of the London Treaty (1930). They manifested themselves outside the naval establishment as increased politicization of the naval leadership that led to major problems of coordination between the navy and the cabinet. Finally, they contributed to the IJN successfully pressuring the government into withdrawing from the Second London Naval Conference and thus secession from the 'Washington System'. For some scholars this has been seen as the success of the so-called 'Fleet Faction' and that their success restarted the naval arms race and led inexorably to the IJN attack on Pearl Harbor.⁸

In any discussion of the 'Fleet Faction' and Japanese naval responses to arms limitation issues at this time Admiral Katō is always a, if not *the*, central figure. Whether as a key figure or as the symbolic figurehead, Admiral Katō Kanji is therefore arguably an ideal focal device for studying the politics of naval limitation in Japan. At Washington 1921/22, as Chief Technical Adviser, he was the focus of some rather controversial press coverage and speculation. However, this was insignificant in comparison to the legacy the Washington Naval Limitation Treaty bequeathed, in terms of perceptions of 'inferior ratios' imposed by the 'colluding' Anglo-American Naval Powers at Washington. This legacy undoubtedly had a major impact on the mindset of Katō himself as well as certain elements within the navy and the general public. He was not directly involved in the Geneva negotiations in 1927. Nevertheless, clearly as the C-in-C Combined Fleet, the highest command position afloat, he did have to deal with the consequences of agreements made at Washington. He did have strongly held views, which carried considerable weight. He was certainly very aware of the strategic consequences for the fleet from any agreements that might have emerged had Geneva 1927 been successful—especially on cruiser ratios, and there is no doubt that he was at the very heart of negotiations at home in Tokyo in 1929/30, as Chief of the Naval General Staff, addressing the questions of the acceptance of 'compromise' proposals, the signing and the ratification of the Treaties, and the later supplementary budgets which were designed to compensate for the ratios agreed at London.

Katō, by his actions, by the actions of his subordinates and supporters, by his attempts to influence the throne, together with his resignation, clearly influenced events and his role is undoubtedly a key one. It is quite common to see him attributed with very considerable influence (and even control)

over the institutional changes relating to the Naval General Staff in the early 1930s and the personnel purge—even influencing hot-headed young officers in the 1930s. From his controversial stand and resignation in 1930 and throughout the period until Japan withdrew from the interwar naval limitation frameworks based on the original agreements at Washington, Katō Kanji continued, in his role as a member of the Supreme War Council, to be closely involved in these events. This study offers a reevaluation of his role in these developments.

The complex negotiations and the politicization of the naval officer corps, especially from the London Treaty Crisis onwards, spawned a major constitutional crisis focusing on the ‘infringement of the supreme command’ (*tōsuiken kanpan*). This constitutional issue, incorporating the right of direct access to the Emperor (*iaku jōsō*) by senior military officers which enabled them to bypass the cabinet, indicates a primary fault line running through the fabric of Japanese civil-military relations. Katō’s actions and the timing and mode of his resignation plus his political activities afterwards, as the leader or symbol of the anti-treaty forces, are central to our understanding of the role of the Japanese navy in politics as well as Japanese domestic and international politics at this time. Massive overt intervention by senior naval officers such as Katō Kanji in the political process has received considerable attention from contemporaries and from scholarly literature in Japanese, of which the pioneering work of Asada Sadao has continued to be the most influential. However Ikeda Kiyoshi, a leading Japanese naval historian, has perceptively pointed out that most of the scholarly literature has been dominated by interpretations based on extensive use of Japanese archival materials involving key figures and key materials sympathetic to the pro-treaty forces at this time.⁹ A study of these crises utilizing Katō Kanji as a focal device, as a leader, figurehead or symbol of the anti-treaty forces within the navy and elsewhere, provides a useful alternative perspective on events and political actions. This in turn should lead to a more balanced assessment of the role of the IJN in politics and politics in the IJN at this time.

Katō, because of his highly visible and controversial role in these events has, at best, received less than his due for a principled stand against what he and many contemporary Japanese perceived as Anglo-American coercion over ratios. At worst, he has been subjected to an overly simplistic vilification and at times almost demonization by contemporaries and modern Japanese and non-Japanese scholars. In the words of Arthur Tiedemann, in his preface to the translation of the Kobayashi Tatsuo’s seminal work on interwar naval limitation in *Taiheiyo Sensō e no Michi* (The Road to the Pacific War):

(Katō) has been accorded less than justice in being portrayed as a good-natured but not too bright an old sea dog whose opposition to the (London) Treaty was an aberration brought about by the machinations of a wily subordinate (Admiral Suetsugu Nobumasa). There was more intellectual substance to Katō Kanji than that, and his criticism of the treaty reflected long-held opinions, opinions deeply rooted in a seriously pondered and coherent world view. Moreover, Katō's technical objections to the treaty were not frivolous.¹⁰

This viewpoint, the only American interpretation of Katō and the naval arms limitation debate which gives any credence to the views that Katō and others held, is in complete contrast to the dominant image, one of negative stereotyping and even character assassination of a talented naval officer in the extant literature in Japanese or English. Tiedemann's observation is welcome and a long overdue development in the debate in the historiography of the naval limitation controversies in Japan. There is no study in English that focuses on this alternative, more considered or more sympathetic view of Katō Kanji.¹¹ It is true that a more positive view of Japanese naval officers and interwar naval limitation in general does appear in the works of Kobayashi Tatsuo that in turn influenced James Crowley's seminal work.¹²

The dominant approach has been from a diplomatic history as opposed to arms control approach to the subject. An honourable exception is the excellent study of events leading to the Washington Conference by Roger Dingman, a model of balanced analysis underpinned by a fine understanding of arms races and arms limitation theory.¹³ However, the field has tended to be dominated by the pro-treaty and one might say rather pro-American perspectives of American or American-trained diplomatic historians such as Stephen Pelz and Sadao Asada. Even the monumental study of the IJN by Evans and Peattie merely restates the Asada/Pelz interpretation and especially their negative and rather dismissive view of Katō Kanji and those of like mind.

It is essentially the extraordinarily one-sided negative view of Katō, from what we might call the 'anti-Katō faction' of contemporaries and present-day scholars that is in considerable need of correction, challenge and debate. The portrayal of Katō in much of the secondary literature, especially in English-language works, shows clearly a return to simplistic caricatures of Japanese military men that, one hoped, had disappeared. Especially in the works of neo-revisionists such as Tsunoda, Asada and Pelz, Katō appears as an hot-headed sea-going samurai deeply imbued with traditional feudal values, a 'son of a samurai spear-bearer' who glorified in and constantly advocated a

brand of Japanese spiritualism. Katō, according to this interpretation, is to be credited with infusing a hitherto ‘Western-influenced, modern, technologically-oriented’ rational naval officer corps with a set of modes of thinking emanating from Japan’s pre-modern past which led the IJN inexorably into war with the United States. This they perceived as non-Western, irrational and spiritual. Katō’s principal ‘irrationalism’ for the majority of writers, however, both Japanese and Western, was to be found in his devotion to the struggle against the application of the ratio system in naval warships, especially the ‘inferior rations, allocated to Japan. Much of the literature, implicitly and explicitly assumes that the arms limitation agreements were a ‘good thing’ and that those who opposed them were the something akin to the ‘forces of darkness’ and since they were against arms limitation they must be in favour of war. This fails to take into account the fact that the link between arms races and outbreaks of wars is at least ‘not proven’ and that arms limitation is a political weapon not necessarily intended to lead to disarmament.

Much of the analysis to date fails to take account of a basic political reality, and this certainly is apposite when it comes to reevaluating Katō’s position on the agreements, namely ‘where you stand depends on where you sit’. This is applicable to Japanese politics as it is to other political systems. To dismiss Katō’s position on naval limitation as ‘narrowly technical’ omits the key point that he was occupying positions that required precisely that perspective—not some overall national, diplomatic ‘big picture’ perspective. What emerges in the extant literature on naval limitation and his involvement is a portrait of a ‘premodern’ feudal warrior creating havoc in a ‘modern’ international and domestic political arena. The portrayal is made all the more effective in that Katō and his followers are cleverly contrasted with fellow Japanese naval officers, usually from the Navy Ministry, of a more ‘moderate’ persuasion. The latter are in turn credited with first-rate minds, broad outlooks and essentially modern, Western, rational viewpoints.¹⁴ This contrast with a Japanese group—the Navy Ministry or Treaty Faction or Administrative Faction—is arguably much more effective than simply contrasting Katō’s group with their Western naval counter-parts. Katō and fellow officers of like mind were always evaluated negatively and ‘interfered’ in politics but it is perhaps worth noting also that when pro-treaty naval officers, serving or retired, involved themselves in politics this was not seen as intervention and was invariably praised and seen in a positive light. Any efforts by the anti-treaty faction to adopt a hard-line attitude in the negotiations at the conferences for example, or even to question the Americans, is invariably cast in an extremely negative light. The extant

literature is laden with emotive anachronisms such as ‘feudal’ and ‘samurai’ as well as a more modern negative imagery associated with ‘General Staffs’.

Katō devoted the most important years of his career to the struggle against the ‘inferior’ ratios ‘imposed’ at Washington and continued at London in 1930. Therefore, for any student attempt-ing to unravel the complexities of Japan’s experiences with naval arms control, Katō’s pivotal role provides an effective means for studying the massive documentary material on the subject. Moreover, such a focus, in addition to providing the necessary continuity between the conferences, can provide a more thorough examination of the aspirations and motivation of the opponents of the treaty agreements. This in turn will hopefully provide a useful corrective to the existing, over-simplified portrayal—not to say caricature, of Katō and the forces hostile to the treaty agreements reached.

The aim of this study, however, is neither to condemn nor condone, but to take our understanding of their attitudes and actions forwards and, in addition, to attempt to establish a balance in terms of source materials utilized. Rather than caricature Katō as some sort of feudal throwback reflecting something similar to Schumpeter’s ‘primitive activism’ we need to examine his thinking, his behaviour and perhaps how he was used by others, symbolically and actually. This requires giving him his due in terms of his undoubted intellectual abilities, his sophisticated understanding of international politics and perhaps a rather less sophisticated understanding of domestic politics as well as his ‘realist’ perspective on arms limitation and American intentions. Then one must add to that the career positions he found himself in when confronted with treaty agreements. Finally, one must perhaps look at his personality. Arguably, Katō is a particular personality type common in all military and many civilian organizations. He was clearly very direct, wore his emotions on his sleeve and was patently uncomfortable with ‘shore’ or bureaucratic jobs, especially those that might require political expediency over principle. He was a classic field commander rather than a headquarters man, a leader certainly but one happiest in action rather than in the politics of compromise, non-decision and the calculated indirectness of bureaucratic politics. He is similar to the Andrew Gordon typology of the ‘rat-catcher type’ as opposed to ‘regulator type’ or as the command/warrior type as opposed to the administrative/diplomatic, Whitehall/ Pentagon-type. Another way of saying it is heroic leaders versus (naval) managers.¹⁵ The latter tended to come to the top in peace-time navies and were often more at home in staff (e.g. Navy Ministry) rather than command roles (at sea or Naval General Staff). The former, much less risk averse, were much more highly valued in wartime.

Finally, this study of Katō attempts to go beyond mere biography or narrow naval history. Katō's later activities in opposition to the naval ratios were mainly in the arena of domestic politics and therefore provide an excellent means of studying the role of the Japanese navy in politics as well as politics in the Japanese navy. Moreover, it sheds considerable light, especially concerning the London Treaty crisis phase, into the institutional complexities in a crucial area of decision-making in defence and foreign policy in early twentieth century Japan. It also offers us, in addition, a rare case study, in terms of comparative civil-military relations, of the politicization of a naval officer corps and role expansion by a navy in domestic and international politics with all its ramifications for civil-military, inter-military and even intra-military relations.

The approach adopted here divides the study into two major parts. In [Part I](#) Katō's career is traced up to the Washington Conference, with special attention being paid to formative influences—in particular those influences relating to his own brand of Japanese traditionalism and how they blended with his interests in technological developments. In addition, Katō's international experiences and his role and importance in the navy up to 1921 will be assessed. This will be set against a background of the rapidly developing IJN. [Part II](#) focuses primarily on Katō and the inter-war naval conferences with special attention being paid to Washington (1921/22) and London (1930). Again, as background, a brief overview on naval developments, especially those pertaining to Japan and naval limitations precedes Katō's activities at the Washington Conference. A description of Katō's role in the navy of the 1920s and the London Naval Treaty crisis of 1930 is followed by a summary of his final years. Katō Kanji is then be reassessed as a naval and political figure and conclusions reached regarding his importance to the inter-war naval limitation debate within Japan as well as to the politicization of the inter-war naval officer corps.

Such an approach offers the opportunity to provide a more balanced appraisal of Katō's thinking as well as his abilities in this highly sensitive area of naval politics. It is also to be hoped that the utilization of Katō Kanji as a focal device will provide future researchers with additional information on the impact of naval agreements on Japanese domestic politics, civil-military, intermilitary and intra-military relations, hopefully leading to a more balanced appraisal of the analysis and impact of these naval conferences on the Japanese inter-war political system and the Japanese navy.

In all of this the study of Katō merits a more extended and more balanced treatment than has hitherto been available in Japanese or English. Katō's resignation as Chief of the Naval General Staff after the ratification of the

London Naval Treaty of 1930 heralded the premature end of a most distinguished naval career. Katō, therefore, at the end of his career, whether one supports or opposes his ‘principled’ stand against ‘imposed ratios’ etc, represents perhaps yet another tragic failure in the traditions of the figures portrayed by Ivan Morris.¹⁶ Nevertheless, his involvement in the political scene in interwar Japan indicates the blending of a sophisticated understanding of particular international politics plus a hard-line, realist view of naval limitations albeit combined with what might well be interpreted as a rather naïve perspective on domestic politics. But a focus on Katō the man can hopefully offer further insights, especially but not exclusively, on those who opposed the treaties. It also contributes to understanding the complexities of the domestic impact of international agreements, especially arms-control agreements (and more pertinently when used by Japanese civilian policy-makers as a convenient form of external pressure—*gaiatsu*) on a professional and rapidly developing navy and on the fragile, embryonic nature of Japanese democratic politics. Finally, such an approach hopefully sheds further light on the brittle fabric of civil-military relations in terms of both civilian control and military role expansion in politics. Whilst adding to the small number of studies of Japanese naval history in English this volume is also intended to contribute to the important ‘and ongoing debates regarding military intervention and military role expansion’ in interwar Japanese politics and to comparative civil-military relations.

Notes

- 1 Numata Hiro, ‘Acceptance and Rejection of Elements of European Culture in Japan’ *Caheirs d’histoire Mondiale* Vol. 3 No. 1, (1956), p. 241, cited in George M. Wilson *The Bakumatsu Intellectual in Action: Hashimoto Sanai in the Political Crisis of 1858*, in Albert Craig and Donald Shively (eds.), *Personality in Japanese History*, (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 238.
- 2 Tsunoda Jun, ‘Nihon Kaigun Sandai no Rekishi’, *Jiyū*, (January 1969), pp. 90–125.
- 3 But see *Fading Victory. The Diary of Admiral Matome Ugaki 1941–45*. Translated by Masataka Chihaya, 1991 University of Pittsburgh Press.
- 4 *The Imperial Japanese Army, 1918–1929*: Roger F Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan 1838–1922*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971); Mark Peattie, *Ishihara Kanji and Japan’s Confrontation with the West*, (Princeton, 1975); William F. Morton, *Tanaka Giichi and Japan’s China Policy*, (Folkestone, 1980). Charles L Yates *Saigō Takamori: The Man behind the Myth* London 1995
- 5 L.A. Humphreys *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s* (Stanford University Press Calif., 1995) & his Doctoral thesis ‘The Disintegration of the Meiji Military System’, Ph.D, (Stanford University, 1974).
- 6 David C Evans and Mark R Peattie *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy 1887–1941* Annapolis 1997 Peter G. Cornwall, *The*

- Meiji Navy: Training in an Age of Change*, Ph.D., (University of Michigan, 1970); John C. Perry, *Great Britain and the Emergence of Japan as a Naval Power*, Ph.D., (Harvard University, 1961), David Evans, *The Satsuma Faction and Professionalism in the Japanese Naval Officer corps of the Meiji Period*, Ph.D., (Stanford University, 1978). Please see also my Doctoral thesis *Katō Kanji and the Politics of Naval Arms Limitation: Politics in the Japanese Navy and the Japanese Navy in Politics* University of Sheffield, 1984.
- 7 Asada Sadao, 'The Japanese Navy and the United States', in Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (eds.), *Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-American Relations 1931–1941*, (New York, 1973), pp. 225–259. 25 'Japanese Admirals and the Politics of Naval Arms Limitation: Katō Tomosaburō vs Katō Kanji', in G. Jordan (ed.), *Naval Warfare in the 20th century: Essays in Honour of Arthur Marder*, (London 1977) 'The Revolt against the Washington Treaty: The Imperial Japanese Navy and Naval Limitation 1921–1927' *Naval War College Review* pp. 82–97, 1994; From Washington to London: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the Politics of Naval Limitation 1921–1930. in Eric Goldstein John Maurer (eds) *The Washington Conference 1921–22: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability and the Road to Pearl Harbor*, (Ilford, 1994) pp. 147–191; 'Nihon. Kaigun to Gunshuku—Taibei Seisaku o meguru Seiji Katei' in *op. cit.*, Hosōyā, Saitō and Katō (eds.) pp. 353–414 and 'Washington Kaigi o meguru NichiBei no Seisaku Kettei Katei no Hikaku—Hito to Kiko', in Hosoya Chihiro and Watanuki Joji (eds.), *Taigai Seisaku Kettei Katei ni NichiBei Hikaku*, (Tokyo, 1977), pp. 419–464.
 - 8 See *op. cit.* Asada 1994 Naval War College Review p. 94 citing Stephen Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor: The Failure of the Second London Naval Conference and the Onset of World War II*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), p. 27.
 - 9 Ikeda Kiyoshi, 'Rondon Kaigun Jōyaku ni kansuru Gunreibugawa no Shiryō Sanpen', *Hōgaku Zasshi* Vol. 15, No. 4, (March, 1969), pp. 102–126, was an attempt to remedy the neglect of materials on the Naval General Staff/'Fleet Faction' side. Ikeda stated in this article that very little of their materials had appeared or been utilized by Japanese scholars.
 - 10 Arthur Tiedemann 'Introduction' in James William Morley (ed) *Japan Erupts: The London Naval Conference and the Manchurian Incident* (New York, 1984) p. 9.
 - 11 But see my 'Admiral Katō Kanji and the Politics of Naval Arms Control', H. Ion and J. in Gooch (eds), *Military Heretics*, (Laurier Press, Canada, 1993).
 - 12 For Kobayashi's works in Japanese see bibliography but in English see *op. cit.* Morley 1984 pp. 11–117 for Arthur Tiedemann's excellent translation 'The London Naval Treaty'. James Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy 1930–38*, (Princeton, 1966), especially pp. 35–81.
 - 13 Roger Dingman, *Power in the Pacific: The Origins of Naval Limitation 1914–1922*, (Chicago, 1976).
 - 14 This is particularly marked in the works of Kobayashi, Asada, Pelz, Evans & Peattie.
 - 15 This is the insightful terminology used by Andrew Gordon in *The Rules of the Game: Jutland and Naval Command* (London, 2000) p. xi and p. 17.
 - 16 Ivan Morris *The Nobility of Failure. Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (London, 1975).

PART I

Katō's Formative Years

CHAPTER 1

The Early Years

Materials relating to Katō Kanji are not inconsiderable but tend to be focused mainly on the theme of naval arms control. Katō himself was not a prolific writer and the main corpus of materials written by him again relates to the subject of naval limitation. This one-dimensional feature of writings by and on Katō is partially rectified by his official biography.¹ Yet even in that massive study there is also a tendency towards a one-dimensional portrait. One finds, as in Chinese biography, little hint of the personality beyond that relating to his official function. The paucity of materials that would ‘bring the subject to life’ is especially marked when we try to examine formative influences on Katō’s intellectual development and personality. Whilst it is rather easy to list formative influences which have a certain immediate plausibility it is quite another to provide evidence of a distinct causal relationship. In part this is due to a lack of relevant material on the early lives of Katō and other prominent prewar Japanese figures. Albert Craig stated the problem succinctly: ‘We know little of the early childhood of most historical figures. At best we have only sketchy biographical materials and a handful of anecdotes.’² In part, it is due to the nature of Japanese biographical writing which indicated the strong links between Japanese and Chinese historical tradition. Again, to quote Craig ‘Part of the lifelessness of official biography lies in the Confucian canons of history by which they were written. These demanded the recording of those aspects of life that would serve as a moral mirror for posterity not the details that would make them come alive.’³

These remarks were addressed to the problems of Tokugawa biography but they are particularly apposite in Katō’s case. The main source of information on Katō’s life, especially his early life, is the massive official biography and all other biographical studies of him tend merely to paraphrase or embellish the data contained therein. Japanese military biography, by offering a ‘moral mirror’ could not but reflect the values of an earlier era with its emphasis on traditional warrior values. In addition, the didactic

motive was further strengthened by the particular period in which the biography and other literature on Katō was written, namely the early stages of the Pacific War. Katō, as other writings clearly show, was, like many other major military figures, held up as a model for Japanese youth at this time.⁴

Nevertheless, information on Katō's birthplace and family background and influences should enable us to draw some general conclusions regarding his personality and early intellectual and career development. This chapter will provide some background on Katō's birthplace, Fukui, especially as it functioned in midnineteenth-century Japan. Then the more direct influences on the young Katō, namely his parents and the intellectual influence of the *Bakumatsu* intellectual Hashimoto Sanai are considered. Finally, some details of his early formal education at elementary and military schools are described and evaluated.

FUKUI

Katō was born in the city of Fukui, in Western Japan, in 1871. Fukui had been the former castle town of the leading *daimyō* family of Echizen, the Matsudaira of Fukui. In 1877, Katō's family moved to Tokyo where Katō received his early schooling. From that time his home was always in the *Kantō* area in and around Tokyo. Nevertheless, Katō always maintained strong links with Fukui particularly through the Hashimoto Sanai Remembrance Society, a society dedicated to a brilliant young Fukui scholar executed in the *Ansei* Purge of 1859. A memorial to Katō Kanji, dedicated by another distinguished Fukui naval officer, former Prime Minister Admiral Okada Keisuke, still stands in Fukui city today.⁵ Since Katō's first four years were spent in Fukui and, since his family had deep roots there, it seems reasonable to assume that such an environment had a considerable influence on the formation of Katō's character, personality and intellectual development. Indeed, the Japanese hold these early years of life to be crucial as indicated in the proverb *Mitsugo no Tamashi Hyaku made* (The soul of a child of three lasts for the rest of its life')⁶

Fukui is located some 200 miles west of Tokyo on the west coast of Japan and around 1870 was estimated to have had a population of between 17,500 and 27,000.⁷ Fukui *han* (domain) had been created in 1600 when Yūki Hideyasu, second son of Tokugawa Ieyasu received 650,000 *koku* in Echizen for his services at the battle of *Sekigahara*.⁸ At this point, the family name of Matsudaira was adopted. In 1661, Fukui became the first *han* to issue *hansatsu* (domain paper money). In 1686 the *han* was reduced from 475,000

to 250,000 *koku*. It later stabilized at 320,000 but, as with so many other *han*, it was to be plagued with economic difficulties, in part resulting from the above-mentioned reduction, and numerous famines. Peasant revolts of the Tempō era (1830–43) were most numerous in the Echizen area. By the mid-nineteenth century, therefore, in the wake of famines and peasant revolts, Fukui was facing grave economic difficulties and help from the *Bakufu*, or at least an easing of demands from the *Bakufu*, was not forthcoming.⁹ With the accession of Matsudaira Shungaku to the position of *daimyō* in 1836, Fukui's fortunes began to change. He was, in fact, the sixth son of the Lord of Tayasu, one of the *Gosankyō* households and could perhaps have hoped for a position nearer to the centre of power. Matsudaira was the cousin of the eleventh Shogun and the nephew of the twelfth. Despite his youth Matsudaira soon began efforts to reform the *han*. He began by appointing new advisers in an attempt to reverse the economic decline. Honda Shuri, Suzuki Chikara and Nakane Yukie, all men of considerable talent, were chosen for the task. They adopted a policy of drastic fiscal retrenchment but these measures failed to reverse the economic decline.¹⁰ It was left to yet another triumvirate of younger and more talented men, Hashimoto Sanai, Yokoi Shōnan and Yuri Kimimasa to bring a measure of economic prosperity to the *han* in the 1850s.

From the beginning of the 1840s Matsudaira's efforts to reform the *han* had begun to have some effect. As a coastal *han*, Fukui was often made aware of the increasing presence and threat of Western warships in nearby coastal waters in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. This stimulated developments in gunnery and, around 1848, sea defence measures were taken on the coast of Echizen. Western-style gunnery and Western-style cannons in particular, were now increasingly studied and from 1847 retainers were despatched to Nagasaki to learn Western gunnery science. In 1851, in response to the *Bakufu*, which at last was taking the Western threat more seriously, Fukui completed Western-style cannons at a fort at Kagariyama. The 1850s saw a complete modernization of the *han* military structure. In 1852, Fukui abolished archery units, replacing them with rifle corps and began Western-style drilling. In 1855, the remaining archery units and spear squadrons were reformed into rifle units. In 1857, a huge factory for armaments was set up within the castle town. It was approximately 300 *tsubo* (1 *tsubo*=36 sq. ft.) and involved the diversion of a river and the employment of a labour force of over 1,200 people in its construction. It was a remarkable achievement rivalling the famous *Shuseikan* in Kagoshima.

Such military improvements were helped by the knowledge possessed by Fukui's scholars of *rangaku* (Dutch learning). In 1851 a policy for smallpox

vaccination throughout Fukui *han* was established by the pioneer in Dutch medicine Kasahara Ryōsaku and the latter established a smallpox vaccination centre in 1851. Matsudaira Shungaku later petitioned the Shogunate to set up a national vaccination programme but his request was rejected.¹¹ In 1855 the *Meidōkan*, one of the leading schools of the *Bakumatsu* era, was established in Echizen and in the following year Hashimoto Sanai was recalled to teach there and was instrumental in setting up a *Yōsho Shūgakusho* (Centre for the Study of Western Books). All these improvements were, to a great extent, dependent on an improved economic climate. With the failure of the fiscal retrenchment policies of Fukui's elder statesmen, it was the combined efforts of Yokoi Shōnan, Hashimoto Sanai and Yuri Kimimasa which finally reformed and revitalized the economy. All three, in their different ways, went on to play a national role.¹² Yuri Kimimasa was the one principally responsible for achieving a workable policy for economic recovery although he owed a great debt to the other two. All three saw the generation of trade outside the domain as the path to recovery especially if it generated an inflow of gold and silver specie. Hashimoto's ideas were very abstract and in most respects, Yokoi and Yuri provided the more practicable schemes.

The principal differences between the latter two were that while Yokoi wished for total control by the *han* bureaucracy and the exclusion of the rich merchants from any leading role, Yuri saw the bureaucracy and merchant class combining their talents. Yokoi also advocated interest-free loans whilst Yuri insisted on interest being paid on loans. The vast armaments factory mentioned above was an example of the organizational abilities within Echizen *han* and finally, in 1859, Yuri was able to establish a *bussan sōkaijo* (Produce Distribution Centre) which was a co-operative venture between the *han* bureaucracy and the rich merchants. Educationally the establishment of the *Meidōkan*, a school for literature and the military arts, for all *han* retainers, owed much to the practical application of knowledge emphasized by Yokoi Shōnan. The principal driving force, however, was Hashimoto Sanai. Under his leadership, the *Meidōkan* achieved nation-wide recognition. Thus, in the last decades of the *Tokugawa* Shogunate, Fukui by its military, educational, scientific and economic reforms, had laid the necessary foundations to enable the domain to play a major role in national affairs.

Generally speaking, the existing literature tends to emphasize the external Western threat as the driving force behind the Fukui reforms. However, internal factors such as economic distress were also important. One possible additional factor not mentioned in the Japanese literature is that Matsudaira Shungaku, obviously not happy with inheriting a fiefdom on the periphery of national politics, wished to build himself a base from which he could enter

national politics and claim his rightful place at the centre of power. It is perhaps no mere coincidence that both Yokoi, his principal political adviser, and Matsudaira himself were not originally from Echizen and that this perhaps inclined them, to some extent at least, to perceive events from a national rather than a local perspective. Echizen under Matsudaira Shungaku did play a major role in *Bakumatsu* politics. William Beasley states:

Of the domains that played a key part in late Tokugawa politics, five were those of Kunimochi: Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa, Hizen and Echizen.¹³

This was largely due to Matsudaira Shungaku's personal influence as the leading *daimyō* of Echizen. This came, primarily from his family connections. His support for the Hitotsubashi faction in the struggle over Shogunal succession led to his removal from the position of *daimyō* at Fukui and to his being placed under house arrest in Kyoto in 1859. At the same time his brilliant retainer, Hashimoto Sanai was executed for intriguing, on Matsudaira's behalf, at the Emperor's court in Kyoto.¹⁴ Matsudaira was too powerful, or perhaps at least, too useful, to be disposed of permanently and, in 1862, he was appointed *Sōsai* (supreme councillor or regent) of the Shogunate. He was the principal influential leader of the *Kōbugattai* movement to unite the Imperial court and the *Bakufu* to bolster the failing regime and was appointed military commissioner of Kyoto in 1864.¹⁵ His successor as *daimyō* in 1859, Matsudaira Mochizaki, was appointed *Fuku Sōtoku* (Deputy Commander) of the *Bakufu* expedition to punish Chōshū in 1864, a recognition of the political and military importance of the Fukui domain.

We are fortunate in having an eye witness account of how Fukui would first appear to a foreigner at the time of Katō Kanji's birth. William Elliot Griffis wrote of Fukui:

I was amazed at the utter poverty of the people the contemptible houses and the tumble down look of the city as compared with the trim dwellings of an American town...I realised what a Japanese—an Asiatic city was (and) I was disgusted.¹⁶

But it is clear that Fukui was far from being a feudal backwater. After residing there for some years Griffis wrote:

I was proud and delighted that my lot was cast in Fukui, a city which in eminence, and intellectual progress was set, as it were, on a hill.¹⁷

This statement appears to be based on a genuine knowledge and respect for the achievements of Katō's birthplace and there can be little doubt that his later assessment was a more accurate one. At the time of Katō's birth Fukui was undoubtedly one of the most progressive and outward-looking of Japan's domains. This was, in great part, attributable to the reforming zeal of Matsudaira Shungaku. He remained influential behind the scenes after 1859 since his son actually seems to have been guided, in most things, by his father. What Griffis perhaps failed to note was that Fukui was, in a sense, past its peak in 1871. Griffis did notice the tremendous outflow of talent to the capital at Tokyo. It is important to note, however, that this was accompanied by a gradual exclusion of Fukui people from key positions, a natural consequence of the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance consolidating their domination of the new national government structure, in the first decade of the *Meiji* (1868–1912) period.

Nevertheless, Katō's parents had grown up, not in some feudal backwater but in the capital of one of Japan's most progressive domains that was undergoing a rapid and often quite spectacular series of educational, scientific, military and economic reforms as it emerged from feudalism. The interests and education of Katō's parents and people such as Hashimoto Sanai reflect that special blend of tradition and modernity which produced an outstandingly successful modernization of the *han* and also of Japan itself in the nineteenth century. Moreover, for a period in the 1920s Fukui men dominated the top naval positions with Okada Keisuke and Katō Kanji successively occupying both the Commander-in Chief of the Combined Fleet and Chief of the Naval General Staff positions. Okada went on to become Navy Minister and in the 1930s Prime Minister thus placing Fukui men briefly in key positions in national naval affairs and in politics in general.

KATŌ'S FATHER

Katō's Father, Katō Naokata, was born in 1830 in Fukui, the fourth son of Katō Tsunekatsu, leader of one of Fukui's samurai *Nagae kumigashira* (spear squadron).¹⁸ The Katō family traced its lineage back 'by hoary legend' to the Fujiwara family being an offshoot of the Tōyama line of the family. The Katō line was established in the reign of Oda Nobunaga (1534–82). The head of the fifth generation was the first to have been born in Echizen, in 1615. The family were ranked as lower samurai and held minor positions with the feudal lord, both in Fukui and at the *daimyō's* Edo residence.¹⁹ When the Katō family stipend reached 24 *koku* plus a four-man rice stipend in 1711, the head of the sixth generation occupied the posts of *Edo yashiki*

bugyō (Edo mansion administrator) and *bugubugyō* (chief armourer). Many of the family also saw service with the *daimyō's ōban* (grand guard). Naokata's father, Katō's grandfather, had raised the family holding to 100 *koku-well* above the average-samurai holding at that time.²⁰ But, Naokata, as the fourth son, inherited nothing and was forced to seek service with the *daimyō* and also to set up his own household.

Although Katō's official biography makes much of Katō Naokata's importance in Fukui naval development there is almost no mention of him in the various local histories. Indeed, so far, only one recent, short biographical sketch of him appeared. This, to a great extent, is a paraphrase of the official Katō Kanji biography and significantly shows a photograph purporting to be Naokata which is, in fact, one of Katō Kanji.²¹ Naokata was apparently 'massive in physique, generous, discrete and of a gentle nature'. He was educated in the traditional samurai arts, though no clear details remain. It is likely, however, that he attended the *Seigidō* school the precursor of the more famous *Meidōkan*. Only one piece of writing by Naokata remains (presumably written around the time of the arrival of Perry's black ships). It concerns the growing naval threat to Japan from Western naval powers. On seeing these ships, the biography states, Naokata 'suddenly understood' stating:

Geographically our country is situated close to China and Russia. Since we are isolated in the Eastern Sea, when we encounter national difficulties, we must rely on naval power. Now, when our country is beset with domestic and foreign difficulties in rapid succession this is not the time for our country to remain isolated.²²

From the arrival of Perry's ships in 1853, Naokata devoted his life to naval matters. Naokata's decision came at a crucial time when both the *Bakufu* and the various *han* were feverishly building and buying Western-style naval vessels to combat the Western threat. The *Bakufu* established a *Kaigun Denshūjo* (Naval Training Institute) at Nagasaki in 1857 where shogunal retainers and certain selected *han* retainers were to be trained.²³ Naokata was one of those selected for the Fukui contingent. Training at the Nagasaki school was carried out by Dutch officers. On completion of his training, Naokata was ordered to return to the *han* as *gunkankata* (warship instructor) and was placed in charge of construction of the *Kottoru*, Fukui's first Western-style ship. He served at this time in the domain's construction bureau where Sasaki Gonroku and Yuri Kimimasa were Chief and Deputy Chief respectively. In 1860 he went for further study at the *Bakufu's* newly-

established *Kaigun Sōrenjo* (Naval Training Establishment) at Edo where he studied navigation and seamanship under the guidance of Katsu Kaishū, one of the great figures of the *Bakumatsu* and early Meiji navy. Naokata idolized Katsu Kaishū who, at this time had just completed the famous Pacific crossing to the United States by a Japanese crew on the *Kanrin Maru*. Naokata studied hard and the official biography gives a graphic description of the difficulties and great efforts that culminated in a distinguished career in the naval service of his *han* and in the Imperial Japanese Navy where he achieved the rank of lieutenant. Katō's last appointments were at the *Tōkai Suihei Honei* (Eastern Sea Marine Headquarters) at Yokosuka. For Katō Kanji being the son of a serving naval officer was not unhelpful in securing a naval education although in fact there is evidence that, given Katō's frailty as a child, his father actually had tried to dissuade him from entering the navy and suggested instead a career in medicine.

KATŌ'S MOTHER

Katō's mother Sumako (1844–1926) was, even allowing for the excessive praise common in official biographies, a quite remarkable woman. She was the second daughter of Tomita Rōho, one of Fukui's leading teachers in the military arts. Her brother, Tomita Atsumi, was a Confucian scholar, poet, bureaucrat and founder of Fukui's first newspaper, the *Satsuyo Shinbun*. Sumako, Katō's biographers tell us, received a thorough training from her father and had clearly been raised in an intellectual atmosphere, steeped in tradition. Sumako also showed considerable talent for arithmetic and also, interestingly, English. According to Katō's biographers, she studied English at the house of an English missionary. No clear dates are given but it was around 1870–71. In all probability, her teacher was Alfred Lucy who had arrived in Fukui some months before the more famous E.W. Griffis.²⁴ English teaching in Fukui was yet another manifestation of Matsudaira Shungaku's desire to import Western knowledge into the *han*.

Katō's mother became, albeit briefly, a teacher of arithmetic and English in Fukui. She must have been one of the very first women teachers of English in the *han*. Combined with Katō's father being able to speak Dutch, it is perhaps no coincidence that Katō Kanji himself manifested a strong interest in foreign languages. When the new primary education system was introduced in 1873 Sumako taught, first as a *kyōjukata tetsudai* (teaching assistant) then as a *jokyō* (assistant teacher) at *Ashiba Gun Da-ni Jōji Shōgaku* (Ashiba District No. 2 Girls Primary School). Regarding her promotion to *jokyō* Katō Kanji's biographers wrote as follows:

...Sumako, while bringing up Kanji aged four, engaged in the teaching of children. She possessed determination and was extremely reliable. She was exceedingly noble. When she taught the students she was kind, meticulous and patient and due to her diligence she was promoted to be an assistant teacher within a month 14/2/1873.²⁵

In November 1873, the family moved to Tokyo because of the father's naval duties, and in 1878 they moved to Yokosuka. In 1881, with the death of her husband, Sumako was left to care for her four sons and one daughter. Naokata had had, as well as a naval salary, a rice allowance from the Meiji government. This terminated on Naokata's death and the family were left in dire financial straits. An additional problem was that Naokata had been a 'typical military type' and 'did not leave behind for his descendants, sufficient for their means'. In fact, Naokata had 'spent the greater part of his salary (all according to one source) on drinking with friends'.²⁶ Katō's mother moved the family from Yokosuka to Tokyo and immediately erected a small sign offering to do sewing and laundering. Even in such a difficult situation, Sumako placed great emphasis on education both formal and informal. She saw to it that Kanji was able to attend the naval preparatory school, the *Kōgyokusha* and her dearest wish was to see him enter the *Kaigun Heigakkō* (Naval Academy). Katō stated in later life:

Even today my younger brother and I often talk about those days and we cannot speak without shedding tears for the hardships faced by mother. In those days, my mother even did laundry for students. If I woke up in the dead of night, especially winter nights, she would be there, sitting alone, without a heater, sewing in conditions that would have frozen my fingers to the bone. It was awful.²⁷

Katō went on to say that they dared not ask for school materials, paper, etc. for they knew this would necessitate her working even harder. Because of her sacrifice, he stated that he was determined 'to do whatever would please my mother'.

HASHIMOTO SANAI

The third influential figure in Katō's childhood development was undoubtedly Hashimoto Sanai (Keigaku). Hashimoto had been a brilliant young Fukui student who had taken over his father's medical practice (including smallpox vaccination) in Fukui. He was well versed in *yōgaku* (Western learning) through his training in Dutch medicine and was also

steeped in Eastern learning through the *Mito* school.²⁸ He was influential along with Yokoi Shōnan and Yuri Kimimasa in bringing about the economic scientific and military development of Fukui *han*, but his major contribution was in education. He was brought back to Fukui to instruct at the newly-established *Meidōkan* in 1856. His work there along would have guaranteed Hashimoto a secure place in Fukui local history. It was, however, his service to his feudal lord Matsudaira Shungaku, in national politics especially over Shogunal succession and his execution in the *Ansei* purge of 1859 which ensured lasting fame for the young retainer in both local and national politics. He was, particularly in the pre-war period, revered as a prime example of sacrifice for the sake of the lord, a true ‘loyalist’.

Katō, the biographers state, actually began reading the works of Hashimoto at the age of twelve. However, it seems likely that Katō’s mother instructed him regarding the basics of Hashimoto’s writings rather earlier as part of his informal moral and ethical training since Hashimoto’s writings were kept in the Katō home. The first text read by Katō, and the one which remained his favourite and is quoted in full in the official biography was *Keihatsuroku* (Notes on Enlightenment) written by Hashimoto in 1848 when he was only fifteen. It essentially concerns the correct behaviour for boys and young men. Katō’s biographers devoted considerable attention to the influence of Hashimoto as a key influence on Katō throughout his life.

KATŌ’S CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

Katō was born in Kōdōgu-cho (now Toyoshima naka-chō) in Fukui City. He was the eldest son of Naokata and Sumako. Despite a seemingly sturdy appearance at birth, his physical condition in his infant years was exceedingly feeble. His mother despite her heavy domestic duties took him every morning to the bank of the Ashiba river and bathed him. This is reputed to have strengthened his physique and Katō later was able to pass the extremely rigorous physical examination for the Naval Academy. As a child, we are told, Katō possessed a rather obstinate nature and tended to be impetuously dauntless.²⁹

Having moved up to the Tokyo area at the age of five, a move dictated by his father’s naval work, Katō began receiving preparatory lessons from his mother at home. She taught him Chinese characters and also taught him calligraphy and arithmetic.³⁰ Being the daughter of a *samurai*, and a former teacher herself, she was very strict but Katō apparently responded well. In 1877 at the age of six, Katō commenced primary school at *Mita* School in Tokyo. This was one of the sixteen primary schools established in Tokyo

prefecture by the new Meiji government. It is stated that, due to the efforts of his mother, he did very well at the school. It was at this school that he met up with Abō Kiyokazu who became a lifelong friend, colleague in the navy and chief compiler of Katō's biography.

EARLY FORMATIVE INFLUENCES: A REASSESSMENT

Secondary materials on Katō in Japanese, generally omit or pass quickly over the formative influences, deeming them obvious or perhaps irrelevant for a Japanese readership. Stephen Pelz and Asada Sadao, as well as commenting on formative influences on Katō in their writings on naval arms limitation, have also written biographical essays on Katō Kanji.³¹ There, implicitly and more often explicitly, they have indicated what they feel to have been the crucial formative influences. Since their writings have been widely read they are worthy of consideration and evaluation here.

Both scholars, by numerous references, have attempted to portray Katō as a simple-minded traditionalist, a sort of seagoing samurai although their later writings have to some extent acknowledged his considerable knowledge of Western technology. Stephen Pelz describes Katō in the following way:

Katō seems to have been a straightforward type of sailor. He had a traditional background: his father had commanded a squad of samurai spear-bearers in the feudal domain of Fukui, and Katō had received training in the traditional warrior virtues. Furthermore, he was influenced as a youth by a samurai teacher who had taken part in the Meiji Restoration.³²

Here, by a judicious use of terminology such as 'samurai', 'feudal' 'warrior' and the repetition of 'traditional' Pelz has woven a web for the unsuspecting reader. Leaving aside the dubious value of such an approach what can one say of the assumptions and facts contained in the above description. Pelz singles out as formative influences, 'the feudal domain of Fukui', a father who led a 'squad of samurai spear-bearers' and a 'samurai teacher' influential on the young Katō who had received 'training in the traditional warrior virtues'. Fukui, as previously noted, was something more than a feudal domain. It was one of the most progressive, forward-looking domains in mid-nineteenth century Japan and had made considerable progress in the direction of economic, military, scientific and educational modernization. Fukui abolished the last of its spear-bearer squads in 1855 and Katō's father had

dedicated his life to naval affairs before that date. Katō Kanji received his schooling in Tokyo in the late 1870s and most certainly did not receive training in the traditional warrior virtues through the formal educational system. The teacher who most influenced Katō in his youth was, according to his biographers, Hashimoto Sanai who died almost a decade before the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Katō most certainly would have been taught, like most other children in Tokyo at the time, by men of former samurai status and they would have participated in the Restoration wars. In fact, although Pelz extracted the information from Katō's official biography he made a fundamental error. What Pelz assumed to be a description of Katō was actually a comment on his father, Katō Naokata. Thus it was Katō's grandfather who led the squad of spear-bearers, Katō's father who received training in the traditional warrior virtues etc. Asada Sadao's writings on Katō Kanji who have the same propensity as Pelz for emotive terminology of a negative nature but he comments differently on Katō Naokata. In an essay on Katō Kanji Asada stated: 'It was perhaps natural then that Kanji (sic) followed his father's speciality and was to become President of the Gunnery School.'³³ It is by no means clear whether Asada has inferred that Naokata's specialism was gunnery from the fact that he ended his career in the position of Chief Gunner or whether he is simply restating the conclusions reached by Itō Kinjirō.³⁴ Whichever the source it is obviously erroneous since Naokata's specialism was navigation, his last appointment notwithstanding. Katō Kanji probably inclined to gunnery because, for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, gunnery science was the key subject for talented young students and the most effective path to high rank in all navies.³⁵

What both writers have in common is a tendency to see the father as a, if not the, key formative influence. The official biography states that Katō inherited from his father a sense of fairness and gentleness. Naokata had, on seeing the feeble physique of the young Katō Kanji, attempted to steer him away from the navy and towards medicine as a career. Katō, apparently, pleaded with his mother who in turn persuaded Naokata to change his mind. This is the only evidence of any direct attempt by the father to influence the son and it failed.

Certainly, Naokata's distinguished service to his domain and to the national government provided Katō with a clearly defined role model to follow. There seems little doubt in the mind of mother or son that Katō Kanji would join the Japanese Navy. At the time Katō was of age to apply for a place in naval educational establishments, the competition of the naval preparatory schools and the naval academy was intensifying. To have a father as a serving officer would have had some advantages for entry but

after that ability was the key criterion for success. Thus, Katō probably did gain some advantages regarding entry through family connections, motivation and possibly educational guidance. There persists a widespread belief that: '...the samurai father was more central than the middle class father today. He was at home more, he had a stronger position in the home... he was a direct role model.'³⁶ It may well be rather overstating the case or perhaps even misleading to ascribe too much influence to Katō Naokata other than as a role model. Naokata was away from home for long periods and died when Katō was very young. Naokata, so far as can be gleaned from the available literature, seems to have completely abdicated his teaching role to his wife, Sumako. He did have a capacity in foreign languages, considerable technical ability and great dedication to his profession. He did have a traditional background but there is no evidence of him being in any kind of dilemma over Eastern or Western values or of a strong inclination towards traditional Japanese values. Katō's biographers devoted considerable attention to the career of Katō Naokata and this may have been in part convention which others have simply echoed. However, one feels, too, that materials written during the Pacific War would have, in any case, tended to glorify any military exploits and influences concerning the immediate family of figures such as Katō who were being held up as models for young Japanese at the time.

Neither Pelz nor Asada pay much attention to the influence of Hashimoto Sanai except possibly as a 'feudal influence' by a samurai patriot. But it would be wrong to regard Hashimoto Sanai as merely a 'feudal' influence. Like Katō's parents and the domain in which they all lived, Hashimoto showed that blend of 'traditional' and 'modern' values which characterized successive generations in modern Japan. Hashimoto's most famous phrase was: 'We shall take the machines and techniques from them but we have our own ethics and morals'.³⁷ But despite the many rich strands in Hashimoto's writings it was probably his attitude to traditional values and his heroic sacrifice which left a lasting impression on Katō. In addition, Hashimoto had written a highly influential essay on the education of young men and Katō Kanji went on to occupy all the top educational as well as command posts in the Imperial Japanese Navy. Throughout his life Katō played an important and continuing role in the remembrance society dedicated to the memory of Hashimoto Sanai finally assuming the position of President in 1930, the year he sacrificed his own career for his principles. In addition to being an obvious tribute to Hashimoto, membership of this society was also a highly effective way of keeping in touch with people from Fukui since the society