

KATŌ KANJI AND INTERWAR NAVAL ARMS LIMITATION:

THE JAPANESE NAVY IN POLITICS AND

POLITICS IN THE JAPANESE NAVY

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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September 1984





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ABSTRACT

The interwar naval arms limitation conferences from Washington (1921-1922) through Geneva (1927) to London (1930) and again at London (1935-1936) represent a series of negotiations which may be of some utility in terms of present arms limitation discussions. The thesis, however, focusses primarily on the domestic consequences for Japan of agreements reached at these conferences. In particular it examines their impact on civil-military relations as well as on organisational rivalry within the Japanese navy itself. The research suggests that naval limitation may have been a symptom of the navy's internal struggles in the 1920s rather than the cause. Moreover it seeks to show that whilst influential sections of the Japanese navy were opposed to disarmament and the 'imposition' of 'inferior ratios', in capital ships and auxiliaries, they were not totally opposed to some form of arms limitation or arms control. However, when international agreements were concluded without the support and formal approval of certain key naval leaders the result was massive intervention in the political process by those same naval officers.

Hitherto, analyses, in Japanese and English, of Japanese naval politics associated with interwar arms limitation agreements have tended to rely heavily on materials provided by those who supported the Government,

the so-called Jōyaku-Ha (Treaty faction). This literature often shows those in opposition, the so-called Kantai-ha (Fleet faction) in an exceedingly negative light. The use of emotive terminology, which portrays the leaders of the Kantai-ha as pre-modern samurai tramping around in a 'modern' domestic and international political arena, is a marked characteristic of this literature.

This thesis examines the debate over the ratios allocated to the Japanese navy primarily from the side of those who found them restricting at best and unacceptable at worst. It seeks neither to condone nor criticise their political activities and opposition to certain naval agreements. Rather it attempts to show that opposition to 'inferior ratios' is not synonymous with opposition to arms limitation. Moreover it does not assume that opposition to certain forms of arms limitation equates with support of aggression. The literature now available in Japanese is voluminous and therefore the focus of this thesis has been deliberately narrowed.

The approach adopted was to select, as a focal device, a leading, highly visible and highly controversial figure in the opposition to naval limitation agreements. Admiral Katō Kanji (Hiroharu) occupied all the leading 'command' and educational posts in the Imperial Japanese Navy. His influence, whether one considers it as a positive or negative factor, over a whole generation of naval officers was considerable. He occupied a number of key positions throughout the debates on naval limitation from 1920 until 1936 and devoted the latter part of his naval and political

career almost entirely to this one issue. Kato is an ideal subject in that he has been characterised as overly 'traditional, too narrowly professional and driven by emotion rather than by rational thought processes, all key characteristics in past 'stereotypes' of Japanese military officers. By describing and evaluating his entire career development from the early formative processes this research re-evaluates his significance within the navy, in the interwar naval limitation debate and within the political sphere of Japanese civil-military relations. Since his understanding of naval limitation would generally be regarded as representative of the 'Fleet Faction' one can have a greater insight into the thought processes and factors which motivated them to intervene in the political process.

Katō Kanji's career essentially mirrors the development of the Imperial Japanese Navy until the onset of the Pacific War. The historical evolution of this navy, which is crucially important to an understanding of the development of modern Japan, has been somewhat neglected by western scholars at least in comparison with its army counterpart. Since a firm grounding in its development is crucial to an understanding of the interwar naval limitation debates a considerable amount of detailed information has been included here. This will help also in assessing Katō's own career development.

Part One of the thesis examines the early formative influences on Katō Kanji and his naval career up to the Washington Conference in 1921. In addition it charts the

development of the Imperial Japanese Navy over this same period and then focusses on developments on naval arms racing and naval arms limitation until the opening of the Washington Conference. Part Two first describes Katō's career in the 1920s as well as the abortive Geneva Naval Conference in 1927. It then focusses on the London Naval Conference of 1930 and, in particular the domestic political crises which developed. It pays special attention to Katō Kanji's role as Chief of the Naval General Staff and as Supreme Military Councillor after his resignation. The consequences of the 'London Treaty Crisis' for Kato's own career, for Navy Ministry-Naval General Staff relations and for Japanese civil-military relations are then traced together with a brief assessment of Kato's final years from 1931 until his death in 1939.

I was fortunate enough to be accepted as a research candidate at the Centre of Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield. There I began to study the Japanese language and history. I was particularly interested in the history of Japan and the role of the Japanese Navy. I spent the first six months on language training at Osaka Foreign Languages University. This was followed by a year studying Japanese naval history and international relations at Goshisha University under the supervision of



## PREFACE

My interest in Japanese civil-military relations began during my undergraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh. My MA (Hons) thesis was on the subject of military intervention in Japanese politics in the 1930s. It was an attempt to apply analytical tools from the field of civil-military relations to secondary English language sources on Japanese prewar politics. The most important finding was that the available materials were inadequate and that real progress in this area could only be achieved by acquiring proficiency in the Japanese language. I also felt that too much of the writing on the military in Japan in the 1930s, was influenced by the Pacific War, whereas I felt that moving back into the 1920s was more likely to cast light on the reasons for increased military intervention in politics. At the time, I was greatly influenced by the work of James Crowley whom I have never met but to whom I owe a considerable intellectual debt.

I was fortunate enough to be accepted as a Doctoral candidate at the Centre of Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield. There I began my study of the Japanese language and serious study of Japanese political history. During my first year I was awarded a Japanese Ministry of Education Scholarship which enabled me to spend eighteen months in Japan. I spent the first six months on language training at Osaka Foreign Languages University. This was followed by a year studying Japanese naval history and international relations at Doshisha University under the supervision of

Professor Asada Sadao. On returning to Sheffield I was awarded a three year Social Science Research Council 'Quota Award' followed by a one year grant from the Japan Foundation Endowment Fund. These awards enabled me to continue my language study and research at Sheffield and enabled me to visit the United States as well as to spend another year in Japan at the Social Science Research Institute, University of Tokyo. I spent a most rewarding twelve months there under the supervision of Professor Banno Junji.

This research has stretched over a considerable number of years. During this time I have greatly benefitted from the advice, assistance and enormous kindnesses of a vast number of people, too many to mention by name. I hope they will not be offended and will understand if I thank them all silently and yet still single out a number of people for special thanks.

I am grateful to the staff of the Centre of Japanese Studies for my initial language training and I would especially like to thank Mr Graham Healey and Dr Janet Hunter. I owe a great debt to my supervisor, Dr Gordon Daniels. He accepted me as a student and although I may not have reached the very highest standards which he demands of a researcher, I feel that my work has improved immeasurably in the attempt. I remain deeply in his debt for his advice, his encouragement, his scholarly wisdom and his infinite patience with a headstrong and often difficult student. I also owe a tremendous debt to Professor Banno Junji. He not only provided me with his brilliant insights into Japanese

history but facilitated contacts and spent many hours helping me with very difficult handwritten materials. Professor Nomura Minoru of the Military History Office Tokyo, personally and by his excellent scholarship, greatly improved my knowledge of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Hirose Yoshihiro of the National Diet Library and Unno Yoshiro of the Foreign Ministry Archives and their staff were tremendously helpful in helping me sift the rich materials contained therein. Professor Mikami Kazuo shared with me his materials and insights into Fukui local history. Professor Ito Takashi provided the introduction to the Kato family. Kato Kanji's son, Kato Hirokazu, was exceedingly helpful and gave willingly of his time to share his memories and materials relating to his father. He allowed me to copy the Kato diaries and, since I was the first foreigner to see, let alone use them, I am conscious of the privilege bestowed upon me. My good friend Sakamoto Yasutoshi spent numerous hours helping me decipher and transliterate materials. Finally I would like to thank the many members of the British Association for Japanese Studies. Their thoughtful comments on papers presented by me at various annual conferences helped me immensely. Any errors of fact or interpretation in this research however are entirely my own responsibility.

I am grateful to the Centre of Japanese Studies, University of Sheffield, The Japanese Ministry of Education, the Social Science Research Foundation and the Japan Foundation Endowment Fund for the finance which enabled this research to be carried out.

Finally I owe my greatest debt to my wife, Katy. Her continuing support, in personal and in academic-related terms, has been a major source of spiritual strength for me. It is no exaggeration to say that without her continual encouragement and belief in me, this work would not have been completed. For all she has given, and for all she has given up, I dedicate this work to her and to our sons.

VOLUME 1

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VOLUME I

## INTRODUCTION

For the war-weary peoples of the world November 1918 signalled far more than the end of the most brutal and traumatic armed conflict in history. For the victorious Anglo-American peoples in particular, who had fought under the banner of eliminating international armed conflict it was the opportunity to construct a new international order which would guarantee peace. One symbol, of both the new international order and the quest for a permanent peace, was the creation of the League of Nations. Not surprisingly, many, especially in the victorious nations, manifested strong pacifist tendencies as a result of the suffering they had endured or witnessed. Therefore, as the war ended, it came as a great shock to the general public, if not to the politicians and the military in those nations, to find the three principal wartime allies and great naval powers, Great Britain, America and Japan, engaged in a naval arms race amongst themselves. Moreover France and Italy were also involved in a similar race, albeit on a reduced scale. This arms race threatened not only the overstrained economies of the countries involved, but also contributed to a heightening of international tension which seemed to threaten the very foundations of the new postwar world order which the allies were attempting to create.

A direct consequence of this naval race, a race which had commenced before the war and continued even during the war, was a concerted attempt by the major naval powers to achieve a measure of naval arms control. A number of

conferences which considered naval limitation were convened in the interwar period, at Washington (1921/22), Geneva (1927) and at London (1930 and 1935/36). The best known, most thoroughly researched and arguably the most important of these was the Washington Conference and the entire series of negotiations is often referred to as the 'Washington System'. The scope of the Washington Conference was far broader than naval limitation and it is more accurate to use the term 'Washington System' to describe the new international order, especially in the Pacific and Far East, which emerged from that conference.<1> However, the ratios of capital ships agreed to at Washington formed the basis for the later naval conferences and it is therefore reasonable to describe interwar naval limitation, narrowly defined, as a 'Washington System'.

In recent years, these conferences and the so-called 'era of naval arms control' have received renewed attention from scholars and policy makers in the areas of disarmament, arms limitation, international negotiating behaviour, civil-military relations and political and diplomatic history.<2> In part this reflects the vast amount of archival material now available to researchers. A rather more significant factor perhaps, had been a growing conviction that the pre-war arms control experience might offer useful lessons for those engaged in evaluating or making policy related to contemporary arms control negotiations. Certain distinguished scholars in the fields of international history and international relations, notably D.C. Watt and Hedley Bull, indicated similarities

between prewar arms control negotiations and contemporary Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).<sup><3></sup> It has even been suggested that battleships in the prewar era be regarded as analogous to postwar inter-continental ballistic missiles although Colin Gray was obviously correct when he stated:

Unfortunately it is rare for a scholar to be equally competent in the vagaries of contemporary O.M.E. (one-megaton equivalent) analysis and in the no less esoteric trade-offs of an earlier era involving capital ship quality, tonnage, and fortification rights.<sup><4></sup>

Two additional developments may well cause yet more interest in prewar naval limitation conferences. The rapid and continuing growth of the Soviet navy and the consequent heightening of international tension has opened up the possibility of extending arms limitation negotiations to cover the naval forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. This may become all the more urgent since Nato is finding it increasingly difficult to find the resources to compete against a Soviet Union seemingly unfettered by the kind of domestic political restraints which plague western democracies regarding increased defence spending. If naval negotiations do take place then perhaps the prewar conferences may offer valuable insights.<sup><5></sup>

Moreover China may, at some stage, join the United States and the Soviet Union in future arms limitation negotiations. This would add further relevance to the study of prewar negotiations as once again negotiations may ensue involving one Asian and two Western powers.

It might well be said that advocates of the utility of comparing prewar and postwar arms limitation negotiations are less prominent now than they were in the early 1970s.



Nevertheless continued Soviet naval expansion and possible Chinese involvement in arms control negotiations may yet stimulate even greater interest in interwar arms control in the near future.

However, the relevance of existing research on the interwar period, especially for those studying SALT negotiations, is open to question on a number of grounds. First, as Ernest May has pointed out, policy makers have shown a marked propensity to ignore or misinterpret the 'lessons of history'.<sup><6></sup> Another and more important factor is that existing analyses tend to be dominated by works lacking analytical clarity with a tendency towards oversimplistic judgements on the nature of arms races. Such studies are also characterised by heavily value-laden judgements on the nature of the conferences, the motives of the participants and the intentions of those opposing the agreements.<sup><7></sup> There is clearly a need for a re-analysis of pre-war negotiations and the causes of prewar arms races utilising some of the insights and analytical tools of social scientists struggling with the complexities and problems of contemporary arms control. Thus, even if one finds policymakers or policy analysts willing to study the lessons of the past, the existing state of interwar arms control studies is such that this would be advisable only after interwar arms control studies show more evidence of familiarity with contemporary arms control literature.<sup><8></sup> 'Learning from the present' may therefore be a necessary precursor to 'learning from the past' and the first valuable lessons may come, not so much from applying interwar naval

arms negotiation findings to SALT but rather the reverse.<9>

The immensity of the task should not be underrated and despite the vast amount of material now available one major arms control report stated:

Perhaps the truest statement that can be made about interwar arms control is that, singly or collectively, they [the conferences] can be used to provide historical precedent for nearly any sophisticated argument one wishes to choose.<10>

This rather pessimistic assessment, whilst undoubtedly containing some truth, need not have permanent validity. An equally reasonable conclusion might well be that:

...it is not so much that history is ambivalent but rather that the framework adopted for enquiry was of an unduly undisciplined character.<11>

Given better analytical tools there would seem to be good prospects that much might be learned, and more accurate parallels drawn, from the 'interwar naval arms control era'.

#### Japan and the interwar naval arms control era

The impact of such naval arms limitation agreements on the domestic politics of participating nations is of considerable interest to students of politics especially civil-military relations. The utilisation of a series of international arms agreements for domestic purposes such as the reduction or slowing down of rapidly escalating defence expenditure did, and still does, represent a threat to military policymakers. The threat is not only to military professionals in their own areas of expertise but also to their own organisations. In some cases international agreements in this area have increased the tendency for

military officers to expand their involvement in domestic and international policymaking both in defence of their own service and in defence of their own assumptions regarding international relations.

Such intensified involvement, often labelled 'military role expansion in politics', was particularly marked in the case of interwar Japan. Moreover, in the Japanese case, a direct consequence of the naval agreements, from Washington onward, was massive intervention, overt and covert, in the political process by naval officers. This politicisation of the naval officer corps in turn provides civil-military theorists with a rather rare case study since studies of military intervention in general tend to focus heavily on army involvement in politics.

In the interwar period, particularly in the 1920s and early 1930s, Japan made considerable efforts to achieve limited disarmament and arms control. Japan participated in League of Nations disarmament committees and also, in the early 1920s carried out domestic arms reduction measures affecting the Imperial Army.<12> But Japan's greatest efforts were focussed on naval limitation by international agreement. Japan participated in all four naval conferences finally seceding from the 'Washington System' during the second London Naval Conference in 1935/36.

In the half-century from the creation of an autonomous navy department (1871) to the opening of the Washington Conference (1921) Japanese naval power underwent a massive expansion. Her fleet developed from a motley collection of hand-me-down ships into the principal regional naval power

in the Pacific and the third ranked naval power in the world. Essentially, the naval agreements at Washington attempted to freeze the status quo by allocating a capital ship ratio of 5:5:3 to America, Great Britain and Japan respectively. Although this ratio placed Japan in an inferior position, it clearly acknowledged her as the third ranked naval power in the world. However, for many Japanese, the Washington agreements in general and the 'inferior ratio' in particular, 'proved' that whilst the western powers were prepared to acknowledge Japan as a major regional power they also wished to accord her permanent second rank status in world terms. The naval agreements appear to have had a stronger impact on Japanese domestic politics than was the case in Britain or the United States. This was in large part due to the rigidity of the civil-military framework in Japan whereby certain constitutional customs greatly restricted the power of civilians concerning national security policy. The two best known supports of military autonomy from civilian control were iaku jōsō (direct access to the Emperor) by the Chiefs of Staff and Navy and War Ministers and the regulation that only serving officers could occupy the service minister portfolio. Such provisions permitted the military, at certain times, not only to treat the cabinet with impunity, but to bring down or prevent cabinets from being formed. In part increased military involvement in politics at this time was a consequence of the affront felt by many Japanese at the seemingly determined and continuing reluctance of the Great Powers to grant Japan the status of

equal in the comity of nations. . -

Japan's interwar experiences with arms control negotiations has attracted the interest of many scholars concerned with arms control problems in general. It has also been of considerable interest to a select band of international historians capable of multiarchival research in the West and in Japan utilising English and Japanese language materials.<13>

In addition, for specialists on Japan, the interwar conferences and their impact on Japanese politics are a very rewarding research theme which illuminates various aspects of Japan's international and domestic political behaviour. The principal conferences in the 1920s cover a period in Japan's history somewhat neglected by western scholars at least in comparison to the heavily researched and documented "dark valley" of the 1930s.<14> The conferences provide a number of richly rewarding case studies of Japan's foreign policymaking in general and Japan's international negotiating behaviour in particular.<15> In domestic politics the impact of the naval arms race and the subsequent negotiations shed considerable light on the nature and evolution of civil-military relations in what is regarded as the gestation period for the Japanese military's massive role expansion in politics in the 1930s. Finally, the domestic turmoil surrounding the naval discussions and agreements clearly shows the immense problems faced by Japan's political leaders manoeuvring in a highly complex institutional framework. Policymakers found themselves faced with the formulation of a viable national security policy at

a time when domestic and international variables were increasingly intertwined as a consequence of the development of 'total war' strategy.

The promise of such rich rewards has induced a number of scholars to examine interwar arms control as a key development in Japanese political history. The major turning point in studies of Japanese naval arms limitation is generally considered to be Kobayashi Tatsuo's seminal essay in 1963 in the series Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi (The Road to the Pacific War).<sup><16></sup> Western studies on the Japanese military and naval limitation entered a new phase and reached a new level of sophistication with the publication of James Crowley's Japan's Quest for Autonomy in 1966.<sup><17></sup> Until Crowley, studies of the Japanese military had been heavily influenced by the Pacific War and the findings of the Imperial Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE). In much of the Western writing Japan's military leadership was seen as racist, perpetrating a grand conspiracy, and motivated by feudal, irrational impulses. Moreover the army was portrayed in an exceedingly negative light whereas the navy tended to be viewed as more liberal and internationalist. The navy was even seen as wishing to avoid the Pacific War.<sup><18></sup> Essentially revisionist in his approach Crowley utilised new Japanese materials incorporated in the Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi volumes for further research which challenged existing interpretations of the Japanese military. In brief he emphasised, some would say overemphasised, the universal aspects of prewar Japanese military behaviour in politics especially foreign

policy. Crowley rejected the hitherto dominant belief that it was uniquely Japanese characteristics and failings which best explained military intervention in politics. What emerged was a more sympathetic portrayal of the problems confronting Japanese military planners, army and navy. In short Crowley provided a useful corrective to the main findings of the existing literature on the Japanese military, where the 'praise and blame' approach associated with the origins of the Pacific War and "feudal vestiges" had been a central theme. In his study the Japanese military emerged as far more 'rational' and even 'modern' than had hitherto been assumed. The principal focus of the book was the army and essentially its policy on the Asian mainland but Crowley also payed considerable attention to naval disarmament. His approach was both informative and stimulating and represented, undoubtedly, a pioneering study which seemed to herald a new era in studies on Japanese national security policy formulation.

Although Crowley won many converts the next phase of research findings, in the early 1970s, came to be dominated by a group which might be labelled 'neo-revisionist' or even 'regressionist' depending on one's perspective. Central figures in this new approach were: Tsunoda Jun, a leading Japanese military historian especially in his influential essay "Nihon kaigun sandai no rekishi" (Three Generations of the Japanese Navy); Stephen Pelz, an American diplomatic historian in his multiarchival study Race to Pearl Harbour; and Asada Sadao, an American-trained Japanese diplomatic historian in his essay "The Japanese Navy and the



United States".<19> A major theme common to all three scholars was that the Imperial Japanese Navy was not the force for moderation it had hitherto been assumed to be. Instead, Tsunoda, Pelz and Asada claimed that a section of the navy, centering around a so-called Kantai-ha (Fleet Faction), mainly in the Naval General Staff, took control of the navy in the early 1930s, restarted the naval arms race and bore considerable responsibility for involving Japan in armed conflict with the West. What emerged was clearly a reversion to the 'praise and blame' approach but with a new twist: namely that now it was not the army, to which Tsunoda was sympathetic, but the navy which bore the main responsibility. Asada, a scholar noted for his research on the Washington Conference, had published, almost simultaneously with Pelz, a study of the Japanese Navy in the 1930s which essentially took the same line. Pelz, focussing on the Second London Conference presented an interesting if oversimplified and at times misleading analysis of interwar naval politics in Japan but his basic premise remained the same. Pelz and Asada had, in common with Crowley, the ability to handle multiarchival materials in Japanese and English but their whole approach seemed to challenge Crowley's findings. Pelz also used many metaphors common to arms race theory and arms control research but in practice his study was analytically rather superficial giving no real indication that he had made sufficient use of theoretical writings on arms control. His principal thesis was that the Washington Conference had halted the naval race and the Japanese, having restarted the race after the Second



London Conference (1935/6), initiated a new arms race which led to Pearl Harbour. Leaving aside the lack of any convincing argument that Japan had caused the naval race or indeed that the naval race led to war, Pelz's lack of familiarity with naval conferences in the 1920s caused him to miss the significant fact that the Washington agreements had not stopped the naval race but had merely re-channelled it into a race in auxiliary craft.<20> Professor Asada's work was based on a far greater familiarity with the conferences in the 1920s especially the Washington Conference. However he too accepted, unquestioningly, that the Washington Conference stopped the naval race and that the Fleet Faction and Naval General Staff bore considerable responsibility for war with the United States. Like Pelz Asada supported the 'Fleet Faction' Naval General Staff-arms race-war causal connections although less explicitly. Both scholars reverted to a 'praise and blame approach' focussing respectively on the 'Treaty' and 'Fleet' factions within the Japanese Navy and in this they both appear to have been greatly influenced by Tsunoda Jun. The simplistic belief that those who oppose arms limitation must, by definition, support war is evident throughout their work. Additionally Asada and Pelz display a marked propensity to see those seeking arms control as seeking peace whereas there is evidence that national power rather than peace was the ultimate end for negotiating parties.<21>

The next phase of research on interwar naval races and naval conferences was the work of Roger Dingman. An American and an international history specialist he also

used Japanese sources extensively. In his book Power in the Pacific he brought insights from arms control and especially arms race theory to his study of the origins of both the naval construction race and the Washington Conference.<22> His principal theme was that domestic political factors were crucially important to both the starting and fuelling of the naval race, to the convening of the Washington Conference and also to the behaviour of the negotiating powers at Washington. Like Crowley, he too provided a detailed and somewhat sympathetic analysis of the difficulties facing Japanese policymakers, civilian and military, and his work can be seen as representing a shift back to the 'revisionist' approach of Crowley. Dingman concentrated heavily on the events leading up to the Washington Conference leaving the actual conference itself and the later conferences for others to analyse in detail. Nevertheless Dingman's work provided future researchers with firm foundations for future research.

These various attempts at examining the 'naval arms control era' have demonstrated a number of serious difficulties facing future scholars. The first is that multiarchival research is exceedingly complex especially if, as in the case of Pelz and Asada, scholars try to cover America, Britain and Japan with equal thoroughness. The second is that focussing on three countries really rules out any attempt to cover more than one conference since the materials would simply overwhelm the researcher. The third is that the later conferences can only be analysed on the basis of a more thorough understanding of the earlier

conferences. Finally, if researchers wish to cover all the conferences, then Japan's role, which at present is the most neglected in the secondary literature by virtue of the language barrier, should probably have the highest priority. At present the voluminous primary and secondary materials in Japanese on the conferences still present a formidable problem. Therefore initially, the focus of a single research project, has of necessity to be narrowed. This final conclusion indicated that a search for a key figure who was central to the naval limitation debate in Japan and whose career spanned all the conferences was the optimal solution. Consequently this thesis will examine the career of Admiral Katō Kanji (Hiroharu) of the Imperial Japanese Navy and especially his role in the interwar naval negotiations.

#### Admiral Katō Kanji (1871-1939)

The career of Admiral Katō Kanji is an ideal focal device for analysing the impact of arms control issues on Japan's politics and especially civil-military relations. Admiral Kato was the most visible and most controversial figure in the naval arms control debate within Japan and his involvement spanned all four naval limitation conferences. Kato was involved in all the negotiations relating to interwar naval arms control. He was Chief Naval Delegate at Washington 1921/22, Commander-in Chief of the Combined Fleet during the Geneva Conference in 1927, Chief of the Naval General Staff and subsequently Supreme Military Councillor during the debate over the signing and ratification of the

London Treaty of 1930. Finally he was a Supreme Military Councillor and prominent naval elder during the preparations for the Second London Conference and was generally credited with great influence at that time.<23> He occupied all the leading command positions in the navy as well as all the highest posts in naval education and there can be no doubt that his formal and informal influence on a whole generation of naval officers was considerable. Tsunoda Jun has even dubbed the interwar naval officer corps, especially in the thirties, the "Katō Kanji Generation".<24> Katō devoted the most important years of his career to the struggle against inferior ratios 'imposed' at Washington and continued at London in 1930. During all this time Katō was generally regarded as the leader of the so-called Kantai-ha (Fleet Faction), a group within the Japanese navy opposed to the 'inferior' ratios allocated to Japan at these conferences.

Existing analyses of naval limitation in Japan and of Katō's role have tended to rely heavily on materials and interpretations sympathetic to the Jōyaku-ha (Treaty Faction) within Japan. This group was comprised of personnel inside and outside the navy supportive of the Japanese government's acceptance of the naval ratios. By comparison, as Ikeda Kiyoshi has pointed out, the views of those opposed to the agreements reached on ratios, the Kantai-ha (Fleet Faction), have been rather neglected even in Japanese writings on the subject.<25>

In order to understand and evaluate Katō's thoughts and actions in this period a more balanced assessment of Katō himself is essential. 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 which, one hoped, had disappeared after Crowley's pioneering work. Especially in the works of neo-revisionists such as Tsunoda, Asada and Pelz, Katō appears as a '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. This they perceived as non-western, irrational and spiritual. Katō's principal 'irrationalism' for the majority of writers however, both Japanese and Western, was epitomised by his devotion to the struggle against the ratio system in naval warships. What emerges 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 of a more 'moderate' persuasion. The latter are in turn credited with first rate minds, broad outlooks and essentially modern, western, rational viewpoints.<26> This contrast, using a Japanese group, the Treaty Faction, is arguably much more effective than simply contrasting Katō's group with their western naval counterparts. The literature is heavily laden with 'emotive anachronisms' such as 'feudal' 'warrior type'

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 attempting 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 motivations of opponents of the treaty agreements. This in turn will hopefully provide a useful corrective to the existing, oversimplified portrayal of Katō and his followers. The aim is neither to condemn nor condone, but rather to understand their attitudes and actions and in addition, to attempt to establish a balance in terms of source materials utilised. Existing materials will be re-examined and new materials will be introduced with the objective of creating a better balanced analysis rather than praise or blame.

Katō's career, as his biographers rightly note, parallels the golden years of the Japanese Navy. A study of Admiral Katō therefore provides, in microcosm, a study of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The navy, in comparison to the army, has been rather neglected in scholarly western language studies of prewar Japanese political history. Indeed the only true body of scholarly literature which does exist on the Japanese navy is related to naval arms

control.<27> There exist no scholarly works on major Japanese naval figures in English to compare with the biographical studies of Yamagata Aritomo, Ishihara Kanji or Tanaka Giichi.<28> Although this thesis will not attempt to provide a fully rounded biographical study of an important naval admiral or a complete history of the prewar Japanese navy, both long overdue, it does seek to partially fill such lacunae.

Finally 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 they offer, especially concerning the London Treaty Crisis phase, insights into the institutional complexities in a crucial area of decisionmaking on defence and foreign policy in early Shōwa Japan. They also provide, in addition, a rare case study of the politicisation of a naval officer corps and role expansion by a navy in domestic and international politics.

The approach adopted here will be to divide the study into two major parts. In Part One Katō's career up to the Washington Conference will be traced with attention being paid to formative influences. In particular those influences relating to his particular brand of Japanese traditionalism and how they blended with his interests in technological developments, that is the mix of tradition and modernity, will be considered. In addition Katō's international experiences and his role and importance in the navy up to 1921 will be assessed. In order to place Katō's



career development in its historical context, as well as to aid narrative continuity, an overview of the Imperial Japanese Navy will precede the description on Katō's early naval career.

Part Two will focus primarily on Katō and the interwar naval conferences with special attention being paid to Washington (1921/22) and London (1930). Again, as background, a chapter on naval developments, especially those pertaining to Japan and naval limitation, will precede Kato'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 will be followed by a brief summary of his final years. Then Katō Kanji will be reassessed as a naval and political figure and conclusions reached regarding his importance to the interwar naval limitation debate within Japan as well as to the politicisation of the interwar naval officer corps. Such an approach offers the opportunity to provide a more balanced appraisal of Katō's thinking, activities and abilities in this highly sensitive area of naval politics. Finally it is to be hoped that the utilisation 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, inter-military and intra-military relations.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FORMATIVE YEARS

Given the importance of the Imperial Navy in the development of modern Japan, it is rather surprising that no scholarly English language biographies on Japanese naval figures have yet appeared. However the aim of this study is to utilise Katō Kanji's career, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, as a focal device for analysing the political problems Japan faced as a consequence of her participation in interwar naval arms limitation talks. Therefore, whilst not a full biography, a considerable amount of background information of a biographical nature is vital to our understanding of Katō's career. Materials relating to Kato Kanji are not inconsiderable but tend to be 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.<sup><1></sup> 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 which would 'bring the subject to life' is especially marked when we try to examine formative influences on the development of Katō's intellect 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 problem 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 which it contained. 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. Kato, 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 should enable us to draw some general conclusions regarding his later intellectual development. This chapter will provide some background on Katō's birthplace, Fukui, especially as it functioned in mid-nineteenth century Japan. Then the more direct influences on the young Katō, namely his parents and the intellectual influence of Hashimoto Sanai will be considered. Finally, some details of his early formal socialisation at elementary and military schools will be 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 Kato always maintained strong links with Fukui particularly through the Hashimoto Sanai Remembrance Society, a society dedicated to a brilliant young Fukui retainer executed in the Ansei Purge of 1859. A memorial to Katō Kanji, dedicated by 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 east coast of Japan and around 1870 was estimated to have had a population of between 17,500 and 27,000.<7> Fukui han had been created, in 1600, when Yuki Hideyasu, second son of Tokugawa Ieyasu received 65,000 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 hanshi (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 (1830-1843) 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 Gosanke 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 advisors 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 modernisation 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 Shūseikan 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 Ryosaku 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 Meidokan, 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 Yōshō Shūgakushojo (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 revitalised 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 organisational abilities within Echizen han and finally in 1859, Yuri was able to establish a bussan sōkaijo (Produce Distribution Centre) which was a cooperative venture between the han bureaucracy and the rich merchants.

Educationally the establishment of the Meidokan, a school for literature and the military arts, for all han retainers, owed much to the practical application of knowledge emphasised by Yokoi Shōnan. The principal driving force however was Hashimoto Sanai. Under his leadership, the Meidokan achieved nationwide 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 emphasise the external western threat as the driving force behind these 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 daimyo 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 Seiji Sōsai (supreme councillor or regent) of the Shogunate, he was the principal influential leader in 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 Choshu in 1864, a recognition of the political and military importance of the domain of Fukui.

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 which was undergoing a rapid and often quite spectacular series of educational, scientific, military and economic reforms. The interest 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 modernisation of the han and also of Japan itself in the 19th century.

#### Katō's Father

Katō's father, Katō Naokata, was born in 1830 in Fukui, the fourth son of Kato Tsunekatsu, leader of one of Fukui's samurai naga kumigashira (spear squadron).<18> The Katō family traced its lineage back 'by hoary legend', to the Fujiwara family being an offshoot of the Toyama line of the family. The Katō line was established in the reign of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582). 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 oku plus a four man rice stipend in 1711, the head of the sixth

generation occupied the posts of Édo yashiki Tahiki bugyō (Edo mansion administrator) and bugubugyō (chief armourer). Many of the family also saw services 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 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 Seigido school, the precursor of the more famous Meidokan. Only one piece of writing by Naokata remains (presumably written around the time of the arrival of Perry's 'blackships'). It concerns the growing naval threat to Japan from western naval powers. On seeing these ships, the biography states, Naokata 'suddenly understood' stating:

Topographically, 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 Sorenjo (Naval Training Establishment) at Edo where he studied navigation and seamanship under the guidance of Katsu Kaishu, one of the great figures of the Bakumatsu and early Meiji navy. Naokata idolised 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 effort required to assimilate western knowledge through the medium of Dutch. This was not

made easier by the fact that Naokata, like so many of the other Japanese trainees, was, by western standards, rather old. In 1864 Naokata received more orders from his domain. He was to proceed to Nagasaki to take charge of a western steamship recently purchased by Fukui. He then served with distinction in the expedition against Chōshū where he took charge of ferrying troops from Osaka to Kyūshū. Soon afterwards he was appointed leader of a ten man group sent to study navigation at the Bakufu Naval Institute at Tsukiji. In 1868 he returned home, and took part with distinction in the Restoration Wars. In 1873 he joined the Imperial Japanese Navy as a Sub-Lieutenant and in 1877 he moved the family to Tokyo. After a brief but distinguished career in the Imperial Japanese Navy, Lieutenant Katō Naokata died in 1881 aged 52. He left behind a wife and five children: four sons and one daughter. Due to his service to the han, Naokata had received a lifetime allowance of 17 koku but, in 1871, as a result of the dissolution of the han and the setting up of the prefecture system for all Japan, his allowance had been altered to end in 1872. Naokata appealed to the newly created prefectural and national authorities and he was allowed to retain 13 koku for the duration of his lifetime. The author of the biographical essay on Katō Kanji's father thought that Naokata, had he lived, would have reached the highest echelons of the Imperial Japanese Navy but given his age this appears less than likely.<24> He did however, have a distinguished career in the naval service of his han and in the Imperial Japanese Navy and

this would indirectly have benefitted Katō Kanji.

### 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 Roho, 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.<25> 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. Sumako taught, first as a kyōjuka tetsudai (teaching assistant) then as a jokyō (assistant teacher) at Ashiba Gun Dai NiJoji



Shogaku (Ashiba District No. 2 Girls Primary School). Katō Kanji's biographers regarding her promotion to jokyo 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 assistance [in teaching] she became an assistant teacher 14/2/Meiji 6 (1873).<26>

In November 1873 the family moved to Tokyo because of the father's naval duties. Then in 1878 the family moved to Yokohama. 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."<27> 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 Kogyokusha and her dearest wish was to see him enter the Kaigun Heigakkō (Naval Academy). Katō stated in

later life:

Even today, when I talk with my younger brother, we often talk about those days and we cannot talk 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.<28>

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.<29> He was influential along with Yokoi Shonan 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 Meidokan in 1856. His work there alone 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 prewar 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 Kato'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 Kato, 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.

#### Early Formative Influences: A Summing Up

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 in Kanji.<sup><30></sup> 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 sea-going 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.<31>

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 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 Kato who had received "training in the traditional warrior virtues". Fukui, as has been shown earlier in this chapter, was something more than a feudal domain. It was one of the most progressive, forward-looking domains in mid-19th century Japan and had made considerable progress in the direction of economic, military, scientific and educational modernisation. 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 show 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.<32>

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.<33> Whichever the source it is obviously erroneous since Naokata's specialism was navigation, his last appointment notwithstanding. Katō probably inclined to gunnery because, for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, gunnery science was the most effective path to high rank in all navies.<34>

What both writers have in common is a tendency to see Naokata, so far as can be gleaned from the available

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 Imperial Navy. At the time Katō was of age to apply for a place in naval educational establishments, the competition at 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. However, despite the 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.<35>

It may well be rather overstating the case or perhaps even misleading to ascribe too much influence to Kato 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 teacher 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. Kato's biographers devoted considerable attention to the career of Kato 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 Kato 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 Kato's parents and the domain in which they all lived, Hashimoto showed that blend of 'traditional' and 'modern' values which characterised 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." <36> 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 Kato. Throughout his life Kato 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." 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 functioned as a meeting place in Tokyo for politicians, intellectuals and students hailing from Katō's birthplace, Fukui.

Perhaps the most serious omission of Pelz and Asada, in terms of analysing formative influences on Katō, is their total failure to appreciate the contribution by his mother, Sumako. If it is possible to distinguish a clear formative influence it must surely be this rather exceptional woman. Sumako was, as stated previously, a rather remarkable woman, even by the very high standards required of daughters of samurai. Yet her influence has been almost entirely ignored in secondary works. It is clear that for Katō's official biographers, and indeed for Katō himself, there was no doubt as to the considerable influence that Sumako exercised over her son, especially in his formative years. Ivan Hall in an excellent biographical study of Mori Arinori, has provided an invaluable analysis of the role of the traditional samurai mother. In a section appropriately labelled "Like Mother Like Son", he convincingly demonstrates the maternal influence on Japanese boys. He states:

...as a strict disciplinarian, and as a chief transmitter of the traditional value system to her offspring, Osato [Mori's mother] was merely conforming to a widespread pattern.<37>

He went on to say:

...nor were the values of a masculine stamp unknown to girls of a samurai family. She was clearly the chief influence in moulding the ideals and supervising the early training of her children.<38>

According to Katō's biographers all the above could easily have been written of Sumako. She appeared to have had all the ideal attributes of discipline, intelligence, affection and patience. The fact that she was the daughter of a famous teacher of the military arts as well as the sister of a Confucian scholar, poet and publisher, may also mean she had perhaps even greater immersion in and understanding of traditional values than was the norm. Her traditional training in morals and ethics by her father were undoubtedly, as in other cases, passed on efficiently to her offspring. As Mishima Michiharu wrote:

...the ethics and morals courses at school merely put me to sleep. I have no recollection of what I learned there. Such ethical feelings as I possess were imparted to me by my mother and grandmother in an atmosphere of maternal love.<39>

Thus Katō may, as Pelz stated, have received an education in the traditional warrior virtues but at his mother's knee not in school! However Sumako was not simply a well educated traditionalist. She reared Katō in what was clearly a transitional period in Japan's development as a modern state. Sumako showed considerable practical skills and adaptability. For example she was skilled at both traditional needlework and the making of western clothes. Her teaching skills were in arithmetic and English, key elements to be passed on to children coping with the assimilation of western scientific and technological knowledge. Katō was also skilled in these areas and this must have been more than mere coincidence. The official biography tells us that Katō inherited from his mother openheartedness, patience(!), and meticulousness and also

like his mother he loved righteousness. Yet these seem only a small portion of what she bequeathed her son. Katō, in later years, like his mother, took a great interest in education. His debt to her, in almost every area of his development, seems quite remarkable. Her educational background, traditional and modern, her exceptional qualities as a dedicated mother and teacher and her willingness to learn English and other things from the west, were probably of greater importance than any intellectual stimulus he might have gained from the father. There seems little doubt in the minds of Katō's biographers, Katō himself or indeed Katō's son, that Sumako was the principal source of many of Katō's better qualities. It is difficult to imagine a mother better suited to preparing a son for developing an appreciation of both eastern and western values to a young boy.

Katō's mother died in Yokosuka aged 83. Katō by then had risen to flag rank as Admiral Superintendent of the Navy Yard at Yokosuka and Sumako lived with Katō and his family at the official residence. Thus, one can imagine that, at least in her case, given the success of her eldest son, her sacrifice had been worthwhile. In a letter to two friends after the funeral he wrote:

Thankyou for attending the funeral. My mother was 83 so I don't regret her age, she lived long enough. But, after my father's death, she was always in difficult straits and yet, under those conditions, she brought me up to reach this position. So, I wanted to repay her for what she did for me but I could not do enough to repay her. Before I could do that she died. This is the most regrettable thing ... she had a nice funeral and that makes me a little happier....<40>



As a young officer, Katō had always sent messages and money to his mother on every possible occasion. For this reason, he became known in the fleet as Haha omoi no Katō, (the Katō who thinks of his mother). She lived out her last years in Katō's house, under the devoted care of her son and his wife and saw her son reach Flag rank in the navy.

The influences resulting from being born in a progressive domain, the son of progressive, talented broadminded parents and the role model and intellectual influences provided by Hashimoto Sanai, leave little doubt that Kato was, in many ways, a true son of Fukui and even less doubt that these were key influences throughout his life. It does seem a great pity that the existing analyses in English tend to overemphasise the narrowly feudal influences with the result that one is presented with an oversimplified, innaccurate stereotype of Katō. This does scant justice to such a rich heritage and especially neglects the blending of traditional values and modern technology.

#### Katō's childhood and early education

Katō was born in Toyoshin Shimo-cho (now Kidigu-cho) 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 daily to the 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 had difficulty controlling a fierce temper.<41>

Having moved up to Tokyo at the age of five, Kato began receiving preparatory lessons from his mother at home. She taught him Chinese characters and also taught him calligraphy and arithmetic.<42> 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, Kato 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. In 1878, his father was transferred to duties at the Tōkai Suihei Honei (Eastern Sea Marine Headquarters) at Yokosuka and the family moved to Yokosuka where Kato began attending the Kiyosu school in Yokosuka. Then, in 1882 on the death of his father, the family moved back to Tokyo. It was at this time that Katō began reading Hashimoto Sanai's writings.

From this time on, effectively Katō became a naval student since he entered the Kogyosho, the most famous naval preparatory school for the naval academy and at that time under the guidance of a Commander Kondo, a former distinguished naval officer.<43>

Until the mid-1880s the Japanese Navy like its army counterpart, relied heavily on preparatory schools where

students effectively began studies suited to a military career at age twelve or even earlier. The negative consequences of such schools have been criticised by both Japanese and westerners, namely that these schools provided too narrow an education at too early an age for potential military officers. It is perhaps worth noting that Katō was later criticised for being too narrowly professional and this may, in part reflect the negative consequences of such early socialisation in a naval preparatory school. In July of 1882, Katō learned that he had done well in the Naval Academy entrance exams. These consisted of a physical examination and papers in science, Chinese and Japanese classics, Japanese and foreign history, topography, ancient history, mathematics and English (including spelling, reading, grammar and conversation). On 18 September 1882, he entered the Academy on the preparatory course. On 12 September 1887, Katō entered the main course as a member of class 18. The school moved to Etajima in 1888 and the Tsukiji facilities were used for the newly established Kaigun Daigakkō (Naval War College). In 1889 Katō received a special award for excellence in the sciences and was promoted to nigo seito (student second class), nigo seitochō (class leader for all second class students) and daigoban butai buchō (No.5 house leader). He went on to win more prizes and was rapidly promoted to ichigo seitochō (class leader of all first class students) and dai niban butaichō (No.2 House leader). He was regarded as a model student and, probably for that reason, he was appointed official companion to Imperial Prince Fushimi

Hiroyasu who was then a student at the Academy. At the end of May 1891 he took his final exams. They included gunnery, practical seamanship, torpedo science, navigation, engineering and a general paper. He graduated at the top of his class receiving a special award. His class at the Academy, No.18, produced two full admirals, six vice-admirals and three rear-admirals. Katō emerged from Etajima with the prime qualification for rapid advancement to high rank in the Imperial Navy of late Meiji namely a high placing at the Naval Academy. The appointment of Yamamoto Gonnohyoe as Navy Minister before the Russo-Japanese War was to result in efforts to eradicate the influence of hanbatsu (regional cliques) in the upper echelons of the navy and develop a more meritocratic system. This latter system became known as toppubatsu (top of the class cliques) and comprised those finishing high up in exams at Etajima.<44>

One interesting event at the Academy sheds light on Katō's courage, determination, dedication to the navy and willingness to seek out western scientific knowledge. During his time as a student Katō became very ill with pleurisy. This possibly reflected the rigours of Etajima life on Katō, perhaps exposing some residual weaknesses from his feeble physical makeup as a child. He had survived the arduous physical examination on entrance but possibly succumbed to later physical excesses in training. In any case the medical officer, a Dr. Yoshida, stated: "...there is no possibility of recovery from this illness. You have no choice but to leave the navy."<45> Katō sought out the

services of a western doctor at Tokyo Imperial Hospital, one Dr. Cooper, whose diagnosis was as follows:

You may recover from the illness but you must have an operation to remove the bone at the rib cage chest wall lining. I should give you an anaesthetic but your condition is too weak for me to administer one so that is too dangerous. But, if you can bear it, you can have the operation without anaesthetic.<46>

The operation was a traumatic experience which Katō vividly recalled even in old age, but the pleurectomy succeeded and he recovered rapidly and never suffered from the illness again. Indeed, after the operation his physical condition improved remarkably. Katō's willingness to seek out western medical help possibly reflected the high regard for western medicine in his native Fukui. Katō's career in the navy had been saved by this application of western medical techniques and, emerging as top of his class at Etajima, he seemed destined for a brilliant future. Katō now entered the fleet as a midshipman cadet and went on the post-graduation training cruise to various countries bordering the Pacific. However, before describing in detail Katō's early naval career from leaving Etajima until the Washington Conference in 1921, the next chapter will outline the development of the Imperial Japanese Navy. In particular, attention will be given to its significance, domestically and internationally, in the period 1868-1918. This will give some background for evaluating Katō's career development and also enable narrative continuity to be maintained.

A HISTORY OF JAPANESE NAVAL DEVELOPMENT

Premodern Naval Development (to 1853)

Japan is an archipelago and the sea has naturally occupied an important place throughout her history. This is not only true of early attempts to establish an empire but also of numerous internal struggles for national and regional power. In recorded history the earliest target of Japanese sea power was Korea and in the fourth to sixth centuries Japan sought to maintain a colony, Mimana, in southern Korea.<1> However Japan's naval ambitions brought her into conflict with China and, following defeat at Hakusonko in 663 AD, Japan lost her foothold in Korea and all real influence on the mainland of Asia.

Small navies were constructed by governments in the Nara (710-794) and Heian (794-1185) periods but little is known of them. These navies were soon replaced by private navies which were used for protection against marauding pirates and in domestic power struggles. A civil war between the Minamoto and Taira clans resulted in a major sea battle at Dannoura in 1185 when 840 Minamoto craft destroyed a force of 500 vessels from Taira. This was clearly the largest naval battle of the premodern period.<2> The establishment of a Bakufu (warrior or camp government) at Kamakura which lasted from 1185 to 1333 resulted in the



creation of the office of Funa Bugyō (Ship Governor) but this was a minor post. At the time of the Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281 Japan had no effective naval organisation. It was the destruction of the Mongol fleets by a typhoon, referred to as the kamikaze (divine wind), which saved Japan from conquest from the sea. This period saw the rapid growth of piracy and privateering and the coasts of Korea, China and Japan were repeatedly raided by wakō (Japanese pirates). By the fourteenth century various private suigun (sea forces) had been established in the Inland Sea of Japan.

In the sixteenth century Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) unified the country, eliminated piracy and utilised the services of many chiefs of private suigun in his invasions of Korea in 1592 and 1593. However, his hastily recruited temporary naval organisation was no match for the well organised Korean naval forces under Admiral Yi Sun Sin. Naval defeats caused Hideyoshi to begin developing a more permanent and more powerful navy but he died before any significant results were achieved. Nevertheless, the Japanese had learned the value of seapower from those recent defeats. Japanese trading ships known as shuinsen (red seal vessels) had been gaining valuable experience through trading links with Siam, Cambodia, Luzon and Annam and Japan appeared to be developing a merchant marine which would have made her a leading maritime nation.

The third Tokugawa shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604-1651) began systematically creating a navy in the 1630s and ordered the construction of two large ships the

Tenchin Maru and the Atake Maru but these were destined to become merely showpieces. Iemitsu did establish five funategumi (boatmen's companies) comprising several hundred kako doshin (sea-going militia). Such measures might have formed an embryonic national navy but these developments were halted by the decision to close Japan to most foreign intercourse.

The so-called sakoku seisaku (closed country policy) remained effective from the 1630s to the mid-nineteenth century. An integral part of this policy was the ban on the possession and construction of all ocean-going vessels including a ban on 'red seal vessels'. Henceforth the maximum size vessel was to be 500 koku (50/80 tons), they were to be single masted and all larger vessels were to be destroyed. Yet another key element in the isolation policy was the order that any foreign ship that attempted to land personnel had to be expelled. The only exceptions were small Dutch and Chinese communities which were permitted to remain and trade at Nagasaki. The adoption of such a policy effectively destroyed Japan's chance of becoming a major naval power at the very time when such a possibility seemed likely.

In the seventeenth century shipbuilding had not yet undergone any major revolutionary changes. Therefore Japan was not necessarily noticeably inferior to western maritime powers. Apart from building up her own expertise Japan did have considerable knowledge of the techniques used by such western maritime powers of Portugal, Spain and Holland through contact with the Englishman Will Adams and other



mariners. This was a direct consequence of the development of western trade in the areas around Japan.

At the beginning of the two centuries of self imposed isolation the Japanese had little to fear from invasion by sea. Given the state of contemporary ship construction technology, naval invasions across uncharted seas were very risky. Thus, in this period, the sea was effectively a protective barrier against the growing western powers as well as neighbouring countries, where in fact, no major naval powers existed. However, during the two centuries of self-imposed isolation, there were revolutions in shipbuilding science, strategy, tactics and materials which the Japanese were scarcely aware of. By the late eighteenth century, Japan's lack of any recent maritime experience rendered her increasingly vulnerable as the sea was transformed from a protective barrier into a highway for the advanced and powerful ships from the imperial powers of the West.

In the late eighteenth century there were indications of an increasing number of western ships in the seas around Japan. This gave rise to pressure for increased coastal defences and Hayashi Shiei's (1738-1793) 16 volume Kaikoku Heidan (A military treatise for a naval nation) was published in 1791.<3> This was the theoretical precursor to the debates over maritime policy which continued to the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868. In 1792 Hayashi was punished and his books prohibited because his ideas on coastal defence were said to be causing internal unrest. In that same year a Russian emissary came to Nemuro (Hokkaido)

asking permission to trade. Russians arrived at Nagasaki in 1804 and at Kunashiri in 1811 where the landing of a warship crew caused a major incident. The British had visited Hokkaido in 1796 and in 1808 shocked the Japanese by sailing into Nagasaki where the frigate HMS Phaeton took on water and supplies. Its principal purpose was to capture Dutch vessels under Napoleonic control sheltering there. The apparent British contempt for the local authorities and the obvious power of British vessels led the local daimyō to commit suicide.

The Bakufu, faced with an increasing number of foreign intrusions, was forced to take drastic measures and ordered the promulgation of yet another expulsion edict regarding foreign ships in 1806. In 1825 it again issued an expulsion decree, gaikokusen uchi harai rei, stipulating that any foreign ship coming close to shore should be destroyed and its crew put to death. This came to be known as mu ninen uchi harai rei (the 'no second thought' expulsion order). The order was never put into force. It is not clear whether this was because the Japanese were unable to actually carry it out or because they feared further reprisals from western nations. Thus, by the mid-nineteenth century the Japanese, by direct experience and from news received concerning the strength of western maritime powers in China, were grudgingly and reluctantly coming to realise that the threat from the sea was increasing and that at the very least, coastal defences would have to be improved.

By 1838 the domain of Mito had constructed a

western-style warship but it was never permitted to use it. Nevertheless, this was evidence of widespread and growing concern over the potential threat from western maritime powers and also the intransigence and lack of foresight of the Bakufu authorities. In 1842, due to the awesome power exhibited by British naval vessels in the Opium Wars, the Shogunate moderated its policy towards foreign vessels. Henceforth local authorities were ordered to provide ships with water and provisions. Thus, a decade before the arrival of Commodore Perry's 'black ships' Japan's 'closed country' policy was gradually being undermined. In 1844 the Dutch king wrote to the Shogun and pointed out the very real threat to Japan from western naval power and suggested that Japan construct a western-style navy. An offer of Dutch assistance was implicit in this communication but the advice was ignored.<4>

Clearly, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Shogunate was under increasing domestic and international pressure to alter some of its outmoded attitudes to the outside world. Originally, the main function of the Shogunate had ostensibly been the military protection of the Emperor and the country. A belated, reluctant attempt to persuade the various coastal domains to construct coastal fortifications was militarily and politically inadequate. An increasing number of visits by western ships from Britain, America and Russia in the 1840s had little effect and it was the visits of an American naval force under Commodore Perry in 1853 and 1854 which finally compelled the Shogunate to take firm steps towards the construction of a western-style navy. Its

efforts proved too little and too late.

### Bakumatsu Naval Developments (1853-1867)

Despite the impetus provided by the visit of Perry's 'Black Ships', internal developments also played an important role in the Bakufu's change of heart on naval matters. Several months before the Bakufu decided on a policy of purchasing foreign warships, Nabeshima Naomasa, Lord of Hizen tried, unsuccessfully, to purchase warships from the Dutch. The Lord of Satsuma too, at this time, petitioned the Bakufu for permission to build naval and steam vessels on the grounds that coastal defence was clearly incapable of ensuring Japan's security. It was no coincidence that, later, Hizen (Saga) and Satsuma provided the nucleus of men and ships for the modern Japanese Navy of the Meiji period (1868-1912).

As a result of Commodore Perry's visits the Bakufu finally initiated the planning and construction of a western-style naval defence system. First they lifted the ban on the construction of ocean-going vessels in 1853. For training they attempted to use indigenous personnel familiar with western methods. For western-style drilling and gunnery the Bakufu hired Takashima Shuhan (1798-1866) and Egawa Tarozaemon (1801-1855). On policy they were much influenced by Sakuma Shozan's (1811-1864) Kaibō Hachisaku (The Eight Principles of Sea Defence).<sup><5></sup> However, despite their increasing knowledge of western naval training and western warships, Japan still lacked the technology, facilities and trained manpower to build and operate her own

navy quickly and effectively. It was natural therefore that the Shogunate should seek to obtain ships from Holland through the local bugyō (commissioner) at Nagasaki. One month after the lifting of ban on ocean-going vessel construction four ships were ordered from Holland. The Dutch were sympathetic and also very keen to become naval tutors to Japan but were unable to comply with this request because of their involvement in the Crimean war.

In later years the Shogunate made considerable progress in laying the foundations for a modern navy. But, it should be noted that the Shogunate was involved in an armament competition on two fronts. Japan needed to build a naval defence system against the western powers and also increasingly the Shogunate found itself in competition with a number of modernising domains within Japan itself.

The Shogunate re-ordered two warships from the Dutch in 1855 and that same year was presented with a six gun, 500 ton paddle steamer, the Soembing (renamed Kanko Maru) as a gift from the Dutch monarch. In that same year coastal domains were instructed to build coastal gun emplacements to repel foreign forces. In 1857 the Dutch delivered the Yappan (renamed Kanrin Maru) and the following year the Yedo (renamed Chōyō Maru) also arrived. In 1858 Queen Victoria presented a small steam-powered yacht, the Emperor (renamed Banryū) to the Japanese monarch.

These four vessels formed the beginnings of a western-style government navy in Japan. At this time the Bakufu had to depend on western powers to build their ships but from this time on it did not rely solely on

Holland. The Fujiyama (United States), Kaiten (Prussia) and Higashi (France), testify to the international nature of Japan's ship purchases. The most powerful vessel was the Dutch built Chōyō which became the Bakufu flagship.

Many of the ships purchased were old or of poor quality and the Bakufu was always chronically short of the funds to purchase modern vessels. Increasingly, more enlightened thinkers in the Bakufu and the various domains were coming to realise that, given the technological sophistication of naval vessels, manpower training was the the first priority.<6>

Initially the Japanese turned first to the Dutch for training. In 1854 a Captain Fabius and other Dutch staff began instructing retainers from both the Bakufu and some of the domains. In 1855 a Kaigun Denshūjo (naval training establishment) was established at Nagasaki and another Dutch team began teaching there. The students were from the Bakufu, the fudai and even tozama domains and received training in maths, navigation, ship construction gunnery and seamanship. A second Netherlands detachment arrived in 1857 and stayed until March 1859 when Dutch tuition of Japanese naval personnel in Japan came to an end.

Japanese students who had studied under the Dutch established a new naval school at Tsukiji near Edo (Tokyo) in 1857. It was first called the Gunkan Kyōjūjo (Warship Teaching Institute) and shortly afterwards renamed the Kaigun Sorenjo (Navy Training Institute). In 1859 the Nagasaki training establishment closed, the students were transferred to Tsukiji and the Dutch instructors left



Japan. Shortage of funds was officially given as the reason for releasing the foreign instructors but it is more probable that the Japanese were dissatisfied with the level of instruction and moreover were becoming more confident of their own abilities.

In 1860 a Japanese mission to the United States boarded the Japanese-crewed Kanrin Maru and sailed across the Pacific. This was a major achievement and is often singled out as proof of how quickly the Japanese had learned the art of oceanic navigation but there was considerable American assistance from a United States Navy lieutenant and nine American sailors during the voyage.<7> The trans-Pacific voyage of the Kanrin Maru was a crucial stage in Japan's development of practical training in the art of seamanship. In 1863 the Bakufu sent students abroad for naval training and, no doubt reflecting in part the assistance furnished during the Kanrin Maru's voyage, the United States was selected as the most suitable country. At this time the American Civil War prevented such an arrangement and instead the students were sent to Holland. Amongst the students was Enomoto Takeaki (1836-1908) who was to occupy high positions in the Bakufu and early Meiji navy. Katsu Kaishū headed a short-lived Kaigun Sorenjo at Hyogo from 1863 to 1864 but this ran into political difficulties.<8> At the various training establishments Bakufu retainers mixed with men from the other domains. Much has been made of this in terms of breaking down narrow regional loyalties and creating a national consciousness. In 1866 Frenchmen were hired as naval instructors at the Tsukiji (or Edo) Kaigun Denshūjo



and, in 1867 Katsu Kaishū (1823-1899) was appointed head of the school. He intended to hire Dutch instructors but, due to the efforts of the British minister, Sir Harry Parkes, British instructors were hired instead. The British had in fact been asked to train the Bakufu army but had delayed answering the request allowing the French to take this role. Parkes clearly saw that tutoring the navy was a means of offsetting French influence within the Japanese government. Consequently, in November 1867, a mission under Lt Cdr Richard Tracey took up duties at Tsukiji and remained there until March 1868 when British neutrality during the Restoration War made it impossible for teaching to continue.

During the 1860s the Bakufu had made intermittent efforts to lay the foundations for a navy, by purchasing foreign vessels and training personnel at home and overseas. They were also keen to nurture indigenous shipbuilding skills and plan the expansion and reorganisation of naval defences. In 1861 the Bakufu had constructed a western-style ship at Nagasaki and had asked the lords of various domains for their advice on military reforms. In 1862 the Edo government had considered a report which called for a navy of 370 ships, 61,000 men and six coastal defence districts. Naval developments on this scale were, however, beyond the government's already strained resources. The shelling of Chōshū and Satsuma by Western warships in 1863 and 1864 was a further reminder of Japan's vulnerability to western naval power. A number of minor administrative reforms were carried out in the next few years and a significant development was the construction of

a naval dockyard at Yokosuka commencing in 1865. This was done with the assistance of the French designer Verney and the yard was modelled on Toulouse. French instructors appeared at Tsukiji in the following year and this marked the high point in French naval influence in the Bakumatsu era.

The years 1853-67 had seen a gradual deterioration in the Bakufu's ability to control the country. A number of internal and external factors contributed to the demise of the form of centralised feudalism through which the Tokugawa Shoguns had unified and controlled Japan for two centuries. In its final years the Bakufu had sought to develop a more modern, western-influenced defence system in order to bolster the internal regime and to improve its ability to defend Japan from western naval powers. The Bakufu had hired instructors from Holland, America, France, Italy and finally Great Britain. America, Holland, Britain, France and even Prussia supplied ships to the Bakufu and to various domains. The Tokugawa Shogunate, desperately short of resources to construct, train and develop an adequate navy, had encouraged the various domains to begin the construction of warships and training in western naval methods. Thus, the Shogunate found itself in a naval race with both the West and some of the more ambitious, modernising domains such as Satsuma and Saga. Ultimately despite the many and varied efforts at political, economic and military reform, the Tokugawa Shogunate collapsed and the last Shogun, Tokugawa Keiki (1837-1913) resigned in 1867 hoping to avoid bloodshed. However some of

his supporters decided to fight on. The new government, comprising a coalition of imperial court officials and men from an anti-Bakufu coalition led by the domains of Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and Hizen became embroiled in a civil war. The new 'Imperial Government', under a banner advocating the restoration of the Emperor to the centre of political power, now sought to defeat the supporters of the Shogunate on land and at sea and thus the "Restoration War" began. By 1868 there was an Imperial Government but it relied on the forces of supporting domains for military power.

On the eve of the Restoration War of 1868/69 the Bakufu possessed some 44 western-style vessels of which 75% had been built in the West and eight were warships. Satsuma had 16 vessels and the various domains, altogether, possessed some 94 vessels. Japan, therefore, by 1868 could actually claim some 138 western-style ships but the quality was rather poor.<9> Indeed Japan was regarded at this time as an ideal market for poorly constructed and often obsolete western vessels. Organisationally the Bakufu naval system had remained rather poor. Thus, despite considerable effort and not inconsiderable expense, Japan's combined naval forces in 1867 would have proved no match for any western or even Chinese navy at this time.

#### The Early Meiji Navy (1868-1895)

In the civil war of 1868/69 an alliance of the domains led by Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and Hizen overthrew the Shogunate and the armed conflict which ensued was mainly

landbased.<10> After the Bakufu surrendered remnants of the Bakufu navy, led by Admiral Enomoto Takeaki (1836-1908), fled to Hokkaido and after suffering severe losses in terrible storms his ships were destroyed by the anti-Bakufu coalition.<11> The latter was, by now, the national government. The naval conflict had both positive and negative consequences. It resulted in the almost total loss of the Bakufu's warships and many of its most talented naval personnel were killed. But it also provided combat training aboard western-style warships for officers and men from the Bakufu and the anti-Bakufu alliance. Such experience proved invaluable for the future naval officer corps. The greatest legacy of the Bakufu's efforts to construct a more modern navy, lay not in the few outdated ships surrendered to the new regime but in the considerable efforts in the area of naval training at home and abroad.

In the period 1868-1871 the new Imperial Government set about reforming Japan's central government structure. A key element in the restructuring, and in the maintenance of the new regime, was the establishment of a truly national army and navy. The first major step was for the domains to disband their own military forces either voluntarily or as a result of compulsion. Thus the Imperial Navy was initially formed by gathering together ships and men from the defeated Tokugawa forces and the donations of the victorious domains which had supported the Imperial Restoration.

The development of the Japanese Navy in the half century up to the opening of the Washington conference

(1871-1921) may, for convenience, be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase can be dated from the creation of a separate naval organisation (1871) to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1894). The second phase covers the period from the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War (1895) until the end of the Russo-Japanese war (1905). The final phase is the period from the end of the Russo-Japanese war to the end of World War One and the Siberian Expedition (1918/1919).

The declaration of the Imperial Restoration in 1868 was followed by a reorganisation of the central government and the three offices of Sōsai, Gitei and Sanko were established at Tokyo. After the battle of Toba Fushimi in 1868 there was a further reform and a Kairikugunmu-ka (navy/army affairs) section was established as one of seven sections.<12> The military establishment at this time was almost non-existent and went little beyond indirect command of the military forces of the various domains. In 1868 there was a further reorganisation and naval matters were placed under a Gunbōjimmukyoku (Military Defence Affairs Bureau) and, as with its predecessor it was controlled by a prince of the blood. On 1 June 1868 the so-called "Kansei Reform" established the Dajōkan system which was to last for some years. A Hyōbushō (Military Affairs Office) now dealt with both the army and navy and although originally located at Kyoto it was moved to Tokyo in 1869. In 1871 the Military Affairs Office was reformed and enlarged. It was reorganised that same year and separate army and navy departments were formed. In 1872 separate army and navy

ministries were created. At this time both service ministers were responsible to the Dajō Daijin, the pre-cabinet equivalent of a prime minister.<13> The latter alone had the right of direct access to the emperor regarding military affairs. During this period both administrative and command functions were the responsibility of the respective service ministers. This meant that Japan, for a time, had effective control and coordination in civil-military, inter-military and intra-military relations.

At the beginning of the Meiji era considerable documentary evidence existed to the effect that the building of a navy was to be Japan's first priority. Indeed the term used in official documents at this time was kairikugun (navy/army). One can also find statements to the effect that the navy and the army were of equal importance 'like the two wheels of a cart'. In practice however, the Meiji government initially pursued neither superiority nor parity for the navy. The term rikukaigun (army/navy) soon became common and this reflected far more than a mere change in terminology. A number of factors may explain why the calls for a high priority for the navy went unheeded in the first decades of the new regime. Perhaps the most important was that the army was essential for protection of the Emperor and the new national government. Internal peace and security, where the army of necessity played the leading role, was also necessary to eliminate internal disturbances which might act as a pretext for western intervention in Japanese domestic affairs. Another important political

reason was that naval figures lacked a deep rooted naval tradition and had not as yet acquired the kind of political acumen and prestige of their army counterparts. This resulted in the navy being in a very disadvantageous position in the competition for scarce funds. Furthermore it was much more expensive to create a large and modern navy than to develop a mass conscript army. Japan's technological backwardness due to two centuries of isolation meant that purchasing vessels abroad required an outflow of scarce specie whereas army conscripts could be paid in paper money. Thus, until immediately prior to the outbreak of war with China over Korea in 1894 the navy occupied a secondary and essentially supportive role to the army. It was, in effect, little more than a troopship navy. However, even with limited funds, the navy made considerable progress in ship acquisition and construction, training and strategic planning as well as organisational development. It also played an important role in a number of domestic and international conflicts.

### Early Meiji Naval Training

The first years of the Meiji era were ones where the navy found its growth greatly constrained by the government's financial difficulties. Furthermore the greater part of available funds were devoted to the army. This shortage of funds was one reason for initially placing greater emphasis on training rather than purchasing ships at this time. However Japan's naval leaders were only too aware that western-style warships presented formidable



challenges, not only in terms of technology but also in human organisation. Feudal ranking was no basis for crew selection aboard naval craft which represented the latest in technology.

In October 1870 an imperial decree stated that:

....the present standing forces are to be organised on the British model for naval forces and the French model for land forces.<14>

From this time on, English language, the history and customs and maritime tradition of England were officially approved objects of study. The choice of the Royal Navy as a model was only partially due to her position as the world's paramount naval power. Prior to the civil war the Shogunate had engaged Royal Navy staff and had held them in high regard. Furthermore, naval men in Satsuma and Saga, key domains in the new national navy, had been studying the Royal Navy for many years. At the time the decision was made the Imperial Navy was employing a Lt Albert Hawes RM as an instructor and HMS Audacious had taken on two Japanese midshipmen in 1870. Finally, the offer of the opportunity to give instruction to the Japanese army and navy respectively to France and Britain may have possibly been seen as part of a strategy to encourage these countries to remove their garrisons from Japan.

In 1870 the Kaigun Heigakkō (Naval Academy) was established at Tsukiji but there were serious problems. The courses were too theoretical, too bookish and the Japanese instructors lacked sufficient experience. In 1871 twelve students were sent to England but the Admiralty were unable to offer them places at Royal Navy establishments and they

were assigned to merchant navy instructors. Some did eventually serve as midshipmen in the Royal Navy. The most famous of these was Tōgō Heihachirō who served aboard the training ship Worcester of the Thames Nautical School and was to become the 'Nelson of Japan'.<15>

In 1873 the Navy Minister petitioned his government for permission to hire a naval training mission from Britain and in 1873 an agreement was signed. Six British officers, five petty officers and twenty three ratings were sent for a period of 3 years. The mission was under a Commander Archibald Lucius Douglas and came to be known as the Douglas Mission.<16> British influence was also evident in the setting up of an engineering school and improvements in the naval medical service and represented a considerable step towards modern professional naval officer training. In the 1880s the navy began planning for more advanced postgraduate study. The result was the transfer of the Naval Academy to Etajima and the establishment of the Kaigun Daigakkō (Naval War College) at Tsukiji. In 1886 the Japanese again turned to Britain for assistance and Captain John Ingles was selected to assist in the development of higher and technical naval education.

The employment of naval officers from abroad was only one means of educating the Japanese Navy in this period. Initially they experimented with sending a number of personnel abroad to serve on the naval ships and in the naval colleges of the great western naval powers. This, in the early Meiji period, was regarded as a substitute for training within Japan but this practice was soon

discontinued. Schooling within Japan became mandatory but it had limitations in that it was said to be overly academic. Japan's naval planners were thus faced with two choices for newly graduated personnel. The first was to send them abroad to serve on foreign vessels. This proved inadequate in that the numbers who could be trained in this way were small and it was an expensive process. Also the training proved very arduous for young Japanese trying to learn shipboard skills on a foreign vessel and in a foreign language. The second possibility was to send young students graduating from the Naval Academy on cruises aboard Japanese ships staffed by Academy instructors. This idea is generally credited to Commander Douglas and the first cruise was carried out in 1875 aboard the corvette Tsukuba which sailed to Hawaii and San Francisco. The range, length and number of cruises was gradually expanded and more and more modern ships were used. The objectives of the cruises went beyond intensive and practical training. They also gave opportunities for the direct study of foreign languages and cultures which, whilst obviously broadening students minds, also provided opportunities for intelligence gathering of a very basic kind.

Naval education was premised on the existence of a fleet of modern ships and naval planners continually struggled for increased funds and prestige for the navy and its role in national defence.

#### Early Meiji Naval Planning

Plans put forward by the Hyōbushō (Ministry of

Military Affairs) in 1870 had envisaged a fleet of 200 ships but this never materialised. Then, in 1873, Katsu Kaishū proposed the building of a fleet of 18 ships. However, by 1875 only six warships were being constructed or purchased abroad. In 1883 the navy finally managed to gain authorisation for a two year plan for the construction or purchase of three large warships, eight medium and small warships and one torpedo gunship.<17>

The appointment of Saigō Tsugumichi (1843-1902) as Navy Minister in 1885 was an important development for the Navy. This former army officer from Satsuma was ably assisted by the young Yamamoto Gonnohyōe (1852-1933) who went on to become one of the great figures of the Meiji navy. Saigō was responsible for strengthening the navy organisationally and improving the quality and increasing the quantity of ships in the fleet. In 1886 he pushed through plans to increase the naval budget and construct 54 new ships totalling 63,000 tons. The plan was based on comparative evaluations of the navies of the Great Powers and also rested heavily on assessments of China's naval strength.<18> In particular Japan decided to purchase three unarmoured French Bertin cruisers designed to combat two new battleships constructed in Germany for the Chinese Navy. This plan came to be known as the Dai Ikki Gunbi Kakuchō Keikaku (First [Naval] Armaments Expansion Plan).

Since the Meiji Restoration Russia had come to be regarded as the primary potential enemy by both the Japanese army and navy. However China temporarily replaced Russia in the 1870s and 1880s as the major perceived threat to Japan.

Increased tension in this period was mainly the result of a long dispute over Japan's relations with Korea which was nominally under the suzerainty of China. The Meiji government had been trying for some years to modernise its relations with Korea only to be rebuffed by an extremely traditionalist Korean regime. Korean intransigence resulted in a widespread campaign within Japan to conquer Korea. In 1875 three Japanese warships had shelled Korean shore batteries over the shelling of HIMS Unyō. This created acute tension and in the following year the Treaty of Kangwha was signed between the two countries. The suzerain power China saw this as a flagrant incursion of her relations with a tributary state. Both China and Japan sent troops to Korea to quell internal disturbances in 1882 and 1884 but Japan's leaders consciously avoided any direct clash with Chinese forces at this time. Finally in 1885 the Treaty of Tientsin was signed providing for the withdrawal of both Chinese and Japanese forces from the Korean peninsula. It also provided for prior consultation between Japan and China before any further despatch of forces to Korea could take place.

China at this time was preoccupied with western imperial expansion and, in 1885, the Chinese Fukien Fleet was destroyed by the French. China now tried to modernise her fleet. Inefficient use of funds resulted in only part of the fleet, the Peiyang or Northern Fleet, being modernised. The Chinese then tried to impress the Japanese with their naval strength. The Chinese Northern Fleet visited Japan in 1886 and 1891 and although nominally

courtesy calls, the visits generated widespread concern in Japan. This resulted in greater support for those advocating naval expansion within Japan.

By 1893 the Japanese navy had made considerable progress. It had established the foundations of a professional officer corps although its higher echelons were largely dominated by officers from Satsuma. It had learned much from Britain and from this point on no longer relied heavily on foreign instructors. Japan had purchased a number of vessels from Britain and moreover was gaining the reputation of being rather shrewd over purchasing and specifications, often obtaining better vessels in a particular class than the Royal Navy. In the 1880s Japan turned more to France for ships and ship designs as that country challenged British supremacy in these fields. Japan's indigenous shipbuilding industry also advanced steadily during these years.<19>

In terms of experience and prestige the period up to 1894 was one of slow and steady advancement. The navy did play a useful supporting role in putting down domestic disorders during the Saga rebellion (1874), the Hagi Rebellion (1876) and the Saigō (or Satsuma) Rebellion (1877). The Saga rebellion resulted in a drastic decline in that domain's influence within the navy but in the Saigo rebellion Satsuma naval officers remained loyal and consolidated their control of the navy. Outside Japan the navy had provided essential support in the expedition against Formosa in 1874, the shelling of Korean forts at Kokwha in 1875 and had transported troops to Korea in 1882



and 1884. In 1893 Japan sent one of her newest warships, the cruiser Naniwa, under Captain Tōgō Heihachirō, to Hawaii, ostensibly to protect Japanese immigrants in the aftermath of the Hawaiian revolution. This was a significant, if relatively unsuccessful attempt by Japan to use warships for diplomatic purposes. Nevertheless, her growing confidence and the publication of Alfred Thayer Mahan's and Phillip Colomb's works, on the need for command of the seas, in 1891 and 1892 pointed to the crucial role of a navy in the quest for empire.<20> Yamamoto Gonnohyoe had already managed to persuade Navy Minister Saigo Tsugumichi to create a separate command organisation for the navy in 1893. This was the Naval General Staff and this development indicated the growing strength and importance of the navy in military planning.<21>

On the eve of the Sino-Japanese War, the Imperial Japanese Navy found itself involved in a major battle with the National Diet over naval construction estimates. In November 1892 the Lower House of the Diet attempted for a third time to reject the Navy's budget. It was primarily the intercession of the Emperor which enabled the navy to obtain necessary funding. The Emperor gave a grant from the Privy Purse for six years and commanded all civil and military officers to contribute one tenth of their salaries for the construction of the fleet.

The intervention of the Emperor Meiji himself was a major turning point in naval plans for expansion. Henceforth the 'Emperor's Navy' evinced a new found confidence and began to shed its traditionally subordinate



role vis-a-vis the army. The creation of a Naval General Staff and the open support of the Emperor Meiji produced a navy ready to challenge for parity with the army and it now needed a fighting tradition to enhance its growing prestige. The war with China was to provide the first real opportunity to achieve this.

In ships and armaments Japan entered the war with China at a marked disadvantage but thanks to superior British-influenced training and tactics Japan emerged from the war victorious at sea. The French ships and Canet guns performed well below expectations whilst the British Armstrong guns were a decisive factor in achieving victory over a Chinese Fleet led by two German-built battleships. The war brought some useful accessions to the Fleet in the form of captured Chinese vessels and gave the navy greater confidence regarding future battles in the Diet. China was also forced to pay a huge indemnity part of which was allocated to naval building programmes. After the Sino-Japanese War the navy became less and less an adjunct of the army, a troopship or coastal defence navy, and developed the battle fleet concept. This 'new style' navy became a major pillar of defence of Japan's 'spheres of interest' as well as 'spheres of sovereignty'.<sup><22></sup> The navy also gained tremendous international prestige for the nation and itself. The Japanese Navy openly acknowledged its debt to the Royal Navy and now began to emerge as a possible ally for Britain in containing Russian ambitions for India and East Asia. Japan, as a result of her victory over China was now a major regional power and, in military and naval terms,

the leading Asian nation.

### The Japanese Navy 1895-1919

The defeat of China caused Japan to revert to regarding Russia as the 'potential enemy'. Russia had traditionally been the 'enemy' until about a decade previous to the Sino-Japanese War. In the aftermath of the victory over China the so-called 'Triple Intervention' occurred in which Russia, France and Germany forced Japan to return the Liaotung Peninsula to China 'for the peace of the Orient'. This 'humiliation' and the subsequent occupation of Port Arthur by the Russians, produced a spirit of gashin shōtan (perseverance and determination) within Japan and thus provided further impetus support for military and naval expansion. It was now felt that the Japanese navy had to be capable of coping with a major European Power, probably Russia. In 1895 for the very first time naval expenditure exceeded army expenditure as a result of some additions (supplementaries) to the First Expansion Plan.

In 1896 the Second Naval Expansion Plan was drafted. This called for the construction of 103 ships totalling 153,000 tons and the nucleus of the new fleet was to be six battleships and six cruisers.<23> It was the ships built under this plan which were to form the main part of the navy in the Russo-Japanese War. In 1889 the British navy had adopted the famous 'Two Power Standard'. One year later, in 1890, a novel variation of this was adopted by the Japanese Navy which opted for its own 'Two Power Standard' namely a fleet equal to the combined strengths of Britain's China

Squadron and the Chinese Fleet.<24> Great Britain's naval force in the Far East was designed to deal with the Russian Far Eastern Fleet which was also traditionally Japan's potential enemy. But the Chinese Navy at this time had seemed the most likely immediate opponent of the Japanese Navy. In 1895 the standard for the Japanese Navy became a fleet equal to either the British or Russian Fleets (in the Far East) and a third power such as France. The Second Naval Expansion Plan stated as follows:

The main battle fleet, centered on ironclads and supported by cruisers and below must necessarily be sufficient to oppose the power that any one or again two combined countries can send to the East.<25>

This second plan which had, as its key element the construction of six battleships and six armoured cruisers also included a major expansion of shore facilities. In the preface to the Third Expansion Plan Navy Minister Yamamoto Gonnohyoe described it thus:

Corresponding to the situation in the Far East there was a plan to construct 4 first line battleships (15000 tons), 4 first class battlecruisers (10,000 tons) 2 second class cruisers (4,400 tons) and land installations. However due to the financial situation we reduced this to 2 first class battleships plus 3 first class and 2 second class cruisers.<26>

The years from the end of the Sino-Japanese War to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war were of great significance for Japan's diplomatic as well as military development. By far the most important diplomatic development was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance but here we are only concerned with naval aspects of the alliance.<27> Japan, by this alliance, acquired the status of a world power, if only by association. The alliance was perceived

on both sides as a means of containing Russian ambitions in the Far East and was viewed as particularly advantageous by the navies of both countries. However the aims of both parties in concluding such an agreement were naturally different and led to considerable difficulties in negotiation. The naval agreement was incorporated in a separate, secret diplomatic note but this was a compromise and did not really meet either sides wishes completely. Britain saw the alliance as offering her protected facilities for coaling and repairs and thus avoiding the enormous expenditure of developing her own Far Eastern bases. It was also a means by which she could avoid increasing her naval commitment in the Far East and possibly even reduce it in the future. Japan hoped for a British naval force of battleships and cruisers in Far Eastern waters superior to any third force, a thinly veiled reference to Russia. In the end Britain agreed "as far as possible" to keep a force available for concentration there. In 1902 Britain immediately withdrew two cruisers from the China Station thus confirming Japanese suspicions that Britain wished to use the alliance to reduce and/or redeploy her naval forces. Japan temporarily ended major naval construction in 1902 and although this was claimed to be due to shortage of funds Britain perceived this as a reduction in commitment by the Japanese. Nevertheless, the naval aspects of the alliance were further clarified, except as regards tonnage figures, by a series of high level talks in Japan and England throughout 1902. The result was a series of detailed agreements as to operational matters in the

event of a war involving both alliance partners. Such matters as fleet distribution and command of mixed fleets by officers of either navy were decided and a joint signal book was produced.

If Japan's relations with Britain in this period became closer, mutual suspicions notwithstanding, her relations with the United States, especially over Hawaii, deteriorated. In 1897 Japan again sent the cruiser Naniwa to Hawaii.<28> The Shinshu incident arose because of the refusal of the Hawaiian authorities to allow entry to a ship bearing 1200 Japanese immigrants. The refusal undoubtedly reflected growing fears of potential Japanese expansion in the Pacific after their successes in the Sino-Japanese War. The United States eventually annexed Hawaii since, as a United States Congressional Foreign Relations Committee put it:

The issue is whether in that inevitable struggle, Asia or America shall have that vantage ground of the control of the naval key of the Pacific....<29>

Japan's diplomatic representative was so incensed at Japan's weakness over the annexation issue that he attempted to commit suicide on his way home to Japan. But if relations with America were becoming strained it was Russia which was causing Japan the greatest immediate concern as Japanese and Russian interests on the Asian mainland continued to collide.<30>

The serious deterioration in relations with Russia, greatly exacerbated by the Russian occupation of Port Arthur, made it imperative that Japan further increase her fleet strength. Japan was still unable <sup>to</sup> rely on her



indigenous shipbuilding industry to supply modern vessels effectively and quickly and she again sought to purchase ships abroad. In this Japan received considerable assistance from her new alliance partner, Great Britain. As tension increased between Japan and Russia, Britain found herself with two warships for sale due to a cancelled order from Chile. The Russians were interested in purchasing these ships and the British government attempted to persuade Japan to present a counteroffer. Japan refused on the grounds of shortage of funds and unsuitability of the vessels. The Royal Navy in the end purchased the ships and a key factor in this was that the British wished to prevent them falling into Russian hands. Argentina had also ordered two cruisers from Italy and when the Chile-Argentina conflict was resolved amicably, she too cancelled her order. Britain acted as agent and purchased these for the Japanese Navy and they arrived in Japan on 16 March shortly after war was declared. These vessels played an important role in the naval campaign against Russia. Japan did change her mind on the 'Chilean' warships but by then Britain thought the sale might be rather indelicate and seriously offend the Russians.

In the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) Japan was able to put to sea a 6-6 Fleet of battleships and battlecruisers and had at her disposal a total of 152 ships in all.<30> Britain formally maintained neutrality during the war but she was clearly of great assistance to Japan. For example Japan knew that, under the Alliance, Great Britain would come to her aid in the event of a Russian attack on the

Japanese homeland. Before the outbreak of war Britain had prevented Russia buying two new warships and actively aided Japan's purchase of two vessels from the Italians. Britain tried to prevent the despatch and then obstruct and delay the arrival of the Russian Baltic Fleet in the Far East by protests to Russia, by refusing to offer coaling and other facilities and by trying to pressure other countries into refusing such facilities. During the war Britain also provided many loans to Japan albeit as private not governmental transactions.

In the end Japan achieved a notable victory over Russia and the navy emerged from the war with the beginnings of a glorious naval tradition. The defeat of the numerically superior Russian navy surprised a world in which the idea of an Asian nation defeating a great European power was something that had scarcely been imagined. The war not only destroyed the Russian fleet and strengthened the Japanese Navy by means of captured craft, but also confirmed Japan as a world power in her own right rather than under the umbrella of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The period following the great naval victories in the war against Russia holds the key to understanding the developments which led, eventually, to the Washington Conference. American-Japanese naval rivalry, the 8-8 Fleet and the emergence of the '70% ratio' all crystallised in this period and these will be treated in detail in a later chapter. By 1905 Japan had emerged as a major naval power and was also allied with the most powerful maritime power, Great Britain. Germany, from 1898 on, was attempting to



become a major naval power capable of aiding the creation of an empire and the Far East and Pacific was an area of growing interest for that country. The United States too in the years after the Russo-Japanese War was determined to construct an oceanic fleet second only to that of Great Britain.

A Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance had been signed in 1905 as a consequence of changed circumstances following the Russo-Japanese war.<31> In marked contrast to the first alliance, which had been principally naval, the second alliance negotiations centred initially on a proposal for the commitment of Japanese land forces to the defence of India. In the end, the Japanese refused to commit its army and only general provisions were agreed for future military/naval discussions and secret notes were discarded. In 1907, some two years after the alliance was signed, Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohyoe headed a mission to England to discuss military and naval provisions of the second Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Japan, by this time was more confident in her own abilities and no longer sought to commit a superior British naval force in Far Eastern waters. The British, because of the reduction of Russian power strength in the Far East, were only prepared to commit forces against a European power and not against the other large naval power in the region, the United States. As a result of the second alliance Japan hoped that the British Navy would continue to, "...agree to assist the navy of its ally, Japan, by its advice on every aspect of naval education and research."<32> Nevertheless, the two year

delay in convening military and naval talks indicated the reduced priority in these areas. This was, of course, largely due to the decline in Russian influence and power at this time.

Faced with these developments and the new responsibilities and role of being a world, as opposed to a regional power, Japan, in the immediate aftermath of the war, began to lay down an overall defence plan for the Empire. This resulted in the Imperial National Defence Policy (INDP) promulgated in 1907.<33> This was a major innovation in both detailed planning and coordination of army/navy and civilian/military planning for the defence of the Japanese Empire.

On the surface the INDP implied a coordinated approach by the Japanese army and navy. However in fact it reflected a growing rift between army and navy strategists and politicians. For several decades the navy had been determined to obtain greater status and power within the Japanese defence establishment and to a large extent had succeeded. The creation of an independent command organisation, the Naval General Staff, the public support of the Emperor for the navy and naval budgets exceeding those of the army were evidence of the enhanced prestige and standing of the navy. Nevertheless, the army remained most reluctant to concede greater influence to the navy let alone parity in Japan's national security planning. Disagreements between high level army and navy officers before and during both the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars continued thereafter.<34> Such disagreements were evident in the

designation of Russia as the primary potential enemy for the army and the United States as the primary potential enemy for the navy in the various INDP documents. Undoubtedly there were also genuine strategic differences underlying the standpoints of the two services. However, the navy's victories in the two recent wars and the considerable naval element in the alliance with Britain had greatly enhanced the domestic and international status of the navy. In addition Japan's standing as a Great Power reflected naval rather more than army strength.

From 1907 conflict between the two services extended beyond different priorities in planning. Both services needed massive budgetary allocations as they attempted to almost double the size of their respective existing defence establishments in accordance with the INDP. Japan was in no position to support such huge increases in funding for one, let alone both services. Thus, by the last years of the Meiji era, both services faced increasing resistance from the Diet and cabinets as well as an intensification in inter-service competition over funding. Ultimately the two services perceived this struggle as, in part, a competition over their respective standing within the nation. The budgetary battles resulted in the collapse of a number of cabinets with both the army and the navy attempting to bring down, or prevent the formation of cabinets not to their liking. This reached a peak in the first years of the Taisho period (1912-1914) and came to be known as the Taisho Political Crisis.<35> Political manoeuvrings over budgets began to erode the tremendous support the Japanese Navy had

gained in the recent wars as public opinion and parliament turned against massive military budget increases. Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohyoe became Prime Minister in 1913 but his cabinet soon fell and two key elements in its demise related to naval affairs. The first was that he had tried to push through a massive naval budget whilst at the same time assenting to a similar increase for the army. Perhaps more important in terms of naval prestige within Japan were revelations concerning bribery over ship and naval weapons procurement. This, the Siemens or Siemens-Vickers Scandal, implicated a number of naval officers who were accused of corruption and accepting bribes.<36> In many people's eyes this was something greater than simply naval officers tarnishing a hitherto pure image. Many now saw a connection between the pursuit of increased naval budgets and corruption, and the creation of 'special funds' for naval lobbying of political parties and industrialists. The navy's hard won popularity was severely damaged by the scandal and reached its nadir at this time.

The War between Germany and Great Britain could hardly have come at a more appropriate time for the Imperial Japanese Navy. Reeling from the immense loss of public confidence and a Diet increasingly hostile to naval budgetary increases, participation in the war offered the navy a possible opportunity to redeem itself and refurbish its tarnished image by means of naval successes in combat. To be fair, the navy probably had other important reasons for favouring Japanese participation in the conflict. Japanese naval officers saw it as a chance to help out their

former tutor and mentor, the Royal Navy, and thus repay past debts. In addition, peacetime navies are renowned for poor promotion prospects and naval campaigns offered them a greater opportunity for promotion. Improving the navy's image nationally and internationally as well as aiding an old friend may have been very important but one cannot rule out the sheer attraction of testing their mettle against the very best of western naval technology alongside Britain and against Germany.

The Government clearly saw that participation in the war was advantageous to Japan in that it offered a pretext for sweeping German power from the Pacific.<37> This would undoubtedly enhance Japan's chances of becoming the paramount power in East Asia. But the government did have reservations about participating in the war. Japan had received a number of requests to assist Britain after the war had begun but these were accompanied by the attempted imposition of certain restrictions on Japan's freedom of action. Britain desperately needed the Japanese Navy in order to cope with the German Asiatic Fleet and the threat from armed merchantmen and submarines in Asia and the Pacific but feared giving Japan the opportunity of improving its position in East Asia. Increased Japanese power could threaten British interests in China and also cause great concern to Australia and New Zealand whose troops were desperately needed on the European front. In the end Japan did finally enter the war out of friendship tinged with hope of self-advancement rather than out of any duty specified in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Furthermore, despite strenuous

public and private efforts to limit her sphere of operations, Japan refused to be bound by limitations other than those which coincided with her own interests. Pro-German elements in Japan, especially in the army, may have contributed to the initial reluctance to enter the war but the major reason for hesitation was the British attitude over the limits on Japan's participation. These limits were clearly to Britain's advantage. Thus, despite declaring 'strict neutrality' on 4 August 1914, a joint Genrō-Ministerial Council decided four days later that Japan would enter the war. On 15 August a final ultimatum was sent to Germany and on 23 August Japan formally declared war on Germany.

Japanese naval involvement in the war, unlike that of the army, was very considerable. The latter's role went little further than participating in the Tsingtao campaign.<38> Japanese naval participation had two distinct phases. The first was in the period up to 1916. Then in 1917 Japan despatched destroyer squadrons to the Mediterranean in view of the serious situation Britain found herself in at that time. Japan's naval strategy at the beginning of the war was twofold. First, attack Germany's East Asia base in China and expel German naval power from the Pacific, and second gain control over marauding German armed merchantmen and submarines.<39> Unfortunately, part of the German Asiatic Fleet had left China and was somewhere in the South Seas. The Tsingtao campaign was a joint operation with British ships under Japanese command and Tsingtao surrendered to allied forces in November 1914. The



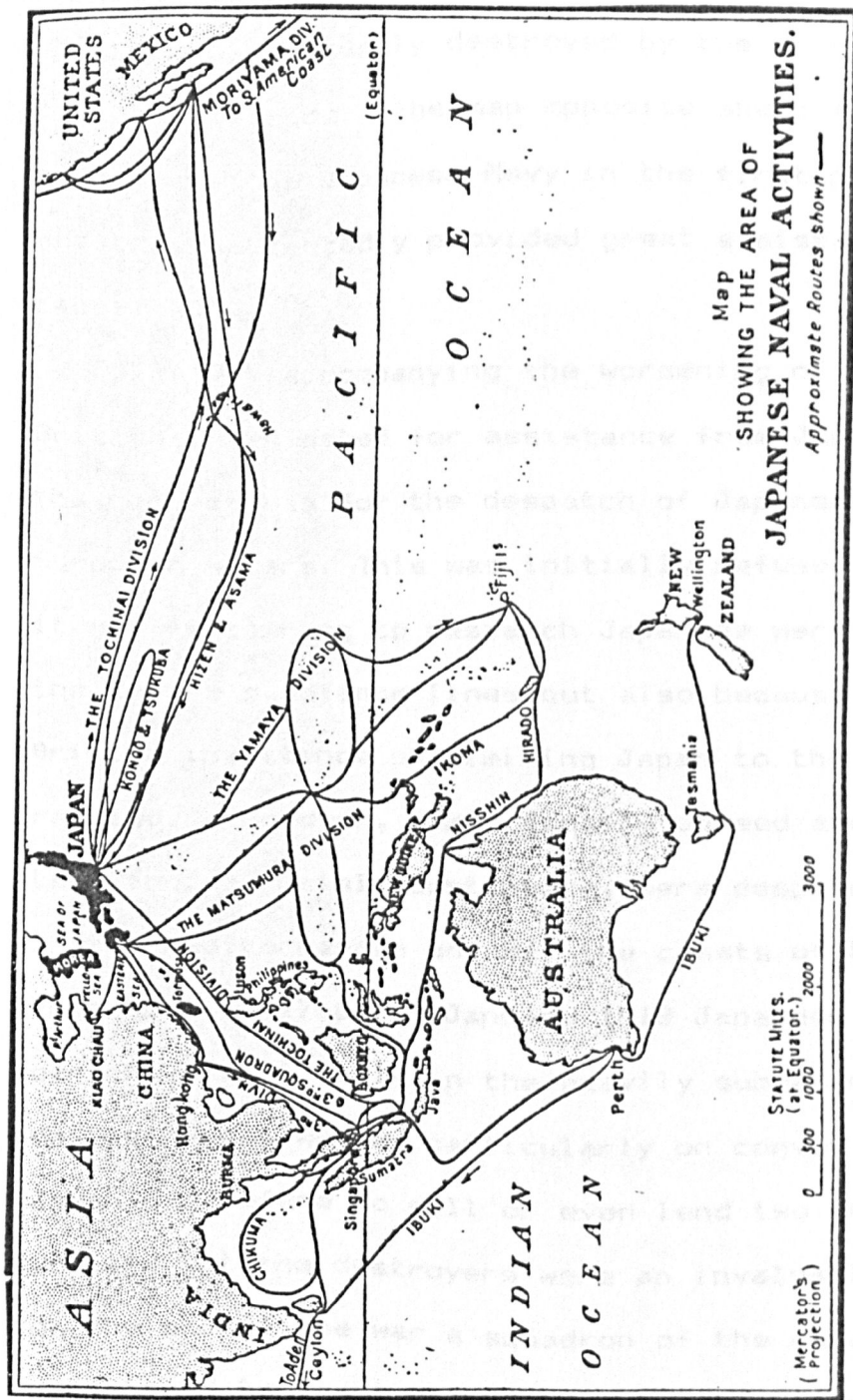
Japanese First Fleet participated in the Tsingtao campaign and also provided units for the safeguarding of trade routes in the Pacific as well as searching for German and Austrian vessels. It was later renamed the "First South Seas Division" and was soon reinforced by the "Second South Seas Division" also from the First Fleet whose duty was to protect Australian trade routes and search for German vessels. These two divisions cooperated well and, in the process of searching out German vessels, captured all the German South Seas naval bases for Japan.

The Third Squadron had responsibility for the region extending from the southern area of the Eastern Seas to the China Sea. They even rendered assistance to the British at Singapore by landing marines there when a mutiny of Indian forces occurred in 1915.

A division of the South Seas Squadron, the so-called 'Katō Division' under Admiral Katō Kanji, was assigned to the British China Squadron at the end of August 1914. It was joined by another Japanese Squadron in October 1915 and participated in allied efforts which resulted in the light cruiser Emden being tracked down and destroyed in November. The Indian Ocean area was now cleared of enemy shipping and the Ibuki then escorted troop transports from Australia and New Zealand as far as Aden.

Japanese forces were also operating in the area off the west coast of north America. The Moriyama Squadron was initially only the Izumo which had been despatched to Mexico in 1913 to protect Japanese residents there. It was joined by two more Japanese warships and by HMS Newcastle





Taken from: The Times (ed.), The Times Documentary History  
of the War Vol 9 Naval part 4: Documentary History -- Naval  
The Japanese Navy, p.275.



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and HMCS Rainbow of the Canadian Navy and these were placed under Rear Admiral Moriyama. The duty of his squadron was the protection of the trade routes along the coasts of North America. These units played an important supporting role in chasing the remnants of the German fleet which were eventually destroyed by the British at the battle of the Falklands. The map opposite shows the vast areas covered by the Japanese Navy in the first phase of the war and they undoubtedly provided great assistance to the allied cause.<40>

In 1917 accompanying the worsening of the situation the British again asked for assistance from Japan. This time the request was for the despatch of Japanese warships to European waters. This was initially refused partly because it was felt wrong to despatch Japanese warships so far from the Empire's defence lines but also because the earlier British insistence on limiting Japan to the Far East still rankled. However, Japan finally agreed and three special task forces, mainly destroyers, were despatched for duties in the Mediterranean and off the coasts of South Africa. From April 1917 until January 1918 Japanese destroyers performed heroically in the heavily submarine-infested Mediterranean waters particularly on convoy duties.<41> Japan did refuse to sell or even lend two cruisers to Britain but the destroyers were an invaluable contribution. At the end of the war a squadron of the Japanese navy was despatched to Vladivostok and landed marines thus setting off the so-called Siberian Intervention.<42>

Japan's naval forces emerged from the war with a

tremendous increase in combat experience and in national and international prestige. Moreover, as a result of the elimination of German naval power, Japan now became the third naval power in the world. This was in sharp contrast to the Japanese Army which found its domestic and international prestige and status greatly reduced. This was partially due to too close an association and sympathy with Germany and also to her limited participation in the war. Japan's status as a world power now seemed to depend largely on the size, power and prestige of her navy.

Thus by 1918 The Japanese Navy's contribution to Japan's position in the world was a great one. Additionally the growth and development of the navy, in terms of manpower education and technological diffusion, had also made a unique contribution to Japanese industry and the modernisation of Japan. However Japan now found herself engaged in a naval arms race with America and Britain and this resulted in a series of naval arms limitation conferences commencing at Washington in 1921. Before considering these the next chapter will trace Katō's early career from entering the Fleet to his appointment to the position of President of the Naval War College, shortly before his secondment to the Washington Conference delegation in 1921.

## CHAPTER THREE

### KATŌ'S EARLY NAVAL CAREER 1891-1921

#### From Training Ship to Combat

On 17 July 1891, after nearly a decade at the Naval Academy, Katō now joined the training cruise ship, the corvette Hiei. Until 1877 these cruises had been for students at the Naval Academy but henceforth they were solely for those who had just graduated from the academy. All students had to keep a detailed diary and Katō's cruise diaries are still kept at Fukui Municipal Museum.<1>

These cruises had a number of objectives. They subjected young cadets to a very intensive and thorough training at sea under varied conditions. They also provided an opportunity of studying other cultures and of improving their command of foreign languages. Finally the cruises themselves were a massive information and intelligence gathering operation. The cadets were expected to observe everything in foreign ports and waters which might conceivably be useful to a future naval officer such as harbour facilities, stores, foreign vessels and nature of fortifications. Students emerged from the cruise fitter, better trained and with some knowledge of foreign countries based on personal observation. This provided an early international perspective for young naval officers, a broadening experience denied their army counterparts.

Katō joined the Hiei on 4 August and among the crew



was a gunnery officer, Yamashita Gentarō (1864-1931), who exercised a great influence on Katō throughout his later career. The Hiei visited Guam, New Britain, Sydney, Melbourne, New Caledonia, New Guinea, Manila and Hong Kong.

On completion of the training cruise Katō was drafted to the Naniwa, Japan's very latest cruiser. It had been built on Tyneside and was superior to any ship of her class in the world. The captain was Tōgō Heihachirō (1847-1934). Kato was greatly influenced by Tōgō and remained a devoted admirer and disciple of him throughout his career. Another member of the cruise was Okada Keisuke (1868-1952), later Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet, Navy Minister and Prime Minister. He hailed from the same village as Katō and at this time they were good friends. Katō's first months at sea were uneventful though Katō was apparently impressed by Togo's speed and resolute action when the Naniwa hit a reef. In late 1893 the Naniwa received orders to proceed immediately to Hawaii where there had been a revolution. The events there were to add considerably to Kato's admiration of Tōgō and also more importantly, provided Kato with his first lessons in international relations, diplomacy, power politics and the realities of American and Japanese imperialism.

The event which necessitated the despatch of the Naniwa was the Hawaiian Revolution of 1893 when a group of white residents, favouring the annexation of Hawaii by the United States, overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy.<2> At this time the Japanese population of around 20,000 far outnumbered the whites settlers in Hawaii. The decision to



despatch the Naniwa in 1893 was the first clear indication of the Japanese government's growing concern over Hawaii. Japan's concern was partly for the safety of Japanese settlers there, but also due to the strategic naval and commercial significance of Hawaii in the Pacific.

For the United States, Hawaii increasingly throughout the late 19th century, came to represent a key element in their Asian policy in both economic and strategic terms. Pressures for annexation increased towards the end of the century and among the most strident of those calling for annexation was the great advocate of sea power Alfred Thayer Mahan. In 1875 the United States concluded a reciprocal treaty with Hawaii which specifically forbade Hawaii to negotiate a most favoured nation clause with other countries. This policy, as Akira Iriye has pointed out, was "in direct contradiction to the principle of equal opportunity the United States was stressing in East Asia".<3> In 1884 the treaty was renewed and an extra clause added giving the United States exclusive rights to Pearl Harbor as a repair and coaling station. Thus, Hawaii was regarded as a vital element in American spheres of influence in the Pacific even before Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War increased concern over the Japanese naval threat in the Pacific. It was also an important half-way station to the markets of the Orient.

On the other hand Japan's interest in Hawaii was relatively new. In the mid-1880s white settlers, in search of labour for their sugar plantations, had eagerly sought and welcomed Japanese immigrants. In January 1885, 850 men,

women and children, sailed for Honolulu followed by another thousand in July. By 1893 the population had risen to over 20,000.<4> This population dwarfed the resident white population and was increasingly perceived as part of the 'yellow peril' by many Americans. Ostensibly the Naniwa had been despatched to Hawaii to ensure that Japanese citizens in Hawaii were safe. However, by the 1890s,

Hawaii was a crucial test of Japan's ability to expand peacefully into the Pacific: Japan's psychological commitment here was far beyond its material interests.<5>

When the Naniwa arrived in February 1893 at Honolulu, the Japanese training ship Kongo was already there. More importantly so was the American cruiser Boston (and a British warship). In fact the Boston had already landed its marines to protect American lives but, "as an official investigation later pointed out, it was to maintain order on behalf of the pro-American revolutionists."<6> Events at Hawaii in 1893 clearly provided an interesting lesson for Kato and others in the use of warships in a delicate situation and a clear example of successful 'gunboat diplomacy' by the United States.

Captain Tōgō found himself at the centre of a number of controversies. First, a fugitive Japanese criminal sought refuge aboard his ship. Tōgō refused to hand him over to the (provisional government) authorities. Instead, he deposited him with the Japanese Consul. Later Tōgō refused to permit a gun salute to the President of the new government when the latter's ship passed alongside. Although much was made of such incidents in the local press, both were based on Tōgō's refusal to recognise the new

government, a position also adhered to by the Japanese authorities in Tokyo.<7> Moreover Tōgō, like many other naval officers, was well versed in international law. Katō later described both incidents in great detail recounting how Tōgō had always emphasised that naval officers must have an excellent understanding of international law. Tōgō's firmness in the face of considerable pressure at this time provided an excellent lesson for a young officer such as Kato. In later years Katō reflected on events in Hawaii at this time and wrote:

As I recollect there were hardly any people in our country at that time who valued Hawaii, the 'Gibraltar' of the Pacific. Since domestic public opinion was extremely weak and no alarm bells went off the consequence is that we are now left with a vexing problem today. Ōkuma Shigenobu, as I remember, was the only one who stated that we must not overlook the value of Hawaii. At that time our naval strength comprised newly-constructed high speed cruisers such as the Naniwa and the Takachiho whereas America was weak in naval strength and possessed only steelbound, wooden hulled ships. If our people had had the concern they have today, if we had considered carefully the international outcome and if we had used the British appropriately then I positively believe it would not have been difficult to at least make Hawaii remain neutral.<8>

Asada Sadao has seen the principal impact of this episode on Katō as a first brush with American imperialism and power politics.<9> Undoubtedly there is some truth in this.

However there were other more obvious lessons to be learnt such as the necessity of a knowledge of international law, the utility of landing marines and particularly the strengths and limitations of warships for political purposes. Certainly the Americans proved themselves more adept than the Japanese in Hawaii at that time.

In March 1894, Katō was appointed shoi (midshipman)

the first step in the naval hierarchy. At the end of March, the Naniwa returned home and Katō was drafted to the Gunnery training ship Tatsuta, as a gunnery student. He spent two months there and achieved excellent results. He was then assigned to duties at the Yokosuka Navy Yard. During his time there the situation between Japan and China rapidly deteriorated leading eventually to war.

Immediately prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War on 21 July 1894, Katō received orders to proceed to the Naval Expeditionary Headquarters in Korea for duties with the shore batteries there. His biographers attributed his selection to excellent results in gunnery training. He remained there until December of that year and then was transferred to the cruiser Hashidate which was operating as a troopship to Shantung. The Hashidate also participated in the naval attack on Wei Hai Wei in early 1895. His role in the war, while no doubt arduous and often dangerous, did not include participation in any of the great sea battles. The official biography quotes extensively from Kato's own writings at this time, but it is mainly descriptive of the events of the war and tells us little of his own involvement or his inner thoughts. One interesting comment by the young Katō is perhaps worthy of note. It concerns his opinion of the Chinese prior to the outbreak of the war:

If there is a war against the Chinese, Japanese women will suffice. One salvoe and the Chinese will surrender. If Japanese women wear mens' clothes and use only blanks that will be quite sufficient.<10>

The Sino-Japanese War was important to Katō's career

development in that he had actually participated in Japan's first major naval successes and gained valuable experience especially in gunnery. In later years he talked mainly of Tōgō's role especially the sinking of the British SS Kowshing prior to the official declaration of the war.<11> This incident indicated yet again to Katō Tōgō's resoluteness and courage in his own interpretations of international law.

#### From England to the Russo-Japanese War

When the war ended Kato continued to serve aboard the Hashidate until October 1896. He then received orders to proceed to England and join the steaming crew responsible for sailing the newly constructed battleship Fuji back to Japan. The Fuji and its sister ship the Yashima (Hachijima) had been purchased, in part, by the Emperor's gift from Imperial Household funds to the navy. The Fuji was the first battleship built specifically for the Japanese Navy. The second in command on this cruise was Saitō Makoto (1858-1936) with whom Katō continued to correspond in later years. Saitō went on to become Navy Minister, Governor-General of Korea and Prime Minister. Kato was in England for the Grand Naval Review at Spithead for Queen Victoria's Jubilee and the Fuji took part in the review. On 17 August 1897, after some eight months in England, the Fuji sailed for Japan. Apart from the normal difficulties of sailing a new ship home, the crew had to sail through the Suez canal. There was some doubt as to whether ships of such size could pass through the 25 fathom channel and other



navies of the world watched with great interest.<12> On 3 October 1897 the Fuji arrived at Yokosuka to a tumultuous public welcome. In December, Katō was promoted to Chūi (Sub-Lieutenant) and then almost immediately to Taii (Lieutenant). The latter rather rapid promotion was simply due to changes in age qualifications. He was then made Butai-Chō (Divisional Officer) of the Fuji. In July 1898 he was appointed Chief Navigator of the torpedo gunboat Tatsuta and then in November 1899 he was appointed to duties in No 3 Section of the Naval General Staff.

During his tour of duty at the Naval General Staff, Katō took the A-Course pre-qualifying examination for the Naval War College. In later years success on this course was a key stage in promotion to flag rank but at this time it was useful but not vital. This was fortunate since Katō was drafted to Russia before he could attend the course. His fine results in the entrance examination were rewarded with a tour of duty as a language student in Russia.

The practice of sending naval students abroad for training had commenced in the Bakumatsu period. The new Meiji government continued and expanded the practice of sending students for both short and long periods of study in the West. The practice ceased briefly during the Sino-Japanese War. Undoubtedly such tours abroad were, in part, designed to increase and widen a naval officer's naval education. But, as was the case with training cruises, indeed more so, they were also intelligence operations. Katō's orders were quite explicit:

You must engage in research and investigation pertaining to matters relating to naval armaments



during your stay in Russia.<13>

Intelligence on Russian military and especially naval matters had increased in importance after the Sino-Japanese War since Russia had once again become the primary potential enemy.

At this time the navy were rather short of officers proficient in Russian at this time. Katō's Russian was already very good although there is no indication as to where he learned it. It is possible he acquired it as preparation for the Naval War College A-Course examination. In later years Katō recalled how he had interpreted for Lieutenant Hirose Takeo who was attempting to court the daughter of a Russian Admiral.<14> Yet Katō had just arrived whilst Hirose had been in St Petersburg for some time. Katō spent almost three years in Russia (1900-1902) and during his stay the army attache was Tanaka Giichi, a future Army Minister and Prime Minister. All the biography tells us of their relationship is that Tanaka, who liked to live in style, i.e. beyond his means, used Katō as an intermediary for borrowing money from Hirose Takeo! Katō did strike up a very close relationship with Hirose Takeo who was later posthumously accorded the coveted title Gunshin (Divine Soldier) for bravery in the Russo-Japanese War. Hirose, after a little initial help from Kato, courted a Russian girl, daughter of a Russian admiral, and his Russian apparently improved. Hirose had graduated from the Naval Academy earlier than Katō but he was apparently a relatively average student there and graduated halfway down his class.

Katō studied hard, improved his knowledge of Russia and Russian even, we are told, to the extent of reading Russian novels. He continued to have a lifelong interest in things Russian. On his return home he spent some time on the battleship Mikasa in the Reserve Fleet. Katō was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in September 1903 and 28 December that same year he was appointed Chief Gunnery Officer of the battleship Asahi. Katō was aboard the Asahi when war broke out with Russia. The Asahi was one of the key battleships of the Combined Fleet in the war and the Chief Torpedo Officer was Hirose Takeo, Katō's close friend from his days in St Petersburg. It does seem somewhat strange that the Japanese Navy allowed two officers with such recent and detailed knowledge of Russia to be aboard the same vessel at such a crucial time.

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) provided Japan, especially its navy, with some glorious episodes as well as some important strategic military and especially naval lessons. Moreover, it also added greatly to Katō's own reputation both by his participation and by his close association with some of the great naval heroes of the war.

The Japanese Navy's attempts to sink blockships in Port Arthur Harbour and the successes at the Battle of the Yellow Sea and the Battle of the Japan Sea provided Japan with a glorious tradition in the eyes of the nation and the navy. The navy's achievements there were compared to the Battle of Trafalgar and Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō henceforth became known as the 'Nelson of Japan'.

The Japanese Navy initially attempted to sink the

Russian Pacific Fleet in Port Arthur Harbour by torpedo attacks but had little success. A plan was therefore devised to block the entrance of the Harbour by sinking blockships. These blockships were to be manned by volunteers since few were expected to survive the attempt. The Fleet provided twenty times the number of volunteers and among those were Kato himself and his good friend Hirose Takeo. The release of two key officers from one ship was unthinkable let alone two with recent experience in Russia and Katō was persuaded that Hirose ought to go. Hirose was killed in the second blockship attack and became a national hero. Remnants of his clothing were deposited in the Naval Academy Museum at Etajima. In fact the blockship attempts failed and torpedo attacks were soon resumed. Katō saw Hirose immediately before his death and was given a letter for Hirose's Russian sweetheart who Katō had known well from his stay at St Petersburg.

In March 1904 Katō was transferred to the battleship Mikasa, Flagship of Admiral Tōgō. Also aboard was Prince Fushimi with whom Katō had a close relationship dating from the days when he had been the prince's official companion at the Naval Academy. Katō saw action immediately as the Russian fleet decided to make a run for the open sea rather than wait passively whilst the Japanese attempted to sink or blockade them. The Japanese Fleet gave chase and the first major naval engagement of the war, the Battle of the Yellow Sea took place. The Mikasa was at the very centre of the battle and sustained some twenty hits, losing 32 men with 88 wounded including Katō and Prince Fushimi. Tōgō, like all

the officers on the bridge was covered in blood and had to be forcibly dragged below decks from the bridge by other officers. After the war a bloodstained chart was deposited at Etajima. It was the chart from the Mikasa bridge as well as a diagram of those on the bridge including Katō.<15> Here Katō had been present at an episode in Japanese naval history which was to have a great impact on future generations of naval officers. Katō had initiated a new form of gun-firing system whilst aboard the Mikasa by which the Chief Gunner operating from the bridge could co-ordinate firing more effectively than hitherto. This method was later copied by other navies. It has also been suggested, though never proved, that the shells which killed the key Russian Admiral, came from the Mikasa's guns. However, by now the navy's need for greater expertise on Russia was becoming even more vital and immediately after this sea battle, Katō was sent ashore to assist in planning. He was ordered to report to Imperial Headquarters as aide-de-camp to Navy Minister Yamamoto Gonnohyoe and also to act as his Chief Secretary. Katō was shocked by this transfer from 'fighting' to 'administrative' duties. According to his biographers, Katō had probably given no thought to anything other than dying gloriously for his country. Instead, as he wrote to his old friend Amano, "I have been appointed as a petty official".<16> Nevertheless Katō worked hard and greatly impressed the Navy Minister Admiral Yamamoto.

When the war ended and Admiral Yamamoto became a Supreme Military Councillor he again asked for Katō as his

aide-de-camp. Katō, by association with Tōgō and the Mikasa and as its Chief Gunner during the Battle of the Yellow Sea, had gained a considerable reputation in the fleet. Katō also gained in reputation with young officers by his close association with Lieutenant Commander Hirose now a national hero. Katō had greatly impressed not only Tōgō, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, but also Navy Minister Yamamoto and such things were clearly beneficial to the career of a young, ambitious and talented naval officer.

On 17 November 1907 Katō was appointed a member of the Prince Fushimi mission of thanks to Great Britain. This mission was in response to the ~~the~~ Emperor being awarded the Order of the Garter in 1906. The award was a result of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 but had been delayed partly, it has been said, by the British Sovereign's reluctance to award the Order to a non-christian monarch and in part due to the Russo-Japanese War, when such an award might have seemed improper in view of British 'neutrality'.<17> The signing of the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance agreement in 1905 had made the award even more expedient politically.

Katō's appointment to this mission was not a result of his connections with the Fushimi family. Rather it was further evidence of Admiral Yamamoto's high regard for him. He was in any case Yamamoto's aide at this time. Although nominally part of the Fushimi mission, Katō's appointment was chiefly as a member of the naval team, headed by Yamamoto, sent to negotiate and finalise the military agreements as part of the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance. An American naval officer wrote of Katō at the time of his



appointment thus:

Commander Katō during most of my time [in Tokyo] was Private secretary to the Minister, a post which I have suspected he got because of his knowledge of Russian. I mentioned him in my gunnery report on target practice last Autumn. I saw of course a great deal of him and we were very good friends in spite of one or two rows. I asked him how he liked his present detail and he replied 'Oh, very much. I shall no longer be attacked by all the naval attaches.' He doubtless has a future, though I do not regard him as a man of much original ability.<18>

The Yamamoto mission, as it is sometimes called, left ahead of the main Fushimi party and landed at Genoa on 10 April 1907, reaching Paris on 12 April and Dover on 6 May. The naval mission then devoted its time to ceremonial functions as part of the Fushimi group. In this period Katō met the heads of State of Italy, France and Great Britain as part of Yamamoto's retinue as well as the top naval officers in each country. The functions ceased at the end of May and negotiations with the Royal Navy commenced in earnest. Yamamoto met with Admiral Lord Fisher and after their talks, a team of three British and three Japanese officers drafted the agreements based on the understandings of Admirals Yamamoto and Fisher. There were five Captains and one Commander. Included on the British side was Captain Ottley, Chief of Naval Intelligence and on the Japanese side Captain Takarabe Takeshi (1868-1949) who later served as Navy Minister when Katō became Chief of the Naval General Staff. As a result of their work article seven of the Alliance was drafted. On 8 June, Katō sailed to Germany with Yamamoto and met Admiral Tirpitz for the first time. On 26 June, they returned to England and then on 2 July the party sailed for the United States where anti-Japanese feelings were at



their peak.

Although the military talks of 1907 were, within the overall alliance structure, of rather a 'minor nature' they did provide Katō, a young commander, with a further opportunity for enhancing his already considerable language skills. They also provided the beginnings of an education in diplomatically sensitive military matters. Katō's technical skills were put to good use as the Yamamoto mission viewed all the latest naval technological advances of all the major naval powers. The opportunity of meeting various Heads of State, as well as their leading naval officers, undoubtedly added greatly to his education, confidence and standing at home. He was also able to make contact with many British naval officers during the negotiations including Admiral Sir John (Jacky) Fisher. He was to utilise this fully in his period as naval attache in Britain and during World War One. The visit to the United States further indicated to Katō the problem of the potential conflict with the United States and made him very aware of anti-Japanese feeling in that country. Among the many honours received by Kato on this mission the most important was probably the British MVO (Member of the Victorian Order).

On 7 August Katō returned to Tokyo and received further honours from his own Emperor to add to those awarded during the trip to Europe and the United States. On 28 September he was appointed second-in-command of the cruiser Asama and then on 10 December 1908, second-in-command of the cruiser Tsukuba. On 13 April 1909, he was transferred from

the Tsukuba to duties at the Navy Ministry. At the same time he was informed that he was being sent to Britain as Naval Attache. Katō was shocked by the news. In a letter to an old friend he stated:

I have been appointed to a Navy Ministry assignment. I have also received orders of appointment as Naval Attache to our Embassy in England. I am taken aback at this banishment for three years.<19>

His chagrin was perhaps understandable in that he had spent considerable time abroad in recent years and had hoped for some time in Japan or at least command of a ship. He did not give his immediate assent to the assignment to England but, after a few days in Tokyo talking to colleagues, he determined to do his best. Katō arrived in England on 3 July, and having spent two previous periods in Britain, was soon fully acclimatised. Despite his initial displeasure and misgivings he never displayed anything other than total commitment in the job. He showed considerable skills in writing reports and social intercourse and displayed a keenness to explore all aspects of British society, not merely military affairs. His reports were well received by the authorities in Tokyo. In May 1910 he was deputed to look after Prince Fushimi who had come to attend King Edward VII's funeral.

In addition to the many diplomatic duties required of an attache, Katō was appointed to supervise the construction of warships being built for Japan in British yards. At this time, the Kongo and three other cruisers were being built and these were the last large Japanese warships to be built abroad for Japan. Katō, who had been closely following

gunnery developments in England, played an important role in attempts to equip the Kongo with 14" guns. These guns were still in the experimental stage in the British Navy and had not yet been fitted on British warships. Katō had two major problems to overcome. First he had to persuade the Japanese naval authorities at home of the benefits of fitting the new guns. This was by no means easy as the faction within the navy in Tokyo supporting this had recently been defeated. His second task was to persuade the British to allow him access to the tests and to permit the Kongo to be armed with the new guns before even the British themselves. Kato negotiated directly with Admiral Fisher and was successful in his efforts. Then aided by a constructor officer, Captain Murakami whom he felt ought to have received the major part of the credit for this venture, Katō finally persuaded the naval authorities to accept his proposals.<20>

This episode demonstrated yet again Katō's not inconsiderable understanding of technological developments, especially gunnery. The equipping of the Kongo with guns more powerful than its British sister ship made it briefly, ton for ton, the most powerful ship in the world. British co-operation was highly significant and as stated in the previous chapter, the links between the Royal and Imperial navies, as a result of British tutelage of the Japanese Navy and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, were very close indeed. Although military secrecy had not been so commonplace in the nineteenth century, by the early twentieth century advances in military technology were jealously guarded. The flow of military information from country to country was drying up

rapidly. Of course, Katō's ability to persuade Admiral Fisher may possibly have been due to his reputation with the Royal Navy as a gunnery specialist but this was probably not the most crucial factor. At this time Britain was engaged in a naval race with Germany and was looking more and more to Japan for assistance with security in areas outside Europe. Japan, of course, by virtue of the alliance with Britain, could in any case have expected a certain amount of information. Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohyoe when in England in 1907, had said that:

Japan hopes that the British Navy which is not only the greatest Navy in the world, but also in every way the most advanced, will agree to assist the Navy of its ally, by its advice on every aspect of naval education and research.<21>

Evidently, in his negotiations with Admiral Fisher, Kato determined that he would take full advantage of the "spirit" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. However, it was probably Britain's increasing dependence on the Japanese Navy in view of the naval race with Germany which rendered the Royal Navy so susceptible to Japanese requests for cooperation in this crucial area. The arming of the Kongo with 14" guns emphasised again that phenomenon, so common to advanced military powers, whereby the latest advances were often implemented for the benefit of other nations before the authorities at home could divest themselves of entrenched, outmoded attitudes. Moreover Japan had by this time acquired a worldwide reputation as a country which always got the very best out of any ship purchased abroad.

For Katō, the period in England was highly successful. He had greatly improved his language skills and his

technical knowledge. He had persuaded the authorities in Tokyo to alter a previously decided policy on naval armaments, a success granted to few naval attaches abroad. His successful tour of duty could not but bring his name again before the top leaders of the navy. He also, interestingly, was resident in Britain during the strained period of the naval race with Germany. This made a great impact on him especially the British efforts to impose an inferior ratio on the German Navy. This clearly influenced his thinking in later years on ratio negotiations with the United States and Britain.<22> Katō met all the top British naval officers and the Monarch and his name was often in the Court Circular of the Times. Katō returned home on 7 August 1911 and shortly after that would probably have been highly amused to hear that his name had appeared in the London Times in a legal wrangle. Apparently the name Hiroharu Katō had appeared on the electoral roll for the south section of Kensington London. It was challenged but the conservative agent did not object permitting the name to remain on the list. He justified this by saying that "Mr Hiroharu Katō was a commander in the Japanese Navy and also an MVO."<23>

Katō, after his return was appointed to command the cruiser Asama and then the cruiser Tsukuba. On 1 December 1911, Katō was appointed to duties at the Japanese Naval Academy at Etajima.

Katō's new appointment was as Kaigun Heigakkō Kyōtō (Commandant) at Etajima. The President at this time was Yamashita Gentarō, Katō's gunnery instructor in his academy

days. The appointment offered Katō a further opportunity to demonstrate his technical and leadership skills and much was expected of him. He had an excellent relationship with his former teacher whom he respected greatly.

Katō was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Basic Course Outlines and Science Textbooks. In fact he chaired numerous committees on such matters as revision of navigation tables. On all these committees he brought a deep and up-to-date knowledge gleaned from his recent period in England. One must however exercise some caution in attributing too much to Katō's work on these committees since there is no indication that such revisions were all or even largely a direct result of his own initiatives. They were probably part of the normal duties of a school commandant although he probably contributed more than most who occupied the post.

This appointment, his first major educational position, was extremely important for his future career. Interestingly, in a letter written at this time on the subject of international affairs, Katō gave some idea of the way his thinking on international relations was developing.

The China problem, ... has become a matter of life and death to which we must sincerely devote our utmost attention. If we leave such things to smalltime politicians and petty diplomatic functionaries, who are unaware of the world becoming smaller and who dream of heaven on earth, what on earth are our country's prospects? It is regrettable that the people and the government have not yet rid themselves of their error in failing to see that the guidance of public opinion should have an authoritative role in external policy.

The California problem is one which has been foreseen for many years. The military authorities, at this late hour, are neither surprised nor panicking. Our finely trained crack



forces are ready, on the signal, to launch themselves in the required direction.

I think that, for our future, there are only two roads, advance or retreat. We are not permitted to pause halfway. If we advance at the present time, even in the east and south Pacific, there will be a collision of interests [with America]. If we do not move or even if we retreat we cannot avoid their attack. Due to events in China we ought to form one grand federation of "one language, one race" and Japan will lead it. I think it's inevitable that we promulgate our own Monroe doctrine in the eastern half of the globe with Japan as the suzerain power. Time and time again it is said that the Yamato race has the destiny of becoming the saviour of East Asia. The outbreak of the California problem is, in all probability, linked with the China problem and forces us to stand up for ourselves. Is this not something which provides us with the opportunity to form a grand merger with China? <24>

Katō remained at Etajima until his appointment to command the cruiser Ibuki just prior to the outbreak of the war in Europe in May 1914. As mentioned previously there was, at this time, a tremendous scandal concerning bribery and corruption charges relating to defence equipment contracts. At the very centre of this was the Kongo, the very ship whose construction and armaments Katō had supervised in England. The Siemens-Vickers Scandals, which might well have damaged a very promising career, did not involve Kato in any way.

### Katō and World War I

Katō was appointed captain of the cruiser Ibuki on 1 May 1914 and spent the next two months readying his ship (and the Chikuma) for ceremonial duty at the official opening of the Panama Canal. Katō felt that the outbreak of the war in Europe made it most unlikely that the government would allow two ships to sail for America since the navy was

now placed on standby alert. In addition Katō saw every likelihood of Japan participating in the war and becoming involved in joint operations. Katō therefore contacted the captain of the Chikuma and both ships now began to prepare for wartime operational rather than ceremonial duties. Katō, who already had a detailed knowledge of military aspects of the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance, began to study problems of international law and documents relating to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the days preceding the final ultimatum to Germany. All of this was being done without 'official instruction' from naval superiors. The Ibuki his biographers tell us, was ready for war on 22 August one day before the official declaration of war!

On 22 August, Katō received orders from the Navy Minister for the Ibuki to proceed, with the Chikuma, to the assistance of the British China Squadron and to make ready for operations in the South Pacific area.

On 23 August, Katō received orders stating that the Ibuki and the Chikuma were to form the ICHI detachment (I/buki+Chi/kuma), later renamed the Tokubetsu Nanken Shitai (special southern area despatch squadron). Its mission was to carry out joint operations with the Royal Navy's China Squadron. Katō's special squadron was despatched to assist in seeking out the German light cruiser Emden which was raiding throughout the Pacific area. Katō was based at Hong Kong and nominally had command of four warships which was unusual for a captain but, in fact only the Ibuki and the Chikuma were directly under his command. One of the problems which caused initial

difficulties between the Japanese and British naval forces was the term 'joint operations'. The guidelines laid down in the military agreements under the revised Anglo-Japanese Alliance were rather vague. There was clearly a wish or as Nomura Minoru has termed it a "secret intention" to place Japanese ships under British command.<25> Equally the Japanese Navy had a policy of avoiding entrusting command of their ships to other countries. The Japanese Navy was probably lacking in experience in such matters and the sensitivities of both sides were bruised somewhat during the war. Katō was called upon to explain to the Commander-in-Chief, China Squadron, the meaning of 'the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance'.<26> Thereafter, due to further diplomatic efforts by both sides, the problem receded. In part the friction at the naval command level regarding joint operations reflected the Royal Navy's tendency to assume the superior role especially towards former pupils and they did try to occupy a 'primus inter pares' position in most joint operations.<27>

Katō's small force participated in the search for the Emden. However it was an Australian ship, HMAS Sydney which eventually sank it. Katō's duties were then transferred to escorting Anzac troopships to Europe. For Kato this was a chance to put his knowledge of Australasian waters, gleaned as a cadet, to good use as well as his linguistic skills. His biographers indicate that Katō was responsible for designing a new escort plan which enabled greater cooperation between allied escort ships. Katō, for his work in the search for the Emden and particularly his

troops escort duties, received commendations from the British China Squadron and the Admiralty. In addition, the New Zealand Forces presented Katō with a silver model of a Maori canoe. It was placed on public exhibition in London and also sent to Buckingham Palace for the King's inspection.<28> Katō presented it to the Etajima Naval Museum but it was destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923.

On 13 December 1915 the Imperial Navy was placed back on a peacetime footing and the southern despatch squadrons and the American detachments were disbanded. Katō, after making a major contribution in the first phase of the war especially regarding the transportation of Anzac forces, was transferred to Chief of Staff of the Second Fleet (second in command under the Commander-in-Chief). In the grand manœuvres of 1915 Kato was able to put into practice lessons gleaned from cooperative operations with the Royal Navy. Captain Yoshi Tatsu, who was Katō's aide during this appointment, stated that Katō

had a fine brain and was of a generous nature. He always took the greatest care even over the smallest matters and provided model leadership towards his juniors.<29>

Yoshii also pointed out that though some people might disagree, he found that Katō had always been respectful of his superiors. Katō's period as Chief of Staff was largely uneventful but it was a time when his popularity with junior officers increased and his knowledge of foreign navies was once more in evidence. On 13 December Katō was appointed captain of the Hiei, his last command as a captain and the navy's newest cruiser.

On 1 December 1916, Kato was promoted to rear admiral and appointed President of the Naval Gunnery School. Originally gunnery had been taught, along with torpedo science, on training ships but gunnery was included in the Naval War College syllabus from 1888 and at the Gunnery and Torpedo schools established in 1893. At the Gunnery School line officers were given further instruction in basic gunnery skills and sub-lieutenants 1st and 2nd class attended four month courses. Later naval officers could pursue more advanced, theoretical courses at the Naval War College. The gunnery school was, in addition to being a training establishment, a research and development centre.

Katō would seem to have been an excellent choice for the post as tenth president of the school. He had had an outstanding record on the four month course at the Naval Gunnery School, seen service as a gunner on shore battery duty during the Sino-Japanese War and had been Chief gunner of the Asahi and the Mikasa (Tōgō's flagship) in the Russo-Japanese War. His improvements in coordinated ship firing procedures in the Russo-Japanese war had been highly regarded in Japan and abroad and he had also studied the very latest gunnery developments in England during his period as naval attache there. His growing reputation as a man conversant with the latest advances in navy-related science and technology together with his pedigree in applied as well as theoretical gunnery science made him an ideal choice for the post.

Naturally, since the war was still continuing and the Japanese Navy was aware that it might be called on again by

Great Britain, the atmosphere at the school was somewhat strained. Increased emphasis was placed on intensive drilling and education. Katō was pleased that the students were very keen and Katō was exceptional in that he came to the school every day himself. He soon made his mark there, introducing almost immediately a series of study groups and research seminars in order to advance gunnery theory at the school. He also introduced sport and established gymnastic exhibitions at the school, although it is not clear whether these innovations were principally for fitness or whether they were to reduce tension and relieve the strained atmosphere. He emphasised, to students and staff alike, the need to go anywhere and everywhere to learn more about naval matters. He also stressed that they should never miss an opportunity of participating in fleet exercises. He encouraged the students to take part in the research seminars giving them every chance to learn. In such an atmosphere it was natural that the students learned a great deal. He also encouraged and nominated staff for study at the Naval War College and did a great deal for the students privately and officially.

Katō himself enthusiastically pursued research and one can perhaps glean something of his interests and approach from the studies he initiated at the school.

- Draft proposals on nightfiring
- Opinions on practical regs for destroyer gun firing procedures
- Study of long range firing
- Study of gunfire against submarines
- Staff examinations
- Matters relating to communication in gunnery fire direction
- Matters relating to training of students on merchant ships.



Aircraft Gunnery matters.  
Reports on electrical gunfire tests  
Personal opinion on study of gunnery matters  
relating to officer education system  
etc.<30>

While President of the Navy Gunnery School, Katō chaired an investigatory committee and court martial over the exploding and sinking of the cruiser Tsukuba. This ship had been Katō's first command and on 14 January 1916 had suddenly exploded causing the loss of 152 lives. The Tsukuba at the time was the gunnery practice ship and it was therefore the responsibility of the President of the Naval Gunnery School. However, it was deemed that Kato and the school could not be held responsible. It represented the only dark moment in what was apparently an inspired and inspiring period for the school.

Katō remained at the Gunnery School until he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Fifth Squadron, a specially commissioned squadron formed in 1918 and sometimes called the 'Vladivostok Squadron'.

#### Vladivostok and the Siberian Expedition

The full history of the Siberian Expedition and the navy's role in its early phase, lies outside the scope of this study.<31> However, since the navy's role in the Siberian Intervention has been rather neglected by historians and since Katō's activities at Vladivostok are integral to an understanding of his later career development, the broad features of Japanese naval involvement merit examination here.<32>

Despite the Japanese Navy's considerable contribution

to the Allied effort in World War One the war had remained relatively remote for most Japanese. The army, far more concerned with events in China, and somewhat sympathetically disposed to Germany, had rejected various requests to despatch forces to Europe, particularly European Russia. The Russian Revolution, especially the seizure of Petrograd by the Bolsheviks in November 1917 sent shock waves through all Allied capitals. Japan was most concerned and became even more anxious when the Bolsheviks began to talk of a separate peace with Germany thus bringing the war close to Japan for the first time since 1914 when Germany's China bases were captured. The Japanese government now switched from generalised discussions on the nature of the postwar world to questions of security. There had been numerous discussions amongst the Allies on the possibility of despatching forces to Russia, even before the Revolution. However Britain, which first favoured a combined operation and then inclined towards one carried out by the United States alone, was certain of one thing: Japan should not be allowed to undertake such an expedition.

On the other hand the spread of the Russian Revolution eastwards had caused Japanese military planners to shift their principal focus from China to Russia. Then in November 1917 the Bolsheviks gained a majority in the Vladivostok Soviet. This was a significant development since initially most cities were anti-Bolshevik. The strategic threat to Japan via the Japan Sea now appeared all too real.

Since early November the Imperial Navy had been making

plans for the despatch of warships to Vladivostok but had been conscious that Britain wished to prevent this. Vladivostok, apart from having large stockpiles of military stores and provisions, was a major trading centre with a considerable population of allied merchants resident there. By December 1917, the British were becoming increasingly concerned with the situation there and were making overtures to the United States to send a force. The Japanese Ambassador in London, felt it should be an allied force and should be mainly Japanese. By the end of December the British had reached the conclusion that such a force, with token American and British forces, would be best. By this time the Japanese army and navy had made extensive plans for operations in Asiatic Russia but no clear decision had been taken on the final form for the allied expedition.

Japan's hand was forced by two developments. First the shock of hearing from London that the British had broached the subject of a joint operation with the Americans and second that Britain had despatched HMS Suffolk from Hong Kong to proceed with all possible speed to Vladivostok. Foreign Minister Motono found it difficult to understand:

Why the British Government had negotiated with the American government about an expedition to Vladivostok without first consulting the Imperial government.<33>

Prime Minister Terauchi, who had been opposed to an expedition, was furious at the despatch of a British warship calling it disgraceful and stressing "at all costs Japanese ships must enter Vladivostok first".<34>

Admiral Katō Tomosaburō, the Navy Minister, agreed and in fact the navy had been making preparations for some

weeks. The Fifth Squadron comprised the cruisers Iwami and the Asahi and the Commander-in-Chief was Rear-Admiral Katō Kanji. Thus, although the Siberian Intervention is mainly perceived as an army operation it was the navy which first became involved and moreover the navy was also the first to land troops in Asiatic Russia. Japan's actions here, while clearly based on her own strategic perceptions and interests, were modified by a certain British mistrust of Japan regarding Japan's territorial interests in Asia. Thus, World War One began and ended with British diplomats fearful of Japan gaining advantages from "allied participation" in war-related matters in Asia and the Pacific.

Katō's appointment to this new position took him to sea and possible action again. It also enabled him to play a very important and sensitive diplomatic role as well as a naval one. He had undertaken various diplomatic duties in the past but they were relatively minor ones. Vladivostock was an ideal setting for him to show his great linguistic skills in Russian and English as well as his ability to work with Russian, American and British diplomats and naval officers.

According to Fujita Shotoku the selection of Kato kanji for the post was the result of Admiral Abō Kiyokazu's advice to Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō. The Navy Minister had been unable to think of a suitable officer and sent for Rear-Admiral Abō. Abō replied without hesitation that:

There is no one more suitable than Rear Admiral Katō Kanji. He has excellent diplomatic skills and is the navy's foremost Russian expert. From his record he would be the most suitable

as Commander-in-Chief.<35> -

Katō Tomosaburō selected Katō and briefed him as follows:

You are probably able to guess the reasons for the despatch of warships at this time. In any case the situation at your destination is like the eye of a cat. Since it is subject to rapid change there is nothing in the way of written orders. You are doubtless worried as I am. Therefore, in such a situation, if there is scope request instructions, and in other circumstances do what you believe to be best.<36>

The Japanese government was determined that a Japanese ship should reach Vladivostok first and this was now Katō's first priority. He was formally appointed Commander-in-Chief, Fifth Squadron on 6 January 1918 and immediately boarded the Iwami at Kure Navy yard. Crews and dockyard staff had been working frantically since the crisis had occurred and the New Year holiday was still in progress. The Iwami sailed from Kure on 9 January and arrived at Vladivostok on 12 January, two days before HMS Suffolk. The Asahi arrived on 17 January and became Katō's flagship. The USS Brooklyn, whose departure from Vladivostok in December 1917 was in part responsible for the deterioration of the situation at the Russian port, did not arrive back at Vladivostok until February. The arrival of a Japanese warship off Vladivostok and especially its entry into port, greatly alarmed sections of the Russian community there and a number of protests were lodged at the various consulates. Katō immediately invited representatives of various political groups aboard and explained that the despatch of Japanese ships was not in order to use force but for the protection of Japanese and other allied residents. There was no intention to intervene in the political



struggle but simply to use 'silent power', namely the forbidding presence of warships, to help create a calmer situation. This was essentially a public relations exercise and Katō was fully aware that his role was to exert 'silent power' on behalf of the moderates against the extremists and show Japan's support for the anti-Bolsheviks. Hosoya Chihiro's study of these events provides considerable evidence indicating that the protection of Japanese residents was a pretext and that 'intervention' was the underlying motivation for the despatch of warships.<37>

After initially reporting back to Tokyo that since his arrival:

the moderate group has not weakened and their confidence has increased. It is clear that secretly they are grateful for our support....<38>

Katō expressed doubts as to how far warships in harbour could extend support beyond the immediate environs of the city.<39> Katō was soon confronted by a rapid deterioration in the situation as local Russian troops sold their weapons and local governmental authority crumbled during January 1918. He sent a number of signals pointing out the limited utility of 'silent power' both in terms of its effect and its geographic limitations. Katō's repeated requests for reinforcements and permission to land marines were refused by the Tokyo authorities in January and February even after a major looting incident at the Versailles Hotel. The message from Tokyo was very clear, namely that the right opportunity for the landing of marines had not yet presented itself.<40>

However Katō did receive permission to make



preparations for landings and on 30 March was told that "a suitable pretext for landings was the protection of lives and property of residents".<41> On 4 April the opportunity finally arrived when three Japanese were attacked at their store by armed Russians and one was killed and another seriously wounded. After brief discussions with Japanese consular officials ashore, Katō ordered 500 marines to land for the protection of Japanese and Allied residents. They went much further than restoring order in the Japanese quarter and occupied the whole city and remained in control until July. The British landed 100 marines for the protection of the British consulate but the American authorities delayed any decision.

The reaction to the landings was mixed. The British in London were embarrassed by the captain of HMS Suffolk's support of Katō and apparently the Prime Minister Terauchi in Tokyo was not pleased by Katō's action.<42> The lack of action by Admiral Knight and the subsequent discussions with the authorities in Washington indicate that the Americans did not approve of Kato's actions and were deeply suspicious of Japan's motives.<43> On the Russian side there were many protests since it was seen clearly as 'imperialist intervention' even Lenin registering a complaint against Katō's 'interventionist' behaviour.<44>

However Katō also received considerable support. The actions of the captain of HMS Suffolk can be seen as essentially supporting the landings. Admiral Knight, whilst cautious in his reports to Washington, did state that "The whole affair has been well conducted and appears to have

been dictated by necessity".<45> Katō explained to Knight on the day of the landings that he had been unable to find any authority on shore to whom he could appeal for protection and feared the possibility of extensive looting. Knight did however hint that the scale and extent of the landings was perhaps too great. He wrote:

This force took over the patrol, not alone of the Japanese section but of practically the whole city....<46>

Japanese sources indicate that Knight was dissatisfied with his home authorities failure to act more positively but there is no evidence of this in the American documents.<47>

In general therefore one could say that Admiral Knight basically supported Katō's actions. One interesting comment by an American resident shows that American support for Katō may have been quite widespread in Vladivostock itself. In a letter intercepted by the American authorities Benton G Decker, a translator at the American consulate there, wrote:

The Japs also know how to handle their prestige abroad. Two Japanese were murdered on Thursday at eleven o'clock in the morning in an office not far off Vitaishaya. Friday there was a big mass meeting and Saturday at two in the morning they began to land marines, who have patrolled the city ever since. If two of us had been murdered our relatives would have been told that it was a pity we ever left home....<48>

Although concerned for the safety of Allied and especially Japanese nationals the ultimate objectives of the despatch of warships and the landing of marines were part of a strategy for extending Japanese influence and halting the eastward advances of the Bolsheviks. Katō was well aware of this and his expertise in Russian affairs was of great assistance in the political manoeuvrings in the months that

followed. A number of influential Russians were singled out for possible support by Japan against the Bolsheviks. Amongst these the most important were G. Semenov, D.L. Horvat and P.Y. Derber. Katō sent reports on all of these, expressing support for both Semenov and Derber but opposing Horvat. He was strongly criticised for extreme bias by a Japanese diplomatic official on the spot who believed Horvat ought to be supported.<49> Katō later landed further marines in July and remained very involved in political affairs until his return to Japan in December 1918.

Katō's year in Vladivostock was a very difficult one but it certainly added to his experience in international diplomacy. It also gave him a unique opportunity to show to advantage his considerable skills in English and Russian as well as his detailed knowledge of Russian affairs. His ability to negotiate with diplomatic military and civilian personnel from Russia, Britain, and the United States did not go unnoticed. Nevertheless, Katō would appear to have been responsible for the first landings of Japanese troops. This landing was the precursor to massive intervention by the Japanese Army, a move which caused the Japanese considerable embarrassment in the years which followed.

Katō's attitudes towards the Americans were probably not changed dramatically by events at Vladivostock but his suspicions of American ambitions in the area as well as their fundamental opposition to Japan's expansion of interests in this region were probably strongly reinforced. Initially, Katō had been evasive when Admiral Knight had suggested that Britain, Japan and America alternately anchor

at the port.<50> Admiral Knight-was personally well disposed to Katō but complained about his evasiveness and harboured a suspicion that Katō was much more forthcoming with the British.<51> However, there is no evidence of this. Given the tense relations then existing between London and Tokyo, such a close relationship was rather unlikely. Katō later sent cables critical of the American activities in Eastern Russia and the longer he was there the more he distrusted American motives.<52> Thus, perhaps one can say that Katō's reputed anti-American feelings were increased by his experience at Vladivostok.

Although it is nowhere mentioned in the Japanese sources, Katō's landing of troops in order to give Japan control of Vladivostok may reflect an earlier experience. Kato's ship the Naniwa under Captain Tōgō Heihachirō had arrived in Hawaii in 1893 during another revolutionary situation. The prompt landing of American forces from the cruiser Boston had ostensibly been to restore public order. In fact, marines had been landed to support one faction in the dispute and the Americans clearly secured a major advantage over other powers present in Hawaii by this action. Katō may well have been influenced or helped by his past experience as well as his memories of Tōgō's resolute actions in a very delicate diplomatic situation.

Katō's next appointment in December 1918 was as Chief of Staff at the Yokosuka Dockyard, second-in-command to the Admiral-Superintendent. Katō's responsibilities ranged from educational matters such as training course supervision for constructor officers and others to matters related to naval

aviation. This was a crucially important period for the navy as it vigorously pursued a major building programme. It was also a period when naval aviation in Japan was still in an early and somewhat uncertain stage and Katō was credited with making considerable improvements in benefits paid to the dependants of fliers killed in training. Katō also at this time became a strong advocate of 'blackout systems' for protection against air raids. Clearly Katō was advocating improvements based on his observations of the European War. Katō failed to persuade the civilian authorities of the necessity for a system covering all of Yokosuka, but he did manage to implement one for Yokosuka Navy Yard and this was the first blackout system in Japan.<53>

In June 1919, Katō was transferred to Naval General Staff duties and one month later headed a study mission to Europe and the United States. The objectives of the mission were to inspect military developments in Europe and the United States as well as their cultural, transport and communications systems in the aftermath of the war. The tour lasted 336 days and covered Germany, Italy, France, Britain and the United States. In Italy, Katō was presented to the King and his group were well received, but the French regarded Katō and his mission with great suspicion and delayed approval for some time. In the United States, Kato's passport was stamped 'suspicious' indicating the tensions amongst nations only recently allied against Germany.<54> Katō's longest and most fruitful stay was in Germany. There he was able to see everything which remained



of the German war machine, especially munitions factories and technological developments. Katō received considerable help from Admiral Tirpitz whom he had met many years previously. The mission learned a great deal from the visit to Germany including, according to the biography, military secrets passed on from Admiral Tirpitz. German documents indicate that the naval mission had other objectives, namely exploratory talks on postwar German-Japanese cooperation and possibly even a military alliance.<55> Wilhelm Widenmann has stated that Katō, in his meetings with Tirpitz, was seeking to persuade the German admiral to act as the intermediary in creating a military alliance.<56> Whilst this cannot be substantiated by Japanese or German documents, the two did meet and undoubtedly discussed military cooperation although talk of an alliance does seem somewhat fanciful. Tirpitz did state that in 1919 he and Kato had reached an understanding "upon which neither Berlin nor Tokyo could capitalize".<57> Kato apparently told Tirpitz that the Japanese Navy wished Germany to construct submarines in Finland, a neutral country, and ship them to Japan. This request conformed with the letter though not the spirit of the Versailles Treaty. However, the discussions aroused concern amongst the former members of the Entente against Germany and rumours of secret negotiations were circulating in London one month after Kato met Tirpitz. There would in any case, have been a major problem in transporting submarines secretly to Japan, but Tirpitz also accused Katō of unwittingly causing the collapse of cooperation. In an interview in 1923 Tirpitz



was reported as follows:

Tirpitz then spoke about the earlier visit of Admiral Katō and said that the Japanese plan had been abortive because, he emphasised, the entente had been made very much aware. The blame for this lay squarely on the fact that Katō himself travelled to meet him in an out-of-the way place like St Blasien dressed in full uniform.<58>

Eventually the Japanese and German naval specialists did agree on an exchange of technological expertise. The Japanese obtained blueprints of German designs and agreed to provide the resultant technical data from tests. The Germans also promised to recruit expert technicians for assignments in Japan. Bearing this in mind it is perhaps hardly surprising that the French and the Americans and of course the British, were suspicious of Katō's movements.

Katō returned to Japan almost a year later and was asked to give a lecture to the Emperor concerning the European tour. It has been suggested that Katō's pro-German inclinations can be dated from this time but in truth the lecture indicates rather the reverse.<59> Katō did speak admiringly of the superb technological achievements of Germany, especially in the military field. However he then went on to point out that technology alone had not been enough. Katō emphasised the spiritual and cultural weaknesses of Germany and one can probably date Katō's increased emphasis on Japanese spirit over western technology from this time. Germany clearly was a model for Katō but a model to be avoided. Katō concluded his lecture as follows:

In short, the German Empire, only 50 years after unification, achieved great strength and prosperity and became one of the world's richest

powers. But her rapid material advancement was in inverse proportion to the spiritual discipline of the nation and she paid insufficient attention to the latter. Consequently material and scientific power came to dominate human spirit and matters were evaluated only from outer appearances. It was not realised that a very important kind of power resides in the human body, namely the spirit. German spirit was built up superficially but outer aspects depend on inner spirit. The Germans did not understand this and faced other countries with only the thought that 'might is right'. The result was that they led their country away from the principle of 'Knowing one's enemy and oneself' and with delusions of grandeur started the Great War which ended in defeat. Those who govern [our] country must consider deeply the lessons to be learned from the German example.

But the Germany of the past was a country which led the world in thought and philosophy. Therefore, from the bitter lessons caused by a too rapid advancement in material culture, if Germany, which is at present disillusioned, can once again return to its spiritual culture, if she can exert all her power to develop the thinking which will ensure a firm base and cultivate her national identity then, along with restoring her economic power, I believe she may once again become a strong nation.<60>

One is left with the impression that Katō found much to admire about Germany but also felt something had gone badly wrong. Moreover, it is quite clear that he was actually making a comment about contemporary Japan and the dangers if Japan followed the German example. Thus, the mission to Europe and especially Germany to examine technology and culture, strengthened Katō's conviction of the absolute necessity of cultivating spiritual values. The message, one preached also by his great teacher, Hashimoto Sanai, was that Japan would only be successful if it emphasised its cultural and spiritual values and allied these with the latest technology. The West was morally and spiritually bankrupt, Katō felt, and this undoubtedly influenced him and his followers in the years to come.<61> Germany's

experience in the war had caused Katō to proclaim loudly 'western technology and eastern spirit' but with a perceptible shift in the balance towards greater emphasis on 'eastern spirit'.

On his return Katō was appointed President of the Naval War College. This was the top post in naval education and it was during his term of office as President that Katō was appointed to the Washington Conference. His immediate predecessor in this position was Satō Tetsutarō, one of Japan's finest naval strategists. The post at the Navy War College did not quite rank with its army counterpart, Inspector-General, which was one of the 'Big Three' army posts along with the Army (War) Minister and Chief of the General Staff. Nevertheless, it represented the very highest level of the Japanese naval educational hierarchy and the President's influence did extend beyond mere educational matters into other important areas of naval policy.

Katō Kanji, immediately prior to his appointment to the Washington delegation, was clearly destined for the very highest ranks of the navy. His promotion had been rapid, his experience wide and his contacts and relationships with top naval officers was excellent. He had served in all major wars with distinction, had spent considerable time abroad and had an excellent grasp of foreign languages and of the latest technological advances. Moreover he had clearly played a significant role in educating younger naval officers, both formally through his teaching positions and informally by his example and his association with such heroes as Tōgō, Yamamoto and Hirose Takeo. However, apart

from the Vladivostok expedition; he had been involved primarily in naval matters. Politically one would say that he was extremely knowledgeable in international politics but probably had little real understanding or interest in domestic politics at this time. There is no indication of certain negative characteristics which others have associated with the man in later years. The literature does not indicate that he was overly impetuous, that he was a militarist, that he was greatly influenced by feudal premodern attitudes nor was he especially anti-western at this time. He did place considerable emphasis on traditional values but these were to be blended with the best technological advances. However, the Washington Conference was to be a watershed both in his naval, political and intellectual development.

Before describing Katō's career immediately prior to his departure for Washington, it is necessary to present, in some detail, the developments leading to the Washington Conference and in particular negotiations on naval arms limitation and these form the content of the next chapter. Other naval powers. These were the changing conception of who was the navy's primary potential enemy, the origins and development of the 8-8 Fleet and the evolution of the so-called 70% ratio in ships, especially vis-à-vis the United States Navy. One needs also to examine research within the Japanese Navy on naval limitation prior to the calling of the conference at Washington in 1921. This will clarify Japan's position and provide the context in which to place and evaluate Katō Kanji's own thinking on the subject.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ROAD TO THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

After World War One, Japan ranked third in the world as a naval power and while this added greatly to her international prestige and position it also embroiled her in a naval construction race with her former allies, the United States and Great Britain. The race had begun to accelerate even during the war and heightened international tensions at a time when public opinion was clamouring for an end to competitive armaments production. It placed enormous strains on the economies of those involved, especially Great Britain and Japan. It is therefore important to consider the historical development of Japanese involvement in this naval arms race and also why Japan saw it as advantageous to participate in naval limitation discussions. In order to comprehend the positions adopted by Japan before and during the conference, one needs to identify the major pillars in Japanese naval policy which caused Japan to 'race' with other naval powers. These were the changing conception of who was the navy's primary potential enemy, the origins and development of the 8-8 Fleet and the evolution of the so-called 70% ratio in ships, especially vis-a-vis the United States Navy. One needs also to examine research within the Japanese Navy on naval limitation prior to the calling of the conference at Washington in 1921. This will clarify Japan's position and provide the context in which to place and evaluate Kato Kanji's own thinking on the subject.



of naval limitation.

### Potential Enemies

In Chapter Two, Japanese naval planning and development in general up to 1918 was described. However, the period following the Russo-Japanese War holds the key to understanding the developments which led, eventually, to the Washington Conference. The emergence of the United States as the Japanese Navy's primary potential enemy and the intensification of naval rivalry between these two nations as well as the development of the so-called 8-8 Fleet and the '70% ratio' crystallised in this period. By 1905 Japan had emerged as a major naval power, had defeated a major European power (Russia) and was allied with the most powerful maritime power, Great Britain. Germany from 1898 on, had begun making great efforts to become a major naval power. This was in support of its efforts to create an empire and the Far East and Pacific were perceived as having considerable potential for German expansionism. The United States also, in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, determined to construct an oceanic fleet second only to Great Britain.

Faced with these developments and the new responsibilities and role of being a world, as opposed to a regional naval power Japan began, in the immediate aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war, to lay down an overall defence plan for her Empire. This resulted in the Imperial National Defence Policy (INDP) promulgated in 1907.<sup><1></sup> This was a major innovation in both detailed planning and coordination



of army/navy and civilian/military planning for the defence of the Japanese Empire. It was in fact three documents and not one.

First was the Teikoku Kokubō Hōshin (Imperial National Defence Plan or INDP). This was by far the most important of the three documents and besides presenting an analysis of the international situation, it singled out those countries liable to become enemies in the future, described the underlying assumptions behind future armament programmes and had, as its objective the unification of military and civilian thinking on national defence policy.

Supporting this was the Kokubō Shoyō Heiryoku (Requisite Armaments for National Defence). This showed in very detailed, concrete terms, the power needed to support the INDP. This quantitative analysis and forecast also had the objective of achieving coordination in military power. Finally there was the Teikokugun No Yōei Kōryō (Outline of Strategy of the Imperial Forces). This listed the strategic premises of army and navy planning as well as those of other nations.

The United States appears as a possible future enemy in the above documents.<2> America was emerging as an oceanic naval power at this time and had recently redeployed seven battleships and eight cruisers to the Pacific Coast. In addition, the American President had chosen to despatch the so-called 'Great White Fleet' on a world cruise in 1907 and the resulting concern in Japan enabled naval planners to specify the American Navy as the budgetary, hypothetical and even potential enemy in 1907. American naval expansion

plans and anti-Japanese agitation in the United States, all helped to increase tension and limit opposition to such military planning and increased budgetary allocations.

In the period 1905-1907, there were naval planners who saw Germany as the potential enemy, but by 1907 Japanese naval policymakers were convinced that the most likely opponent in a future naval conflict was the United States.<3> In 1908, apparently for the first time, the United States was designated kasō tekikoku (potential enemy) during Grand Fleet Manoeuvres. In 1911, a revision of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance provided that Britain was not obliged to come to the aid of Japan in the event of hostilities between Japan and the United States.

In the first revision of the INDP in 1918, the three sōtei tekikoku (potential or hypothetical enemies) were Russia, America and China despite the fact that Japan and America had been on the same side in World War One. The California Land Crisis of 1913, the 1916 United States Navy construction programme and the American attitude to Japan's wartime acquisitions in the Pacific, had brought about a significant deterioration in the already tension ridden relations between these two Pacific powers. American efforts to obtain authorisation for massive funding to fortify the Phillipines, Guam and other Pacific islands did nothing to alleviate this. Nor of course, conversely, did Japan's activities in World War One including capture of German bases in China, its Russian and China Policy and its possession of Pacific islands formerly under German rule. The result was that the Japanese Navy came to perceive the

United States Navy as follows:-

Given the state of political, geographic and historical relations especially regarding the China problem, the rival nation with which a clash of interests is most probable, in other words the potential enemy (kasō tekikoku), is the United States.<4>

Thus, in 1918 the Japanese were clearly concerned over American naval construction plans, regardless of whether such construction was aimed at regional naval superiority over Japan in the Pacific or parity with the Royal Navy in world terms. The Americans also had become increasingly nervous about Japanese naval construction plans. Japan's alliance partner Great Britain, as well as Britain's Pacific dominions, were also very worried about Japan's rapidly expanding naval power in the Pacific. This Japanese naval expansion centred on the creation of the 8-8 Fleet.

#### The 8-8 Fleet

In prewar Japanese naval planning '8-8' generally referred to a fleet of eight battleships and eight battlecruisers.<5> The earliest official mention of such a fleet is to be found in the 1907 INDC documents, to be precise, in the 'Requisite Armaments for National Defence' where it is described as follows:

In conformity with Imperial National Defence Policy, in order that those most seriously regarded as hypothetical/potential enemies cannot attack [us] in the East, our navy must at all times possess one fleet of the very latest, in other words the most powerful, ships. Regarding the absolute minimum standards for this force it requires to be as follows:

Battleships (approximately 20,000 tons) 8  
Heavy Cruisers (approximately 18,000 tons) 8 <6>

Planning an 8-8 Fleet was one thing but obtaining the

finance for one was quite another matter. After the INDP received Imperial approval in 1907, both services sought parliamentary authorisation for the necessary expansion of both the army and the navy. The result was a clash between the army and the navy over limited funds. The two services also, jointly and individually, clashed with civilian policymakers and the Diet over increased funding. The clashes showed a split between an army wishing two new divisions to combat the Russian enemy and a navy seeking a naval construction programme aimed at the United States. Massive increases in military budgets, especially after the defeat of Russia, resulted in a series of domestic crises in the last years of the Meiji period (1868-1912) and the first years of the Taishō period (1912-1926). Cabinets were brought down and cabinet formation was prevented as a result of political manoeuvring by both the army and the navy. Politicians, desperate to find a way out of this failure to coordinate civil-military and inter-military relations, as the power of the Genrō waned and the financial needs and ambitions of the military soared, produced two major innovations. First Prime Minister Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohōe succeeded, in June 1913, in having the service minister qualifications diluted so that reserve officers could be appointed service ministers. This, if it had been put into practice, would have greatly weakened the military power over the cabinet. Second, a Bōmu Kaigi (Defence Affairs Council) was created as a coordinating body incorporating civilian ministers, service ministers and the chiefs of the army and navy general staffs.<7>



Prime Minister Yamamoto, in the process of trying to obtain approval for naval expansion plans in 1913, was confronted with a major scandal which wrecked any immediate chance of Diet approval. This was the celebrated Siemens-Vickers bribery scandal. It led to the fall of the Yamamoto Cabinet and the resignation of the Navy Minister Saito Makoto. Three Naval officers were punished and one Admiral committed suicide but the damage went much further than tarnishing the navy's image. The vast outlays required for an 8-8 Fleet were not easily separated from the scandals and the chances of the Diet agreeing to the required increases in naval budgetary appropriations were much reduced.

The Okuma Cabinet of 1914 finally, through the auspices of the Bōmu Kaigi, set plans in motion for a stage-by-stage achievement of the 8-8 plan. An 8-4 plan put forward in draft form on 10 July 1914 did not receive budgetary approval until 12 July 1917. This plan was for the construction of eight battleships and four battlecruisers by the end of fiscal 1923. On 23 March 1918, directly before the first review of the INDP, the navy succeeded in receiving approval for an 8-6 Fleet. The increased prestige of the Japanese Navy as a result of the Great War, the increased value being placed on heavy cruisers and the announcement of America's massive 1916 Naval Construction Program, all helped this to pass through the Diet. However, from 1918 on, the ultimate goal was altered from an 8-8 Fleet to a massive 8-8-8 Fleet. It was now proposed that eight more capital ships, either

battleships or heavy or battle cruisers (not specified) be added to form three fleets of the 'first line' (eight years old or less). This appears to have been a direct response to a second American naval construction programme in 1918. Yet, for all the efforts of the navy and their supporters in the Diet, it was clear that Japan could not afford an 8-8 Fleet let alone an 8-8-8 Fleet. Ironically, even the 8-8 Fleet could only be financed by loans from the very nation it was aimed at, the United States. It seems likely that the 8-8-8 Fleet, like the American plans, was a 'paper fleet' designed as part of the tactical manoeuvring which sometimes precedes international arms limitation discussions. Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels (United States), had stated publicly in 1916, that putting through programmes of this size was useful for negotiating purposes.

### The 70% Ratio

The final pillar of pre-Washington naval planning was undoubtedly the issue of the 70% ratio and, inextricably intertwined with this was the problem of fortifications on islands in the Pacific. The origins of the 70% ratio, which meant having a 70% defensive ratio to combat an enemy fleet, have never been satisfactorily resolved. It seems certain that the idea was 'in the air' around 1907 and was definitely included in lectures to elite staff officers on the Naval War College A-Course No 6 (1907-1909). Admiral Kobayashi Seizo (1877-1962), a member of this course has



argued strongly that the credit ought to go to Akiyama Saneyuki who was a lecturer at the college at this time.<9> Nomura Minoru, whilst not exactly dismissing this theory, provides a convincing case for it being credited to Sato Tetsutaro.<10> It seems therefore, that the 70% ratio theory in Japanese naval strategic thinking, took firm shape around the time of the formulation of the INDP. It is not, however, stated explicitly in INDP documents at this time and, it has been said that the 70% ratio was originally calculated against either the American or German Fleets. As to when the ratio first appeared in official documents it was, apparently, immediately prior to the issue of invitations to the Washington Conference. At the time that Japan began preparations for Washington, if not considerably before, the 70% ratio was regarded as specifically concerned with the United States Fleet. By a strategy of attrition, Japan aimed to reduce the American Fleet crossing the Pacific to 70% of its original strength and then defeat it in a decisive battle near Japan.<11>

#### From Arms Race To Arms Limitation

From the above, one can see that the two naval powers, Japan and America, were locked in a struggle for naval superiority in the Pacific Ocean. By 1909 the United States had, by most estimates, the second most powerful navy in the world. After Germany's defeat in World War One, Japan moved into third place. However, it was primarily America's regional ambitions as a naval power in the Pacific, rather than her desire for parity with Britain in world naval

terms, which caused Japan to strive to maintain at least in percentage terms a nominal balance with the United States at 70%. Of course, since navies were regarded as essential elements of great power status as well as weapons of war, massive naval construction cannot necessarily be regarded as evidence of intended threats to other nations. Peacetime navies have rather wider functions than armies and naval construction races cannot necessarily be explained by the behaviour of enemies, potential or otherwise.<12> One should also be cautious about accepting that the naval race between Japan and America was simply based on 'action-reaction'.<13>

The previous sections may have suggested that policymakers and naval planners in the period before Washington thought only in terms of armament competition but this would be somewhat misleading. Before World War One, Great Britain and Germany had attempted to come to an agreement on naval limitation. In 1913, the United States Secretary for the Navy, Josephus Daniels, advocated an international conference to try and halt the naval construction race and establish a naval 'holiday'. By the time of the 1916 United States Building Program, Daniels had however, outmanoeuvred the arms limiters when he:

categorically insisted that the United States would fare better in arms control talks if it had a large naval building program.<14>

This was a significant development and would not have gone unnoticed by Japan's naval planners. The Daniels statement also lends credibility to the oft-cited suggestion that these pre-Washington fleet building programmes were

merely 'on paper'. This suggests that such naval construction plans, under certain circumstances, may have indicated a negotiating position rather than a continuance of competition in naval armaments.

In March 1919, just prior to the establishment of the League of Nations, Great Britain had sought to obtain a naval arms limitation agreement with the United States but the main discussions, between Admiral Wemyss (GB) and Admiral Benson (USA) resulted in a massive personal confrontation.<sup><15></sup> This so-called 'Battle of Paris' revolved around British insistence on the retention of a superior strength ratio vis-a-vis the American Navy which Benson refused to accept. However America did agree to abandon or modify its second major program, the '1918 Plan'. In the complex negotiations over the League Covenant it appears that the withdrawal of British opposition to the incorporation of the 'Monroe Doctrine' was a key factor in achieving such a compromise. On 10 April 1919 Colonel Edward M. House, adviser to President Woodrow Wilson, agreed to the suspension of the American 1918 Plan and to consider postponing construction of some ships in the 1916 Plan in cases where construction had been authorised but keels not laid down. This naval truce was naturally based on the premise that the United States would be a member of the League of Nations. During the Paris Peace Conference, the British, realising that they would have to consider conceding parity to the American Navy, again began seeking a naval armament accord through the informal mediation of former Foreign Secretary Lord Grey, then in the United

States. The United States Navy had suggested that a League of Nations Navy might alleviate economic burdens and halt the naval arms race but since America decided to stay outside the League, this initiative came to naught.<16>

Japan's alliance with Great Britain was an important factor in the setting of American 'standards' for naval armaments but she was not a party to these bilateral naval discussions. Nevertheless, Japan was slowly moving to the conclusion that naval arms limitation was inevitable and possibly even advantageous. Japanese Naval officers (especially Katō Kanji who was in England at that time) had observed closely the Anglo-German attempts to achieve naval limitation prior to World War One, especially the British efforts to allocate an inferior ratio to the German Navy. But it is Admiral Takeshita Isamu (1869-1949) who deserves much of the credit for initiating serious research into naval arms limitation within the Japanese Navy.

Admiral Takeshita served on the Allied Naval Council established in 1917 and also on the Committee of Allied Admirals, which was responsible for an agreement on naval items in the Peace Treaty.<17> These bodies were seeking a specific form of naval limitation and disarmament for the defeated enemy Germany. Takeshita's experience on these committees and on the German naval disarmament negotiations was to prove most useful to him in his position as the Imperial Japanese Navy's representative at the League of Nations.

Article 8 of the League of Nations Covenant read:

The members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of



national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety, and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.<18>

Japanese government officials, especially top level military policymakers, feared that the creation of the League would become a means for freezing the status quo. What they feared most were any disarmament provisions which might be incorporated in the League Covenant and Charter.

In the above Article 8 of the Covenant, originated by Field Marshal Smuts of South Africa, the original draft used the phrase 'the lowest point consistent with domestic safety' but Admiral Takeshita cabled Tokyo with objections to this and the Japanese delegation succeeded in having the term 'national safety' inserted instead.<19> Admiral Takeshita also played a key role in discussions over mandated islands. In February 1917, as the price for Japanese warships being despatched to the Mediterranean, Great Britain had promised that Japan could retain the captured German islands in the Pacific; The Marshall, Caroline and Marianas Archipelagoes. Japan's acquisition of these islands during the war significantly altered strategic configurations in the central and western Pacific. This was to cause considerable concern to America and Australia. Australia was intent on annexing these islands and the United States wished that somehow Japan (and the British Empire) could be prevented from acquiring them permanently. Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, found himself in a most embarrassing position, particularly with regard to the Australian claims. He eventually proposed League of Nations mandate status for these island groups much to the

surprise and annoyance of Japan who felt Britain had reneged on a promise.

There had been three possibilities in the minds of the Japanese and especially the navy. Annexation was favoured by the Japanese government and the navy, whilst internationalisation was strongly opposed by those same two groups. Initially the Japanese government inclined towards rejection of the third option, mandate status. In Paris, Admiral Takeshita saw things slightly differently and perceived certain advantages in option three, as did certain elements in Tokyo, provided Japan was guaranteed the mandate. America was totally opposed to annexation, especially by Japan but Takeshita thought she might accept a mandate system. He also believed Japan might conceivably use the islands in future negotiation to halt the naval fortifications race in the Pacific. The Americans eventually acquiesced in Japan receiving the mandate for these islands. But Colonel House, after President Wilson had returned to Washington, managed to have a non-fortification clause written into the mandates thus depriving Japan of Takeshita's proposed bargaining chip and making mutual limitation of fortifications on other Pacific islands much less likely. Moreover, America challenged the allocation of a mandate to Japan for Yap, one of the islands of the Caroline group. They insisted that President Wilson had obtained an agreement that this island, a cable communication station, be internationalised. The mandate was not rescinded but the Yap controversy was to reappear at the Washington Conference. America, in any case, had little



authority to challenge League decisions since she was not a member. For their part the Japanese government realised that the mandate system, especially the Class C mandate which offered virtual sovereignty, was the best compromise they were likely to obtain. The Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō, went along with this and apparently was unconcerned about the strategic significance of the non-fortification clause. He felt that it was not disadvantageous strategically since, in a national emergency, Japan could break the non-fortification agreement and arm the islands.<20>

Before analysing in more detail how the naval arms limitation policy evolved within the Japanese Navy in these and other committees a brief examination of the events leading to the call first for a trilateral naval limitation conference and then for the Washington Conference itself will be provided.

#### The League of Nations and Naval Limitation

In May of 1920, the Council of the League established a permanent committee 'to advise the Council on the execution of articles 1 and 8 and on military and naval matters' and a naval sub-committee of that body was also established. The First Assembly of the League also recommended the setting up of a 'Temporary Mixed Commission on Military Naval and Air Questions' but the above bodies signally failed to make any real progress. Naturally Japan was represented on these bodies but resisted efforts by the League on naval limitation principally because America remained outside the

League. Japan felt that unless America's naval building programmes could be checked limitation measures could not be considered. Moreover the fact that the United States was outside the League and therefore outside its 'protection' probably meant that she would increase rather than decrease, the size of her navy for national security purposes. Great Britain, while re-stating her adherence to the 'one power standard' was confronted by massive American naval construction programmes and was left with three choices. First she could rely on the League to exert pressure on the United States. But like Japan she knew this was not a real option. Second, Britain could try to come to some further agreement with the United States by bilateral naval talks and the third option was to recommence building capital ships. Great Britain's decision to opt for a 'one power standard' was not a concession of parity with the United States but a more rational attempt to retain supremacy within her economic resources. Britain opted for building again and began planning three sister ships to the battlecruiser Hood in 1921. In July 1920 Japan outlined plans for the 8-8-8 Fleet and both countries plans were intimately related to the American 1916 and 1918 Building Programs. The League was faced with a further naval race and since one of the participants, the United States, was not a member the League, was hardly in a position to achieve anything concrete to halt such fierce competition in warship construction. The most significant result of League involvement in naval limitation planning for Japan, was that it provided the necessary impetus for the Japanese Navy to

begin serious research on the subject and this meant that the navy was quite well prepared when Japan received an invitation to a conference in Washington in 1921.

### The Japanese Navy and Naval Limitation

It was during Admiral Takeshita's involvement with naval matters affecting the League of Nations, that he repeatedly signalled the Navy Ministry urging them to set up a committee on naval limitation. Having been closely involved in the various naval discussions between the Allies prior to the Versailles Conference, at the Peace Treaty and the League of Nations discussions, he was concerned that the Japanese Navy take immediate action regarding research on naval arms control. He felt strongly that they must prepare for naval limitation talks in the very near future. He perceived these as taking place within the League system of committees but the non-membership (as opposed to participation) of the United States in the League of Nations meant that his urgings prompted the Japanese Navy to begin a research programme which was eventually to form the basis of the navy position at the international conference in Washington in November 1921.

During the discussions on the establishing of the League of Nations, Admiral Takeshita had continued to press for the navy to begin research. As a result of his urgings, Rear Admiral Ide Kenji, Chief of the Navy Ministry's Gunmukyoku (Naval Affairs Bureau), petitioned the Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō. The latter, on 3 June 1919, authorised the establishment of a Kaigunshō Kokusai Renmei

Kankei Jikō Kenkyūkai (Navy Ministry Research Committee on Matters Relating to the League of Nations).<21> The committee issued a series of studies which were indicative of the main trend of naval thinking on League of Nations matters related to disarmament, arms reduction and limitation. Serious study of naval limitation within the Japanese Navy therefore began in June 1919, with the establishment of this Navy Ministry research committee. It was established a few weeks before the League of Nations Covenant and Peace Treaties were signed and was staffed by officers from both the Navy Ministry and the Naval General Staff. It was chaired by Rear Admiral Abo Kiyokazu, Chief of the First Section of the Naval General Staff who was a very close friend of Katō Kanji. Although there were some changes in personnel, its key members, who were also to have important roles in future naval conferences were, Captain's Suetsugu Nobumasa, Kobayashi Keizaburo and Hori Teikichi.

The first report was submitted to the Navy Ministry on 29 June and after more than ten meetings the committee produced a number of important findings. These were put together as one major report called Studies and Resolutions relating to Arms Limitation in the Research Committee on matters relating to the League of Nations.<22>

In the outline the report stated that it was not permissible for other countries to interfere with a particular country's decisions on armaments. However, the report went on to say that Japan, as a member of the League, ought to try to achieve the objectives of arms limitation despite the many difficulties. Its principal findings were:



1. Taking 24 capital ships [8-8-8] as the absolute maximum strength and 16 capital ships [8-8] as the absolute minimum strength [our navy needs] to decide on the suitable naval strength to be asserted.

2. In order to make the discrepancies in naval strength between the Empire and Great Britain and the United States as small as possible [our navy needs] to assert the principle of equality of armaments.<23>

Thus the Japanese Navy realised the inherent difficulties of reaching an agreement but was prepared to adopt a positive attitude towards arms limitation. At this time the navy was clearly willing to sacrifice the 8-8-8 Fleet but the 8-8 Fleet appeared to be an absolute minimum for naval planners. Significantly a ratio of 70% vis-a-vis the United States was not mentioned.

During 1920 reports had been filtering through to the naval authorities in Tokyo concerning a proposed Three Power Naval Conference possibly to be held in late 1920. For example, Kobayashi Seizō, naval attache in London, reported a conversation with an ex-naval officer (unnamed) prominent in British naval construction, to the effect that there would be a conference. But his report was ignored by the navy who dismissed it as unlikely.<24> The Navy Ministry committee on limitation continued research on naval limitation but, in the immediate aftermath of Senator Borah's resolution asking the American President to call a Three Power Naval Conference (14 December 1920) the Committee altered the focus of its attentions. Hitherto it had seen arms limitation research as based on Article 8 of the League of Nation's Covenant but it now concentrated on a trilateral naval agreement between

America, Great Britain and Japan. This resulted in a report entitled Nichi-Ei-Bei Kaigun Seigen Mondai Ni Kansuru Kenkyū (A Study relating to the Japan-Great Britain-United States Naval Limitation Question). The conclusions reached in this document differed somewhat from the previous research.<25> They were:

1. In so far as we do not lose the balance (with the major powers) we do not need to persist in the construction of the 8-8 Fleet.
2. It is absolutely necessary for the Empire to have a [naval] ratio of 70% or above vis-a-vis the United States.
3. We recommend the insertion of a concrete plan appropriate to the Empire's needs.<26>

This report also included studies on limitations on air power and on the abolition or limitation of fortifications regarding islands in the Pacific. Finally it produced recommendations for concrete proposals on a limitation agreement. These reports were all coordinated by the Navy Ministry who then produced the Kafu Kaigi Gunbi Seigen Mondai Ni Kansuru Kenkyū (Study relating to the Washington Conference Arms Limitation Question) dated 29 September 1921.<27>

This study focussed specifically on the Washington Conference and became the cornerstone of naval policy. It will be examined in detail later in the next chapter.

Probably the most important aspect of League involvement in disarmament and arms limitation planning had been in providing the necessary impetus for the Japanese Navy to begin serious research on the subject. This meant that the navy was quite well prepared when invitations arrived for Japan to go to Washington in 1921.



## The Call for a Conference at Washington

Although Japan had approved budgetary increases, for the navy and the army, in the years immediately following the war, Prime Minister Hara Kei and his financial advisors were becoming increasingly concerned over the parlous state of the nation's finances. An arms limitation agreement began to look most attractive as a means of halting the rapid increase in military spending. It was also an attractive option in that an international agreement would avoid the political risks of domestic-initiated military reductions.

In December 1920, there had been two significant American developments regarding naval limitation. On 14 December Senator Borah asked the Senate to adopt a resolution favouring a 50% cut in American, Japanese and British naval programmes. A few days later Senator Walsh petitioned the President to inform the League that the United States wished to cooperate with the League Disarmament Commission. Borah continued to be active and, on 24 July 1921 succeeded in obtaining congressional approval for his 24 February Amendment to the original resolution. This had called for a substantial reduction in naval building. Due to his efforts Borah has often been credited with a key role in the origins of the Washington Conference but, for various political reasons he did not become a member of the American delegation to that conference. His actions certainly accelerated the negotiations for a naval limitation agreement and, given that the United States was outside the

League, the initiative, arguably, had to come from the United States.

Rumours of a conference on the reduction of naval armaments were rife in Tokyo from around the beginning of 1921. Prime Minister Hara underwent interpellations in the Diet on 22 January. He was questioned about the Japanese Ambassador in London's statement that such a naval limitation conference ought to be supported including a 50% reduction in naval armaments. The Prime Minister avoided commenting on any conference and stated that the Ambassador's comments merely reflected his own personal opinions. Then came a resolution by the Lower House member Ozaki Yukio on 10 February 1921, calling for a reduction in naval armaments by agreement with the Americans and the British. Ozaki's resolution was crushed 285-38 although the Japanese were quick to point out that this, in itself, did not indicate that Japan was against naval limitation by international agreement. An Outraged Ozaki toured the country giving lectures, issuing postcards for a poll on the subject and, after some 70 speeches to over 100,000 people he received some 30,000 completed postcards of which 93% favoured limitation. Ozaki's real achievement was to link a growing peace movement in Japan with an increased awareness of the vast expense involved in a ruinously expensive arms race. He managed to enlist the support of intellectuals, journalists and businessmen and contributed greatly to a positive attitude conducive to participation in an international conference.<28>

Even the Navy, in the person of Katō Tomosaburō, Navy

Minister and 'Father of the 8-8 Fleet', appeared to accept the need for a conference. On 24 March he told reporters Japan was:

Prepared to carry out the limitation of armaments to a certain extent if any reliable agreement is concluded among the leading Powers.... Japan does not want to insist on the maintenance of the 8-8 Fleet under all circumstances.<29>

He also pared 100 Million yen from the naval budget. Katō's public stance caused much concern within the navy and many were outraged by his cutbacks but it was a ray of hope for those who wished for an international agreement on naval limitation. The army did not like the cuts in the navy for they affected naval support units in Siberia and China as well as Pacific bases. The army also believed that the navy were setting a precedent which the army might be compelled to follow. Naval leaders had already had the situation spelled out to them by anxious Finance Ministry officials who pointed out that "whether Japan's national finances live or die is up to the navy".<30> Premier Hara now began to perceive that a conference offered a way out of his dilemma since, so far, he had sanctioned continually increasing budgets for both services.

On 6 July 1921 the United States Secretary of State, Charles Edward Hughes, confided to the Japanese Ambassador in Washington, Shidehara Kijūrō, that the American government intended to hold a conference on the reduction of armaments in the United States. Initially, at this meeting the impression was given that it was to be a Five Power Conference (with Britain, France, Italy and Japan) focussing on limitation of armaments. But by 11 July the Charge

d'Affaire of the United States in Tokyo had informed Foreign Minister Uchida that 'Pacific and Far Eastern Questions' were linked with arms limitation and therefore other interested nations would also be invited.

When America did finally send formal invitations, the response in Japan was lukewarm in both official circles and in the press.<sup><31></sup> The United States' decision to link the question of naval limitation with Pacific and Far Eastern questions, struck the press and the public in Japan, as well as most policymakers, as rather illogical. They could not see why the two issues should be linked. Nevertheless, certain perceptive observers were probably aware that naval limitation was inextricably linked with Pacific and Far Eastern issues. Japan certainly had much more to fear from discussions on Pacific and Far Eastern issues than on the single issue of naval limitation. After some initial hesitation, caused in part by suspicions of American motives, Japan agreed to participate in the Conference. On 8 July 1921, Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes cabled Britain, Japan, France and Italy on the advisability of holding an international conference on arms limitation and Pacific and Far Eastern questions. These countries had been the principal Allied and Associated Powers (USA) in the recent war. On 10 July a White House communique publicised the proposed conference, adding that China had also been invited to discuss Far Eastern Questions. On receipt of favourable replies, formal invitations were sent to the above countries on 11 August 1921 and Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal were eventually invited on 4



October.

### The Navy prepares for Washington

Naval authorities in Tokyo had been receiving reports as early as 1920 concerning a proposed (Three Power) Naval Conference possibly in late 1920. A Navy Ministry's committee produced various reports on naval limitation in 1920 and 1921. These reports were all coordinated by the Navy Ministry who later produced the Kafu Kaigi gunbi seigen mondai ni kansuru kenkyū (Study relating to the Washington Conference Arms Limitation Question).<sup><32></sup> This study, dated 28 September 1921 specifically focussed on the Washington Conference and formed the cornerstone of naval policy.

The report was divided into three main parts: a general study; studies on various limitation plans and; a three point conclusion. It was of considerable length and only the main points can be summarised here.

The report began by stating the strategic and economic advantages of naval arms limitation for the Japanese Empire. First, it would avoid a construction race and lighten the burden of the people. Second, it would alleviate economic distress and advance cultural well-being. Third, it would avoid the bad feeling engendered by a construction race, reduce chances of war and contribute to world peace. Fourth, it would fix, at a certain point, the naval power of hypothetical enemies and prevent them from channelling their great wealth into naval construction. Finally, fixing a ratio vis-a-vis others

would make future planning much easier.

As to disadvantages, the Committee found that a limitation agreement was contrary to the principle of autonomy in national defence. It would also have an adverse effect on the public and they stated:

If we do not obtain agreement, or obtain one which is disadvantageous to us, then the Empire will be in danger. Public recognition of the superiority of the enemy would have a bad influence on our morale. This in turn will reduce our scope for making up for an inferior ratio.<33>

The Committee, while very much aware of the disadvantages, found in favour of an international agreement. As to the attitude Japan ought to take, the study pointed out that Japan lacked the strength to carry out her 'Big Navy' policy. They believed that if Japan persisted with such a policy the conference would not succeed and that to hold out for equality with the United States and Great Britain was futile. Therefore, the study stated Japan should insist on parity with the United States and Great Britain in principle. The report proposed that while Japan, to some extent, ought to recognise their superiority, she should endeavour to make the disparity as small as possible. Furthermore, the Committee suggested that a limitation agreement could be based on either an 8-8, 8-6 or even 8-4 Fleet and after considering ratios of 10:10:8, 10:10:7, 10:10:6 and even 10:10:5, ruled the last two out all together. Next the study produced a list of methods of limitation and advanced seven possibilities:

1. Limits on numbers and displacement for each type of ship built annually.
2. Limits on the number and displacement of capital ships built annually.
3. Limits on overall tonnage which can be



- built annually.
4. Limits on overall tonnage built annually as well as capital ship displacement.
  5. Limiting the naval budget so as not to exceed the previous year's budget.
  6. Reduction plan for the number of capital ships to be constructed annually.
  7. Reduced naval budget plan annually.<34>

They found that 1 had no advantages for Japan; 2 had the advantage of stopping the construction race but since it would trigger off a race in auxiliaries, it was unsuitable; 3 did not take into sufficient account Japan's particular situation; 4 lacked scope for Japan's particular situation and 5, 6 and 7 were rejected as unsuitable. But finally 3 and 4 were considered to be the most suitable from a strategic perspective and 4 from the financial perspective. Thus, having carefully considered 3 and 4 in detail, the study offered concrete plans A, B and C.

	USA	GB	Japan
A.	170,000	170,000	120,000
B.	200,000	200,000	140,000
C.	230,000	230,000	160,000<35>

These figures would appear to correlate well with the projected construction estimates required for 8-4, 8-6 and 8-8 Fleets respectively. Finally the committee, on the basis of these studies, provided concrete proposals as follows:

#### Plan A

1. Recognising the burden caused by the construction race we will endeavour to improve the welfare of the people by coming to an agreement recognising, in principle, that there are differences in the armaments of the various countries concerned.
2. After agreement total tonnage to be laid down is not to exceed A, B or C (above).
3. Meaning of ships in aforesaid battleships/ battlecruisers/cruisers/destroyers/submarines/ airplane carriers (aircraft carriers).

4. To carry out this from 1922 and ships actually commenced or planned are deemed to be included herein.
5. 5 or 10 year periods.

#### Plan B

Same as Plan A above for 2, 3. and 5.

4. Regarding the displacement of each battleship or cruiser to be constructed under this plan there will be a 50,000 tons limit. (or as appropriate 40/50,000 tons).

#### Plan C

In case we are unable to get agreement on Plan 2

1. Identical to plan A.
2. Ratio for each country which may be laid down for establishment of agreement:

Japan	USA	GB	
1.5	2	2	(Plan 1)
1.75	2.5	2.5	(Plan 2)
2	3	3	(Plan 3)

3. According to this plan displacement of capital ships not to exceed 50,00 tons (actually refers to battleships and battlecruisers) or 40,000 if appropriate.
4. Identical to Plan A
5. Regarding the actual time periods for enforcement either a) Taisho 11 (1922), b) year following completion of American 3 year plan (1921) c) year following completion of 8-8 Plan (1928). [The report favoured 1922 as the date of commencement.]

The other major problem considered by the navy's study group was that of Pacific Fortifications. This subject was to prove crucially important to agreements on ratios at Washington. Therefore some details here are appropriate. The report offered three plans.

Plan 1 Japan to maintain status quo on military establishments on the Pescadores and Keelung and to withdraw military facilities from the Ogasawaras. USA to maintain status quo on Hawaii, Guam and the Phillipines. Great Britain to maintain status quo on military establishments at Singapore and Hong Kong. Japan, Great Britain and the USA not to carry out construction of any new military establishment in

the Pacific.

Plan 3 Japan to carry out withdrawal of military facilities on Ogasawaras. America to maintain status quo on Guam. All three to agree not to construct new military facilities in Pacific.<36>

It is quite clear from this document that the Japanese Navy was seriously concerned about Pacific fortifications and positive about coming to an agreement.

While the Japanese Navy was busy studying naval limitation the Japanese government was attempting to plan and control Japan's involvement in this major international conference at Washington. This involved the cabinet, the Gaikō Chōsakai (Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs) and the various ministries including the two service ministries as well as the Japanese Ambassador in Washington.<37> General policy and prior discussion on the agenda were the main matters at this level.<38> At the same time, at Vice-Ministerial level, the Foreign, Navy and Army Ministries, were instructed to form a committee to undertake research on specific questions and coordinate policy.

#### The Triministerial Preparatory Committee<39>

Japan officially received an invitation to the Conference in Washington on 13 August 1921. Three days later a RikuKaiGai Sanshō Uchiawase Sanshō Kyogikai (Committee of officials from the Army, Navy and Foreign Ministries) convened. This Triministerial preparatory committee held a series of conferences at Tsukiji at the Suikosha (The Navy Club). It met from 16 August until 26 September and was organised and coordinated by the Foreign Ministry. This



committee's recommendations, with minor alterations, provided the basis of the actual instructions handed to the Washington Conference Delegation. The membership comprised the three Vice-Ministers from the ministries involved and the Vice-Chiefs of the Army and Navy General Staffs plus their respective staffs. There was a considerable overlap in naval personnel between the naval representatives on this committee and the Navy Ministry's previous naval limitation study groups. Abō Kiyokazu, Chairman of the League Committee was now in attendance as Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff and Suetsugu Nobumasa, Yamanashi Katsunoshin, Nomura Kichisaburo and Hara Kanjiro were all members of the Triministerial Committee's navy team. The most interesting addition was Rear Admiral Katō Kanji, President of the Naval War College.

The Navy had already carried out considerable research but now that a conference had materialised, its position began to change somewhat. The meetings were characterised by a series of clashes between the army on the one hand and the navy and Foreign Ministry representatives on the other. The army essentially took a very hard line indeed regarding arms limitation and Pacific and Far Eastern questions. The first meeting had concerned itself only with personnel and secretariat matters but in the second meeting, the difference in the attitude of the two services was made very clear. The navy stated:

In so far as we can maintain an appropriate ratio vis-a-vis the USA and Britain, we recognise that it is not necessary to persist in the force levels laid down in the instructions to Japan's representatives at the League's General Assembly. On this occasion, depending on the situation, we

do not rule out reductions even in plans already decided upon. We wish to make clear our readiness to meet at a conference.<40>

The Army on the other hand, would not agree to reductions below those stated previously in instructions to their representatives at the League of Nations. They argued that these instructions already embodied reductions and they would provide explanations at a later date, as to why it was impossible to go below these existing levels for national defence. This particular meeting also recommended that cooperation with Great Britain was to be sought where possible, but that it was not vital.

At the third meeting, items which Japan would like to see removed from the conference agenda were discussed. These were Shantung, the 21 Demands, questions relating to the status of the South Manchurian Railway, withdrawal from Siberia, the Occupation of Sakhalin and finally, the Yap Island Problem.

The Vice Minister from the Foreign Ministry explained that he wished to see these items deleted, but it was not possible since the exclusion of items from the agenda had not been a condition of Japan's acceptance. However, Ambassador Shidehara was negotiating directly with Secretary of State Hughes in Washington at this time, to alter the agenda. The army were vehemently opposed but the navy adopted a more realistic approach. Whilst the navy agreed with the army that such matters ought to be excluded, it was not prepared to press for them if it endangered the chances of a successful conference. However, the navy stated that, in the event of it being necessary to return Kwantung and

Kiaochow, they would require that Port Arthur and Tsingtao be non-fortified and without military establishments. They had no objections to withdrawal from Siberia provided Vladivostok remained an open commercial port and they felt that the occupation of Sakhalin was, in any case, merely a temporary measure and ought to be removed from the agenda.

The navy had already agreed that, provided an appropriate ratio could be obtained vis-a-vis Great Britain and the United States, even the 8-8 Fleet could be reduced. Regarding submarines, whilst against abolition they were not opposed to international legislation on their use in wartime.

According to the Hara Kei diaries the Navy Minister made clear the differences between the navy and army viewpoints and indicated that, whilst internal investigations had shown the navy to be reluctant to give up the 8-8 Fleet they would do so if necessary. This he stated, showed their flexibility whilst the army was not even prepared to "reduce even by a single soldier".<41> Finally, the army's plans for an increase up to 25 divisions had not received budgetary approval (unlike the navy's 8-8 Plan) and it asked that the term kitei keikaku (existing plans) be replaced by the phrase genni jikkōchū no hon keikaku (plans actually being carried out at present).

On 12 September the Foreign Ministry drew up plans for the conference as countermeasures to the United States plans for the agenda. The army representative at the conference (and at Washington), Major General Tanaka Kunishige had strong objections to certain aspects regarding Pacific and



Far Eastern Issues. Regarding Pacific Fortifications Commander Hori Teikichi for the navy, proposed that limitation not be a problem of arms limitation but a principle and wished to include under this 'territory and colonies', but his suggestion was not accepted. Finally the Foreign Ministry despatched instructions to Ambassador Shidehara in Washington. Unknown to the Japanese these instructions were already being intercepted by the Americans, thus weakening Ambassador Shidehara's and later the delegation's negotiating position.<42>

These meetings challenge certain assumptions on the Japanese Navy's position prior to and at Washington. The evidence suggests that the navy were willing to give up the 8-8 Fleet and wished to see a halt to the competition in fortifications in the Pacific. The positions taken by the navy researchers in the above reports and committees also call into question the assumption that Katō Tomosaburō imposed naval limitation on an unwilling navy. Instead, it appears likely that Katō Tomosaburō was reflecting conclusions reached independently of him by officers from the Navy Ministry and, significantly, the Naval General Staff. The 70% ratio does appear clearly in earlier documents of the navy's own committees but is only implicit in the instructions issued to the Japanese delegation to the Washington Conference. As Nomura Minoru points out, it is what is meant by the phrasing 'the appropriate ratio'.<43>

The Government discussed the "Triministerial Committee' recommendations in both the cabinet and in the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs. The instructions given

to the naval delegates were divided into 18 sections and since, unlike the instructions to the plenipotentiaries, they have not appeared in English elsewhere, each will be summarised here:

1. The level of armaments must be decided by each country individually, it must not be imposed by others. But such an attitude will lead to failure of the proposed conference which will in turn accelerate the construction race. The delegates must adopt a sincere attitude to arms limitation based on mutual respect of the sovereignty of the individual nations.

2. At least in the waters of the East, Japan is to maintain near parity/balance with the forces others are able to deploy in that area. In order to achieve that the 8-8-8 Fleet authorised by the Emperor and the Diet and announced by the Navy Ministry is the standard. But even a reduction in the 8-8 Fleet which already has budgetary approval will not be declined provided that we can maintain an appropriate ratio vis-a-vis the United States and Great Britain and that there are no major changes in the Pacific in the near future. (emphasis mine)

3. Agreement not to stop at future building plans but to include, as a principle, ships already commenced or already planned. Existing strength however is to be placed outside the scope of agreement. (emphasis mine)

4. Regarding actual plans examples are as follows although these can be discarded provided negotiations are not to our disadvantage.

- a) Limitation on numbers and displacement of capital ships.
- b) limitation on total tonnage of ships other than capital ships, that is cruisers, destroyers, submarines and aircraft carriers.

5. 10 year agreement in accordance with Article 8 of the League of Nations to start as soon as possible after the agreement.

6. Regarding the USA and Great Britain's naval strengths, which must be the standard for the Japanese Navy, those two powers must resolve to limit at the lowest level but, should these two fail to agree, Japan should endeavour to mediate for an appropriate agreement.

7. Not in agreement with plans to limit airpower at the conference but the fact that Japan's ratio is markedly inferior ought to be borne in mind.

8. Japan is in favour of abolition or limitation of Pacific Islands fortifications but should at least press for the status quo.

9. Oppose proposals for the abolition of the submarine since it is vital for national defence.

10. In principle in agreement on limitation of armour and armaments on ships but endeavour to find scope with reference to each country's industrial ability .

11. Unable to abolish conscription due to our situation even although this is advocated by others.

12. Regarding the Military Service Education Scheme (military instructors in schools) this should be left completely to each country's own choice.

13. Regarding proposed limitation on stockpiling of shells etc. in peacetime we do not approve of this proposal.

14. We do not consider that civilian armaments manufacturers influence international peace therefore we oppose limitation at present.

15. We oppose the use of gas warfare for humanitarian reasons but take appropriate measures according to the situation at the conference.

16. We are opposed to the aerial bombardment of unprotected civilians.

17. International inspection is an infringement of sovereignty and moreover casts doubts on sincerity of the parties agreeing to a treaty.

18. Even though we are agreed on free exchange of military information and future plans etc this will first have to be announced in the Diet.<44>

### Selection of Delegates

A major problem for the Japanese government at this time was the selection of the delegation to go to Washington and especially who to select at the Plenipotentiary level. Hara

Kei, the Prime Minister, was an obvious choice but, probably because of the delicate domestic position of his party, he felt it inadvisable to go himself.<45> One other factor may have been his desire to prevent conference developments from damaging his carefully nurtured relationship with the military. Since taking office, despite his avowed intention of stamping out the image of 'militarism' in Japan, Hara had wooed both services with impressive budgetary increases. He knew well that an international conference offered the opportunity for a gradual shift away from military expansion and even opened up the possibility of real reductions in military expenditures. In addition the Premier saw that if the Navy Minister was sent, he could then temporarily take over that cabinet post. This would be an encroachment on the hitherto unassailable position of the service ministers in cabinet. He did record that he perceived the taking up of the Navy Minister's portfolio on a temporary basis, as a first step to civilian Service Ministers.<46> Navy Minister Admiral Katō Tomosaburō therefore seemed an excellent candidate. A further reason for selecting the Navy Minister was that Katō Tomosaburō was generally regarded as the 'Father of the 8-8 Fleet' in that he had skilfully nursed the building programme through various Diet and cabinet sessions over a number of years. The Navy Minister was therefore probably more likely to defuse criticism if elements of the 8-8 Fleet were to be scrapped or postponed. Ambassador Shidehara Kijūrō (1872-1951) in Washington, was regarded as ideal as one of the plenipotentiaries but one who was unlikely to be able to control military



representatives at the conference itself. Understandably, the Navy Minister was somewhat reluctant to accept this onerous and highly sensitive, not to say politically dangerous appointment. First, he was not proficient in English, regardless of what his biographers may say, and he was to some extent concerned about protecting his own position vis-a-vis the military, since he was known to have political ambitions beyond his service duties.<47> Katō felt he lacked knowledge of diplomacy and probably did not relish assuming personal responsibility for halting plans for an 8-8 Fleet. He suggested to the Prime Minister, that Admiral Saitō Makoto (1858-1936) would be a more appropriate choice.<48> A former Navy Minister, Saitō was the first non-army appointment as Governor-General of Korea, yet another move by Hara in the direction of more effective civilian control. Hara ruled out Saito because of the important work he was doing in Korea and moreover, the Premier felt Saito would have to spend considerable time doing research to prepare for the conference, since he was rather out of touch with naval affairs. Saitō himself was, in any case, reluctant to leave Korea at this crucial time. Kato then reluctantly agreed to go, but stated that he was not very knowledgeable on diplomatic affairs and would have to depend heavily on Ambassador Shidehara for advice. Therefore he asked that the junior man be made equal in rank with himself. One suspects that the suggestion was based, not on modesty as his biographers would have it, but on pragmatic grounds.

However, there were two major problems with appointing



Katō to a Plenipotentiary position. First, the American Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, had hinted that it would be better not to send military men as plenipotentiaries. Second, Hara's proposal to become Navy Minister in the Admiral's absence required approval from at least the Navy Ministry and the Gensuifu's naval members (Board of Fleet Admirals And Field Marshals). Katō had stated that only Admirals Shimamura Hayao and Katō Teikichi on the Supreme Military Council were qualified to act as his temporary replacement but he was reluctant to see either of these appointed. Hara's Cabinet Legislative Bureau staff found that it was possible to interpret the regulations so as to permit Hara to take up the appointment, but Yamagata Aritomo and the army extracted a promise that such a practice would never be applied to the Army.<49> Hara, on this issue of sending a military man, could possibly be accused of allowing domestic political priorities to outweigh the opportunity to defuse overseas criticisms of Japanese militarism. Katō Tomosaburō though, on the advice of Shidehara, wore civilian clothing throughout the conference.

Shidehara and Katō, in diplomatic and military matters respectively, were experts and it was thought that a generalist would be a good choice for the third, and senior Plenipotentiary. He should preferably have considerable prestige, at home and abroad, and be an appointment domestically beneficial to the government of the day. Ito Miyoji (1857-1934) of the Gaikō Chōsakai (Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs) was suggested but Hara opposed this.

Hara appeared to have favoured Shibusawa Eichii (1840-1931) but eventually decided on Prince Tokugawa Iesato (1863-1940), President of the House of Peers. A polished, cultured (Cambridge educated) figurehead is perhaps the kindest description of the man, for it was known that he had neither knowledge nor interest in arms limitation. Nevertheless he was certainly the sort of person to assist with the more social aspects of the conference, provided of course, he could be kept away from the decisionmaking process. Prince Tokugawa was nominally in charge of the delegation but the real power was divided between Katō Tomosaburō, who mainly concentrated on arms limitation, and Shidehara who took responsibility for Pacific and Far Eastern Affairs. Later, Hanihara Masanao was promoted from delegate to Plenipotentiary status when Ambassador Shidehara became ill. The important position of Chief Naval Aide or Chief of the Technical Advisers was Katō Kanji and the reasons for his selection form the introduction to the next chapter.

This chapter has sought to show the evolving position of the Japanese Navy in terms of both arms racing and arms control. The United States was clearly designated the potential enemy by the Japanese Navy and American naval construction plans were a major influence on Japan's own naval building plans. However, numerous other factors, domestic and international, also contributed to Japan's involvement in a naval arms race. Regarding naval limitation, one is struck by the thorough, and in many ways positive preparation, by the Japanese Navy for the

conference. The documentary evidence does not sustain the widespread conviction that the navy, whether it be the Navy Ministry or the Naval General Staff, were hostile to arms reduction proposals. <50> Moreover, these findings tend to challenge the assumption that Katō Tomosaburō caused the navy to accept such thinking. In many respects, the Navy Minister appears to have reflected the findings of various naval committees rather than imposed his own viewpoints on a recalcitrant navy.

Thus far, in an attempt to provide sufficient background material on naval development in general and naval arms limitation in particular, alternating chapters on Katō and the navy have been provided. In part two Katō Kanji will be the main and continuing focus and other data on naval developments and the conferences will be provided where necessary, since space precludes a full analysis of all aspects of the naval conferences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### KATŌ AT WASHINGTON 1921-22

Katō Kanji's appointment to the Washington delegation in September 1921 marks a watershed in his career development and his thinking on the subject of naval arms limitation. By any standards Katō's naval career so far had been highly successful and his rise extremely rapid. He was seen as a man of considerable talent, destined for the very highest naval posts. Thus far his career, with the possible exception of the Vladivostock episode, had been relatively uncontroversial. He was a well known and respected figure in military circles at home and abroad but to the general public he was at this time relatively unknown. His participation in the Washington Conference was to bring him national prominence.

Katō's role at the conference was both important and at times controversial. Although he attended the conference in an advisory, not a decisionmaking, capacity, Katō was nevertheless a person of some influence. However, it would be easy, and erroneous, to ascribe too great an importance to his role at Washington. Nevertheless, Katō's thoughts and acts prior to and during the conference have received much comment. They are crucial to an understanding of Japanese naval matters at the conference and also to an understanding of Katō's own future behaviour regarding naval arms control in both naval and domestic politics.



## Katō's Appointment as Chief Technical Adviser

Newspapers began carrying unofficial reports of Katō's appointment as early as the second week of September 1921. His official appointment dated from 21 September.<1> At this time Kato had served only 13 months as President of the Naval War College. Surprisingly, since Katō's activities at Washington have been much criticised, writings on the conference offer few hypotheses as to why the navy selected him for the important post of Chief Technical Adviser. His appointment has puzzled scholars and one historian, noting this has suggested that Katō:

...was associated with Captain Suetsugu Nobumasa as the advocate of the big fleet and an opponent of naval limitation.<2>

He therefore concluded that:

...his [Katō's] inclusion is therefore something of a mystery and can only be explained on the hypothesis that the Japanese in their desire for consensus wished to include representatives of discordant elements within the navy.<3>

Japanese scholars have often indicated that Kato was a member of the Kyōkōha (hardline faction) in the navy and therefore the above hypothesis would appear to have a certain plausibility. Perhaps such writers have been too much influenced by Katō's actions later, as a consequence of events at Washington, since there is no clear evidence that he was strongly opposed to naval arms control prior to the conference. There are a number of other factors which explain his appointment equally well. Moreover these reasons do not rely on judgements based on Katō's behaviour in later years.



Perhaps the easiest and the most obvious reason for his selection was that Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō believed that Katō Kanji was simply the best man available for the job. It is known that the Naval General Staff had nominated Rear Admiral Moriyama Keizaburō for the position, but the elder Katō had rejected him and selected Katō Kanji instead. Moriyama was a Naval General Staff officer interested in continental expansion and fearful of American strategic encirclement.<4> He would therefore appear to have been a good choice if 'hardliners' or 'discordant elements' were required in the Washington delegation. Of course it could well be argued that Katō Tomosaburō was merely replacing one 'hardliner' with another who was simply better qualified. Moriyama had spent most of his time abroad in France and expertise on the French Navy and the European naval situation would have been useful. Moriyama had also spent time in Mexico and commanded a naval squadron patrolling American coasts in the First World War.

Negotiations at the conference required however a thorough command of English. It is reasonable to assume that Moriyama's best language was French. Katō Kanji was certainly highly competent in English as various accounts by attaches clearly testify. Yet there are reasons for supposing that Katō Kanji's utility to the negotiating team at Washington went far beyond mere linguistic proficiency.

In the first place Katō's technical expertise was highly regarded both inside Japan and abroad. He had an international reputation as a gunnery expert and, as his period as attache in England showed, he was something of an

authority on naval construction with a thorough knowledge of British shipbuilding. Katō had only recently returned from a European and American inspection tour as head of a naval technical mission and therefore had an excellent, up-to-date grasp of technical naval developments in the West. Secondly, Katō had some experience in negotiating military agreements, both formally and informally, with British and American officers. He had been a member of the team which drafted the military agreement accompanying the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance. He had also conducted complex negotiations during the First World War with leading British officers in the British China Squadron. Moreover, he had been at the very centre of highly complex and sensitive diplomatic and military negotiations at Vladivostok in 1919 with British, American and Russian military and diplomatic personnel. He was regarded as the leading expert on Russia in the Japanese Navy and, since Siberia was to be discussed, this may have been an additional factor in his selection. Kato was on good terms with many American and especially British naval officers and had served with the latter in the Far East, with Anzac support ships on their way to Europe and on duties in the Mediterranean during the First World War One. He had been awarded the MVD and KCMG by the British Government and also held the American DSO.<5>

Katō Tomosaburō may have had other reasons for appointing Katō Kanji which related to negotiating strategy. Katō Kanji was not at this time a Naval General Staff officer and the elder Katō may have preferred an 'academic' officer for this sensitive position.

Image-consciousness aside, Katō Kanji was a forceful arguer in committees and, combined with his talent for English, this may have been perceived by the Navy Minister as an asset to the Japanese delegation. Japanese negotiators, culturally, linguistically and with only limited experience in international negotiating, were at a certain disadvantage in face to face discussions with the more positive and assertive American contingent. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Katō already possessed a considerable knowledge of naval arms limitation. He had been naval attache in London during the abortive naval limitation discussions between Britain and Germany over ratios in the period immediately prior to the First World War. In addition he had recently served on the tri-ministerial preparatory conference on planning for the Washington Conference during 1921.

Katō was clearly extremely well qualified, linguistically, technically and in other ways. He did, as was stated above, have first hand knowledge of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and Siberia, in other words his expertise went beyond technical naval matters. In addition to this his knowledge of western navies, western naval officers and technical matters make it difficult to suggest a better choice for the position. Katō's forceful, not to say argumentative and direct manner, may not have endeared him to Japanese colleagues, or even British ones. Nevertheless, as someone in an advisory position only, such a characteristic may well have been precisely what the elder Katō required.



## Katō's Thinking Prior to the Conference

There is an almost total consensus in scholarly writings that Katō was, and remained, an opponent of arms limitation. However an extensive search of archival materials provides little evidence in support of this interpretation.

In April 1921, Katō was visited by the US Naval Attache in Tokyo and he reported that:

In regard to reduction of armaments, Katō spoke warmly in favour of it, and gave as his conviction the necessity for calling a conference to reconcile the vital conflicting national policies of the various countries in the world. He declared instead of agreeing to a formula for naval strength the nations should bend their best endeavours to reconciling the national policies whose clashes cause wars. He considers that any more wars should be unthinkable, and is very anxious to do everything possible to avert them. He declared that Japan does not wish to push herself into America but stated that she must have the opportunity to expand on the continent of Asia, and America must not endeavour to restrict Japan's expansion so long as America herself is not affected ... referring to limitation of armaments, he said that each power should send a delegate of the calibre of Chief Justice Taft and that these delegates should lay on the table only vital policies and then reconcile them with mutual understanding and sympathy.<6>

The attache concluded that Katō was "one of the very best Japanese naval officers. A leader." Interestingly he added "his enemies call him narrow-minded and a radical"<7>

In September Katō spoke twice to the British Naval Attache, the second time in the presence of the British Ambassador. The attache reported thus:

Admiral Katō is eulogistic on the motives which have prompted the President of the USA to convene this conference, and he says that in his opinion and that of broadminded, thinking Japanese it is

one of the greatest things that has ever happened in the history of the Empire.... Of the three powers concerned Admiral Katō said he thought that probably Great Britain was the most anxious for reduction in Naval Expenditures, and America came next. However, now that the position had been put before the people of Japan they also realised that the finances of their country were not as satisfactory as they have recently been and curtailment of expenditures on armaments would be a great boon, and conducive to the betterment of civil life.<8>

On being pressed by both the attache and the Ambassador regarding his thoughts on the forthcoming conference Katō replied that "he could not imagine it would be anything except successful."<9> Katō then proceeded to state what he felt to be the most important matters which would arise at the conference. He believed these to be naval disarmament, military [army] reductions and the future of China.

Regarding naval disarmament Katō was said to be "most optimistic" but on the military [army] he provided two rather contradictory comments. At the first meeting with the naval attache Katō was extremely critical of the army stating it ought to be halved. This was a common contemporary naval standpoint reflecting primarily budgetary considerations. He added that the 'Military Party' in Japan would soon fall. In the second interview he stated, guardedly, that he really had no knowledge of the subject himself and that the army must remain at full strength. Katō felt that China would be the most difficult issue, that patience was necessary and also thought that the Japanese public were strongly opposed to any form of international control. Regarding Siberia Katō surprisingly had little to say other than that the policy remained unchanged.

Returning to naval aspects Katō volunteered the view that



"all the Japanese Delegates will go to Washington in good heart". On being pressed as to the actual nature of naval limitation negotiations Katō stated that naval reductions had been much discussed but not yet seriously tackled in Japan. Nevertheless he felt sure that financial restrictions would be put forward by the Americans as the best method, a suggestion the British Naval attache found to be a "rather unlikely possibility". Katō added that he favoured the prohibition of construction of capital ships and, at the same time limiting the displacement in construction of same. He did not believe the abolition of submarines or mines could be achieved since they were "a valuable arm to a weaker power". On Pacific Fortifications Katō found the public clamour for the demolition of fortifications to be rather unrealistic. He was well aware of the vast sums which America would need to allocate to Guam and other Pacific islands to make them worthwhile and the difficulties of obtaining congressional approval for such expenditure. The report stated that Katō felt that an agreement would be useful that "these islands will not be further adapted for Naval requirements would greatly help matters." <10> He went on to say that the Loochoos and the Bonins were in fact merely way stations for small ships to stay for shelter and had been fortified by the Army. He could see no possible excuse for doing more than making them minor naval stations. Katō concluded that he was pleased to think that the Navy Minister Katō Tomosaburō would lead the delegation and spoke highly of him.

Apparently something had changed Katō's opinions on

naval arms limitation and other matters between his conversations with the American naval attache and his meeting with the British naval attache and between the two interviews with the latter. At the time of his early discussions with the American officer Katō was not directly involved in preparatory talks on naval limitation. It is probably fair to say that his initial thoughts accurately reflected his own personal views. For Kato the problem was not to secure an arms limitation agreement since this would treat the symptoms (the arms race) rather than the cause (international misunderstandings). Here Katō can be seen as not so much as 'hostile' to arms limitation but as someone who felt that it was of secondary importance. By September he knew there had to be a conference and was actively participating in the preconference negotiations in Japan. Moreover, his change of heart may well have been due to being directly involved in negotiations with the army after the first attache interview. There is no doubt that there was much concern and sensitivity on the part of the army regarding the arms limitation and Far Eastern issues.<11> One would have to say that Katō always believed that arms limitation was not the central problem, it was a symptom and the problem was essentially a political one.

Prior to his departure Katō had penned a long and wide-ranging article in the journal Taiyō.<12> It was printed during the conference but after his departure. This article showed clearly that Katō had studied past efforts at disarmament and arms limitation in some considerable detail. It also showed an impressive knowledge of recent

Western writings on the subject. - Katō found that previous conferences had advocated arms limitation and reduction for fiscal reasons or to freeze the status quo in a way that benefitted their own position. He strongly criticised this approach and, expounding on motivations for arms reduction, pointed to the previous failures at The Hague Conferences, the Anglo-German Negotiations before the Great War and the League of Nations efforts on disarmament. He also cited a statement by then United States Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels in 1913 calling for a naval holiday. Kato was most suspicious of the motives behind previous proposals and negotiations. He argued that negotiating arms reductions merely because armaments were becoming too expensive was insincere and that it was often merely an effort to freeze the status quo in favour of certain nations at particularly suitable times. He then added that he felt that America's problems on naval armament resulted from her decision to remain outside the League of Nations. Moving on to reductions themselves Katō stated:

Britain and America will have to decide on a one power standard and Japan, at a level not exceeding the standard set by the USA and Great Britain, will agree to the minimum limitation of naval power which will not endanger the defence and existence of our country.<13>

As to how reductions would be carried out Katō believed that auxiliary vessels and commercial trade were not relevant factors and that the element which decided naval power was the battleship [capital ship] and that those vessels were to decide the naval standard. Katō concluded that the requirement for a large number of ships simply to protect merchant shipping was old fashioned. He concluded:



... namely, if we are to decide the limits on Japan's naval power it must be, at all costs the standard set by the USA and Great Britain who are the most powerful. There is no other way.... Japan must decide her naval strength, not by comparing levels of national wealth nor by overseas trade but by free judgement as to what will effectively deter invasion by a hostile power. Naval limitation must also incorporate limitation of 'base power' [Pacific Fortifications].... For example when other countries construct large bases in areas surrounding Japan it is natural that they become a threat to Japan and we must take countermeasures.<14>

On 2 October 1921, Katō Kanji accompanied by his naval team, some civilian staff and journalists, set off for Washington in advance of the main Japanese delegation. Katō boarded the Corea Maru at Yokohama and on the quayside had this to say:

When I cross the Pacific I intend to speak out and explain things but it would be somewhat premature to say anything here. However, even if we do loudly proclaim our theories I do not know if our proposals will be accepted by the Great Powers since, as everyone knows, Japan is a small naval power.

Therefore, ultimately the most important aspects of naval limitation will depend on the thinking of the Great Powers. In other words it all depends on the attitudes of Great Britain and the United States towards this problem.

Regarding the [Japanese] Empire it goes without saying that we hold to the principle of restricting naval power to the minimum limits commensurate with national defence. To realise this we must first discuss the power of the great navies of Great Britain and the United States as the basis for a standard [of armament]. In the present situation, seen from the principle of national defence, the US navy is excessive but more than that I cannot say.<15>

Katō here again was restating the idea of allowing the United States and Great Britain to set a standard or upper limit. One should also note the barbed final comment on the "excessive" size of the American Navy. Here his own, and the Japanese Navy's suspicions of the United States are

clear and, given the impending conference, this statement must be regarded as somewhat frank and lacking in caution. Fortunately it went unnoticed by western military intelligence sources in Japan.

On the sea voyage to the United States, Katō and his colleagues held daily meetings to shape their strategy for the conference. The naval team were naturally fully aware of the research already carried out under Navy Ministry auspices. Their task was now to fully digest the instructions issued by the Japanese government. With these in mind, they would then try to anticipate what the Americans, who they felt would take the initiative, had in mind. In other words, they attempted to forecast the American proposals on the basis of the latest information from the government and the latest military intelligence. After landing at Honolulu, Katō's team met United States naval authorities, both civilian and military, on a number of occasions. On at least two of these occasions Katō publicly requested advance information on the American proposals so as to assist his research.<16> However, Secretary of State Hughes had ensured a tight security screen and, in any case, most of the top echelon of the United States Navy were unaware of the details of the American plan.<17> Katō's team eventually produced their outline of the American proposals as follows:

1. Arms limitation and 'Pacific and Far East' discussions will be held in parallel from the outset.
2. The United States will issue concrete proposals at the very outset.
3. The content of the American plan will be as follows:
  - a) A ratio of power between the United States,



Britain and Japan will be decided.

b) An outline will be given from appraisals of national strength, level of necessity as well as existing strength. There will be a decision favouring parity between the United States and Great Britain and Japan's ratio will be somewhat different from this.

4. Regarding the United States Navy's three year plan they will scrap approximately one third and scrap 4 or 5 Indiana class battleships. But regarding battlecruisers they will construct these faster as they are indispensable to their long distance strategy.

5. They will abolish a considerable number of superannuated vessels.

6. They will extend ship age and, if the ships are suitable for duty, do without replacement vessels.

7. They will probably propose a construction holiday since this is distinctly advantageous to the United States and Great Britain.

8. Since the Anglo-Japanese Alliance forms the basis of the United States standard [of naval strength], the Americans will make very effort to scrap it.

9. On Pacific Fortifications, if Japan brings up this problem then the United States will insist that the first line of the United States defence is east of Hawaii and will stress they will build fortifications there if they so wish.<18>

In certain respects the predictions were surprisingly accurate. On technical issues however, the Japanese predictions were rather closer to the plans the United States Navy General Board might have drawn up. But Hughes kept this and other top naval policy bodies ignorant of his plans. The thinking of Katō's team thus reflected either excellent naval intelligence or 'mirror imaging' in terms of strategic thinking. However, his team did not accurately predict the main elements of the final American 'political' proposals.

It was inevitable that Katō would have some dealings with the press prior to his arrival at Washington. Katō spoke to journalists at Honolulu shortly after his arrival. He stressed that sincerity and a strong desire for

limitation were vital otherwise "we cannot expect anything but the failure that has attended previous conferences on the reduction of armaments".<19> On 18 October he was reported as saying that he was glad the conference was being held in the United States and that no one surpassed Japan in earnestness regarding the conference. He went on to say that as a result of his recent trips to Europe and America he had come to believe that an international conference was necessary "to clear away international misunderstandings" and that "international differences seem to be derived from mere misunderstandings". Katō said he had privately advocated such a conference, a reference possibly to his talks with the United States Naval Attache in Tokyo. He warned that people should not be too utopian about how much the conference could achieve but that every effort towards the goal of prevention of war should be made. He concluded that one of the first steps for "the leading nations of the world is to reaffirm the acknowledged principle that all armaments should be based upon bare necessities...."<20> Kato at times used the press skilfully in order to pressure the Americans by pleading for more information for his party. Yet it was perhaps inevitable that some remarks attributed to him would cause concern to the authorities at home. On 28 October, a report was received in Tokyo regarding a statement by Katō that:

Japan's financial position does not allow the government to expend an enormous amount for naval armament. Consequently the scope of the armaments of the Japanese Navy must be minimised, irrespective of the decision of the conference.<21>

The Asahi Shinbun newspaper stated this to be contrary to

Navy Ministry policy. The naval authorities, whilst clearly concerned, believed Katō to have been misquoted in that there were probably errors in the transmission of the report.<22>

### The Washington Conference

The Conference opened on 12 November 1921. It was in effect two separate though inter-related conferences, one on arms limitation and the other on Pacific and Far Eastern affairs.<23> The primary concern here is the issue of arms limitation, particularly naval arms limitation. Therefore the conference will be treated rather narrowly, focussing mainly on naval arms limitation in detail and touching on other arms limitation issues on Pacific and Far Eastern questions only where necessary.

The opening address, following the Prayer, was given by President Warren Harding of the United States. Arthur James Balfour of Great Britain then proposed Charles Evans Hughes, American Secretary of State, as Chairman of the Conference. Hughes made a speech and announced the proposals drawn up by the United States side regarding naval arms limitation. The nature and extent of these proposals surprised and shocked the audience at this vast international gathering. Hughes next proposed that preparatory committees be set up to decide the agenda of the Arms Limitation Committee and the Pacific and Far Eastern Committee and these were to run parallel with each other. Baron (Admiral) Katō Tomosaburō assumed principal responsibility for Japan's arms limitation negotiations and Baron Shidehara for Pacific and Far Eastern



questions. Due to illness during the conference, Shidehara was unable to carry out all his duties and a fourth plenipotentiary, Hanihara Masanao, was also appointed. Nevertheless, even from his sickbed, Shidehara influenced Katō Tomosaburō's thinking and decisions on naval limitation-related issues. The two Japanese leaders worked well together and did not, apparently, observe strict lines of demarcation regarding their respective spheres of authority.

### Naval Limitation

Hughes launched his carefully conceived plan for naval limitation on a totally, or almost totally, unprepared audience. Katō Kanji and his technical team, as was shown earlier, had attempted to forecast the American position and had only been partially successful. Undoubtedly other delegations had done likewise. The other delegations, including the British who were suspected by many as being party to the United States proposals were, like the Japanese, taken unawares by the nature and detailed extent of the proposals. Hughes began by stating that all competition in naval programmes must cease immediately; that agreement and sacrifice from all countries was necessary; that capital ships, which according to his experts were the true measure of naval strength, were to be the basis for an agreement with auxiliary vessels in a 'reasonable relation' to capital ship tonnage allowed. Finally he proposed that there be a "naval holiday" of ten years before replacement building of capital ships could commence. On capital ships

Hughes excluded for the time being the issue of French and Italian allocations and ratios, but these nations were to participate in the initial negotiations. Hughes put forward four main principles:

1. That all capital ships building, either actual or projected, should be abandoned.
2. That further reduction be made through the scrapping of older ships.
3. That, in general, regard should be had to the existing naval strength of the powers concerned.
4. That the capital ship tonnage should be used as a measure of strength for navies and a proportionate allowance of auxiliary combatant craft prescribed. <24>

Before the assembled audience could recover from the sweeping nature of the proposals Hughes delivered yet another surprise. He now proposed an extremely detailed plan giving figures not only for the United States, but also for Great Britain and Japan as well. In brief, Hughes proposed the scrapping of ships built and building as follows:

Country	Number of ships	Total Tonnage
USA	30	845,740
GB	19	583,375
Japan	17	448,938
Total	66	1,878,043

After three months the ratio of capital ships was to be:

Country	Number of ships	Total Tonnage
GB	22	604,450
USA	18	500,650
Japan	10	299,700

Replacements, to commence after the ten year moratorium, were to be so tailored as to result in an agreed capital ship tonnage of:

Country	Ratio	Total Tonnage
GB	5	500,000
USA	5	500,000
Japan	3	300,000 <25>



Capital ships were to be replaced, subject to the ten year holiday after they had reached twenty years of age and no capital ship thereafter was to exceed 35,000 tons. This latter figure was rumoured to be the maximum tonnage for ships to pass through the Panama Canal. Auxiliary ships were to be included in the limitation agreement but no precise details were put forward at this point in time.

The most colourful statement on the response of the audience to Hughes dramatic proposal was made by Gabrielle d'Annunzio who wrote:

It has been said again and again that when Charles Hughes with unexpected boldness proposed the destruction of ships, all the white puppets jumped as though the wire had suddenly been broken while the yellow puppets remained as blandly insensible as sheathed sabres of well tempered steel.<26>

Theodore Roosevelt Junior, who was to play a central role in technical negotiations with Katō Kanji, wrote in his diary that the British response was as follows:

Lord Lee, the First Lord of the Admiralty, turned the several colors of the rainbow and behaved as if he were sitting on hot coals. Beatty, after the first step, sat with his eyes fixed on the ceiling. Admiral Chatfield on his left turned red and then white.<27>

Katō Kanji, in a lecture at the Japanese Naval War College after the conference, stated that this response by the British and the fact that they rushed off afterwards, were clear evidence that suspicions of pre-conference collusion on the part of the British and the Americans were unfounded.<28>

Roosevelt went on to say that:

The Japanese sat with immovable faces looking straight ahead and I failed to notice any of them speak while the matter was going on.<29>

Katō Kanji described the elder Kato's response thus:

Katō, Chief Plenipotentiary, while he had previously recognised the difficulties, was extremely concerned because of the vast scale of the proposals and their influence not merely on Japan's material strength but on the personnel and the morale of the future navy.<30>

However, Katō went on to say that his chief realised that he would have to go along with the spirit of the times and:

resolved to respond to the spirit of the proposal and gathered civilian and official Japanese at the embassy immediately afterwards to tell them his thoughts.<31>

The next day Katō Tomosaburō stated to the press that Japan was not seeking equality with the British and American Fleets and that he was in no doubt that a complete understanding could be reached.<33> Later, in conversation with Balfour he said:

When I first heard Mr Hughes scheme I was surprised at its being so drastic but at the same time I resolved that, on the whole, I must support the principle underlying it.<32>

He also told Hughes later that he had, at first, been hardly able to comprehend the full purport but his immediate second thoughts were that it was essential to accept in principle.<33> At the Second Plenary Session on the 15th Katō Tomosaburō responded to the 'Hughes Proposal' as follows:

Gladly accepting, therefore, the proposal in principle, Japan is ready to proceed with determination to a sweeping reduction in her naval armament. It will be universally admitted that a nation must be provided with such armaments as are essential to its security. This requirement must be fully weighed in the examination of the plan. With this requirement in view, a few modifications will be proposed with regard to the tonnage basis on the replacement of the various classes of vessels.<34>

Roosevelt pointed out, correctly, that the press would take this as an acceptance of the 'Hughes proposal' whereas it was, in fact, a carefully hedged reply.<35> Shortly afterwards the Japanese delegation and especially the 'Two Katō's' were to be accused of reneging on this 'acceptance' especially as the Japanese counterproposals for an increased tonnage and improved ratio came out into the open. A number of points in this 'acceptance' ought to be borne in mind for an understanding of how things were to develop from this time onward. First, Katō Tomosaburō was holding to the principle of 'national need' not 'existing strength' as put forward by Hughes. Second he was clearly indicating a dissatisfaction with the tonnage allocated to Japan and therefore, in effect with the ratio. Indeed, as he was to tell Hughes later, his interpretation was that the ratio was to come into effect after ten years and he did not accept that this was the ratio as of November 1921.<36> Clearly there were problems ahead for the Chief Plenipotentiary and also for Katō Kanji, who for a short time, occupied the centre stage.

#### The Sub-Committee of Naval Experts

This major international conference spanned a long period of time and a bewildering variety of complex, inter-related subjects. Therefore there was a plethora of committees and sub-committees, some temporary, others more permanent. This structure proves somewhat confusing for researchers on the Washington Conference who have to cope with committees and sub-committees where the official titles



of those bodies are either not used or often altered almost beyond recognition. For example 'naval technical sub-committee' is a term used to describe the committee we are about to examine in detail here. However, in many instances, references have been found to other committees with the same title but quite different functions. In addition, it was the case that similar terminology encompassed committees within delegations as well as committees of the conference itself.

The Washington Conference was really two conferences with two Committees of the Whole: The Committee on Limitation of Armaments and the Committee on Pacific and Far Eastern Questions. The former comprised Delegates of the Five Powers with Kato Tomosaburo representing Japan. The latter comprised Delegates from the Nine Powers with Shidehara Kijuro and sometimes Hanihara Masanao representing Japan.

The first meeting of the full Committee on the Limitation of Armaments commenced with an immediate examination of the principal matter at hand, the issue of naval limitation. The Delegates then decided that a technical committee, comprising one technical adviser from each of the Five Powers, be formed and it was: "to take under immediate advisement the questions raised by the US proposals on naval limitation." <37> Aristide Briand of France proposed that this sub-committee submit, at the earliest possible date, recommendations on which agreement could easily be reached and the Committee fully supported this. At Mr Balfour's suggestion, Colonel Theodore

Roosevelt Jr., Assistant Secretary for the Navy (USA) was appointed Chairman. The members of the newly created sub-committee were Colonel Theodore Roosevelt Jr. (USA) Chairman; Admiral Beatty (GB); Vice-Admiral Baron Acton (Italy); Admiral de Bon (France) and Vice-Admiral Katō Kanji (Japan).

The official record of the conference stated regarding the sub-committee called "The Sub-committee of Naval Experts":

Resolved that the expert subcommittee should be notified that it was the instrument of the Committee alone and that publicity with regard to any of the subjects under discussion should be given through the medium of the Committee.<38>

Roosevelt, the Chairman of the committee of experts was of course a political appointee to the Department of the Navy and an army man by training. This was in contrast with the 'naval/technical' nature of the other committee members. Following discussions with Hughes, Roosevelt briefed those members of the committee who were available at the time that:

The instructions that were to govern the committee are that this committee is purely a technical one and its duties are to discuss purely the technical questions. It is in no way to consider itself a committee from which publicity can emanate, but is considered a committee of advisors. Anything in the nature of policy is not properly in the reference.<39>

Roosevelt then suggested that they meet at 10:30 am on the following day, 16 November. That evening Roosevelt and Katō Kanji dined together and apparently Katō surprised the American by alluding to the possibility that the conference might fail.<40> Roosevelt recorded in his diary that this was the first time he had ever heard a Japanese allude to



the possibility of the conference failing. But, in fact, Katō had merely commented that, in the event of the conference failing, his invitation to Roosevelt to come to Japan would still be open. Roosevelt's diary also mentions Kato's eyes lighting up "as he spoke of the samurai and their songs" and one scholar has stated that a true insight into Katō's behaviour at Washington is to be found in Roosevelt's diaries!<41> The next morning the first meeting of the Sub-Committee of Naval Experts took place and Roosevelt recorded his plan of campaign for the first meeting as follows:

I had planned to ask the various people to submit their amendments and suggestions in writing, my tactics being to, on their receipt, read them all aloud to the conferees assembled and then take them up in rotation as has been the case in the meetings of the delegates. As I see it, if it is possible we will reach agreement with England, France and Italy first. Then if the Japanese are recalcitrant, the committee can report unanimously with one dissenting vote.<42>

However, events did not proceed exactly as planned and a series of complex negotiations thus began.

Unfortunately, despite a thorough search of the United States archival materials on the conference, and despite finding numerous references to stenographic records of this committee as well as requests from the Conference Secretariat for copies of the minutes, no recorded minutes or verbatim reports of these meetings came to light. What follows is a synthesis of the recollections of Katō Kanji at the time (telegrams to the home government), Colonel Roosevelt's diary and the notes taken by the British. Later Katō Kanji explained in some detail what had actually happened and all in all, there is a large area where the

different accounts concur.

Katō Kanji noted, cryptically, in his diary for this first meeting "will announce 70%" but Japanese correspondents such as Itō Masanori of the Jiji Shinpo, either based on leaks or educated guesswork had been forecasting the 70% demand from around 15 November onwards.<43> Roosevelt opened the first meeting of the sub-committee in accordance with his strategy but Admiral Beatty (GB), refused to respond as Roosevelt had hoped and stated that he was not prepared to make his comments in writing. Beatty confined himself simply to stating that he needed further explanations regarding the replacement programme. France and Italy had little to add since the issue of the ratio of capital ships for France and Italy was to be decided after the 'Big Three' had resolved their ratio problems.

Next it was Katō Kanji's turn to speak. Roosevelt recorded it as follows:

Last of all came Japan who put down a concrete proposal requesting that their percentage be raised from sixty to seventy as compared with Great Britain and the United States: requesting equality in aircraft carriers and giving as two ships which she wished to retain in her programme, the Mutsu and the Aki. Her entire impression was based on two thoughts: a) that each nation had the right to determine what was necessary for her defence; b) that this navy was her minimum requirement. She, at no time alluded to the existing strength of naval powers, which of course is the basis of our argument.<44>

Roosevelt then turned again to Beatty who once again hedged, asking what the basis for auxiliaries was to be. He also requested that Britain's European situation be taken into account. Roosevelt then proposed that Beatty's comment

be the basis for a resolution to be submitted to the main committee. Roosevelt concluded this entry by saying that he "hoped to be able to get more concrete statements from the English".<45>

Since a number of commentators on the Conference as well as participants such as Shidehara, have intimated that Katō Kanji was pressing his own case in the sub-committee, it is worth noting the way Roosevelt recorded it. His diary entry does not mention Katō Kanji by name. One may assume this is because it was clear that Katō expressed the official Japanese position not his personal view; although undoubtedly Katō fully concurred with the official Japanese position.

The American press at the time, and many scholars writing on the conference, have implied that Katō Kanji was the first member of the Japanese delegation to publicly advocate a 70% vis-a-vis the United States at Washington. Either directly or indirectly, it has also been suggested that Katō was putting forward his own, narrow, military/strategic viewpoint in the discussions with other technical experts. However, British records of the conference state as follows:

At the first meeting of the sub-committee on Limitation of Armaments [sic], the Chief of the Japanese Naval Experts, acting under instruction of Baron Katō, declared that the ratio of 70 per cent for Japan, is in accord with the spirit of safeguarding the interests of all concerned, as expounded in the preamble of the original Hughes proposal.<46> (emphasis mine)

Roosevelt's diary entry for 30 November states:

The only new development in Admiral Katō's statement was that he officially said that he had asked for a ten seven ratio on the insistence of



Baron Katō.<47> (emphasis mine)

Roosevelt reported the results of the first meeting to Hughes and stated that Japan would not dare refuse to compromise and upset the conference. He noted that Hughes, for the first time, was "slightly worried". Roosevelt went on to suggest that Japan might, if she disrupted the conference, become an outlaw and

if she had justice on her side it would be one thing, but she has no justice in her contention and has been given by the United States more than her due consideration.<48>

By this 'consideration' Roosevelt was referring to the fact that Japan, according to American calculations, was not even entitled to a ratio of 10:6 vis-a-vis the United States.

On that same day Itō Masanori was confidently predicting that Japan would ask for 70% whilst the Washington Post claimed that Katō Tomosaburō was asking for "slightly greater than 60%".<49> One commentator stated that these differences were the result of Katō Tomosaburō giving two interviews, one in Japanese stating that Japan's experts believed 70% to be the absolute minimum, and a statement in English to the western journalists later that day asking for "slightly greater than 60%".<50> Such a conclusion is certainly plausible especially if Katō Tomosaburō's words were 'off the record' for the Japanese press but has not been possible to substantiate this by means of contemporary records.

Negotiations began in earnest on the following day. After the second meeting Katō was invited back to Roosevelt's office for a private discussion. Since this was

the first real discussion between the leading 'naval specialists' of Japan and the United States it may be useful to examine both Roosevelt's and Katō's account of this private talk. Roosevelt recorded the conversation thus in his diary:

After the meeting I took Admiral Kato back with me to the office. He brought with him Uyeda and his [Uyeda's] interpreter. I kept no one. I told him that I was speaking to him alone as one gentleman to another and in a non-official capacity. I tried to strike a basis with him by saying that I was not going to blarney him, that I was not coming to him with empty hands and loud promises as I felt that that type of approach was worth but little, and as I was not that kind of a man. I told him that I admired and respected Japan, but that he, if I judged him right, and I, were both perfectly willing to fight each other at any time, in the interest of our mutual countries. I then gave him the basis of the existing tonnage that we had used in making our determinations. He did not at once comprehend and kept reverting to his statement of national needs. At last, however, I think I got him clearly to understand what I was after. We then debated to and fro for a period, at the end of which time he told me that he felt that the national need of his country depended on a ratio of ten to seven, and that, if I understood him correctly, he would commit suicide if he had to return to Japan with anything less. I told him I was equally determined on ten to six, and he left. As he was leaving he got up and told me that as a Samurai gentleman he appreciated my reception of him, and that as a Samurai gentleman, during negotiations he would never lie or deceive me in any way. I have no idea as to whether our conference has done any good. There were but two things I really hoped to accomplish from it anyhow. One was to get them to think in terms of existing tonnage, and the other to convince them that we were showing no signs of yielding.<51>

Katō Kanji told an audience at the Naval War College shortly after his return to Japan that:

The problem of the 70% ratio first began in an interview between Roosevelt and myself on 17 November. It was an unofficial meeting. Roosevelt said 'regarding the Japanese proposal [70%] I regret that, on our part, I must state clearly that there is no scope for compromise.



Japan's ratio of 10:6 is based on total tonnage of existing capital ships. This is a comparative calculation and the actual power decided was calculated from two categories. First, total tonnage afloat, that is operational, and second a separate listing of ships under construction. In the latter category a construction ratio was added. For example those which were 60% completed were classed as 60% of total tonnage. As to the Mutsu she was 98% complete (We [the Japanese] had corrected this misunderstanding on the 16th). Of course, I do not think this calculation method is perfect. The various kinds of calculations all have their defects but this one has the least.' Roosevelt then said 'according to US calculations, even though Japan's existing strength comes to less than 50% of that of America, bearing in mind Japan's present prestige they would raise it to 60%'.

He went on to say that with auxiliary vessels this ratio of tonnage offered almost no scope for America and Great Britain to commence construction. But Japan has no scope either and it is the same for submarines. According to Hughes, we [America] have a basic plan which disregards the principle of 'national need'. But if America were to adopt the latter standpoint the US naval authorities would demand a doubling of the existing naval power and Britain too must be the same. Each country's disputes all follow each other around. For this reason Hughes, in order to make the conference a success, took [naval] power already possessed and made that the foundation of arms limitation and paved the way for success. With a ratio of 10:6 vis a vis Japan the US did not think itself capable of attacking Japan. The United States wished wholeheartedly for the success of the conference and had no other motive than this. For this reason the scrapping of new and old ships approached approximately double that of Japan's sacrifice. By paying this sacrifice we hope for a complete understanding from Japan.

Regarding all this I [Kato] said 'I understand the gist of the discussion sufficiently and, because the present arms limitation proposal is most favourable, Japan will positively agree to approve it as well. But, in the words of President Harding, the complete abolition of war by arms limitation is a dream. This is because we do not possess any organisation in the world at all which can prevent war. Therefore states must possess armaments in which they are confident. Japan has been carrying out research for a number of years from this viewpoint. Based on national expectations the 10:7 ratio demanded by Japan is the absolute minimum ratio and we do not consider it to be a threat to the United States. Japan wishes to lighten the burden of the people of various countries at the conference, agrees with

the main essentials of the conference and with the large scale scrapping of new ships, and promises to carry this out. As to how earnest we are on arms limitation I think I have explained sufficiently. As to the thinking of the Japanese members we find it impossible to believe that the main conference is idealising the present world situation in such a way as to ask each country to omit national security perspectives. The United States, which holds strongly to a ratio of 10:6, is dictating to Japan in such a way as to leave us no scope at all.<52>

Since both participants relayed the contents of this private conversation in full to their respective Plenipotentiaries and, since there were clearly going to be a number of major problems, something had to be done to try and resolve what, increasingly, appeared like an insurmountable difficulty. Since the only real parties to the dispute were the United States, Great Britain and Japan, Katō Tomosaburō suggested that the technical representatives of these three powers (thus excluding France and Italy) meet to try and resolve the issues. It was made clear that they were to confine themselves to technical matters, not pass judgement on policy and, after discussion, were to report back to their delegates. In order to avoid confusion, this informal committee will be referred to as the "Three Nation Naval Experts Committee".

#### The Three Nation Naval Experts Committee

The committee was made up as follows: Admiral Coontz and Captain Pratt (USA); Admiral Beatty and Rear Admiral Chatfield (GB); Vice Admiral Katō and Captain Uyeda (Japan). The first meeting was held on 21 November. Katō Kanji immediately requested that the Americans provide data

on their definition of 'existing strength', their calculations and a listing of the ships included in such calculations as well as tonnages and completion percentages of capital ships under construction at that time. In a written reply, the American side stated: "Naval strength has been measured by the capital ships under construction and by those dreadnoughts and super-dreadnoughts completed."<53> As for ships under construction, they had decided on keels laid by 12 November 1921. The Americans also added that pre-dreadnoughts were excluded. The date for all calculations was the opening day of the conference. The resulting calculation for completed and uncompleted ships was:

Country	Number of ships	Tonnage
USA	33	1,118,650
Japan	15	504,000 <54>

giving a ratio of 10:4.5. However the Americans had allowed Britain to include the four Hood class cruisers and the Japanese were to incorporate the Takao and the Atago for which keels had not been laid but for which large sums had already been expended. This had improved the relative ratio of the British and Japanese navies.<55>

Katō Kanji expressed dissatisfaction at the delays over providing this data and also over the nature of the answers. He believed the Americans were simply stating the basis for calculations without explaining them. Katō wished to question the definition and calculation of 'existing strength' as defined by the United States. He queried the inclusion of ships building and stated that the exclusion of pre-dreadnoughts contradicted the Hughes statement. He



denied that the Mutsu was incomplete, questioned the accuracy of the American figures and finally commented on and queried certain of the figures for Britain's tonnage.<56>

### Existing Strength

This is the issue on which the most fundamental divergence of opinion occurred. It should be noted that in these meetings, Katō Kanji made no mention of 'national need' as the criterion for naval strength. He was in effect arguing the case for Japan solely on the basis of the principle of 'existing strength'. This therefore represented a victory of sorts for Roosevelt who had endeavoured to get the Japanese to think in terms of 'existing strength' as opposed to 'national need'. No records of the meeting have been found, but Katō, at a later date, explained the Japanese objections to the United States definition of 'existing strength' thus:

Regarding the term 'existing strength', since no common definition exists amongst different countries, it is futile to try and calculate it.... The American reply avoided defining it and only went so far as to indicate their own calculations and this was a matter of regret for us. If we followed the American calculation it was according to ships complete as well as ships under construction. On this matter our understanding was that 'existing strength' is the naval power which exists at present and unfinished ships, which do not possess the ability and power for naval strength and are unable to undergo sea combat, cannot be regarded by us as 'existing strength'.<57>

Whilst accepting that the United States was making considerable sacrifices in scrapping unfinished ships and, that Japan could and must reciprocate, Katō continued:

However, as for the American conviction that such sacrifices can be inserted into 'existing strength' calculations this is not compatible at all with the understanding of the Japanese members. Despite certain basic differences, concerning the various items taken up by both countries, the greatest factor affecting the final decision lies mainly on this point. The unification of calculations by both countries on such a basis is impossible.<58>

The Americans, equally found the Japanese definition of 'existing strength' totally unacceptable. They asserted:

The American advisors cannot admit the argument made by the Japanese advisor [Katō Kanji] that they do not recognise as naval strength uncompleted ships. If no naval strength existed in these ships, there would be no sacrifice of naval strength by scrapping them. This is manifestly, on the face of it, not so. The United States must sacrifice an enormous naval power by scrapping their fifteen ships which are being built.<59>

The fullest explanation was to come later from Hughes in conversation with Baron Katō after the discussions between the naval experts had ended in failure:

The basis for the American proposal, Mr Hughes continued, had been the existing naval strength. The American delegation had felt, however, that in calculating this it was impossible to ignore facts and ships in an advanced state of construction were facts which could not be omitted from the calculation. A ship which was 85% completed, for example was a very solid asset in calculating naval strength. It often happened that at a given moment ships in the active fleet were for some reason or another out of action. One ship might have developed some defect in her hull, and another in her engines. A third ship might have her ordnance not mounted. In such circumstances it might even happen that months would elapse before a fully completed ship was ready for active service. A ship that was building, if 90 per cent completed, might even be ready in a shorter time than a ship which had been in service for years. Moreover there could be no comparison between the value of a completed ship, especially at the present time, when the ships under construction would embody all the lessons of the late war.....<60>

It would be wrong to state that the American case had no



credible basis. There was a certain logic, often circular, which can not be easily dismissed. This is especially true given the principle on which Hughes' strategy was based i.e. a 'stop now' formula. Nevertheless, one feels sympathy for both Katō Kanji who was being lectured on technical naval matters by an army Colonel (Roosevelt) and Katō Tomosaburō receiving explanations on technical naval issues from an American lawyer/politician (Hughes). The 'stop now' formula, embodied in the Hughes opening speech, whether by accident or design, clearly favoured the American Navy which had a massive building programme in progress. Moreover, funding was proving extremely difficult if not impossible. In terms of negotiating strategy the United States, by keeping its plan secret and by forcing others to react to it, retained control of the situation. In no small part this was due to the skills of Hughes, a determined negotiator and experienced lawyer. Hughes was correct in stating that ships under construction cannot be compared to those already built. Hughes argument was that a ship in construction was potentially more readily available than one already in commission but needing repairs and this was superficially convincing. However, it fails to consider the fact that a new ship has to be crewed and 'shaken down' on exercise before it is ready to join the fleet. The Mutsu, which had already steamed hundreds of miles with a full crew had not entered the fleet.<61> This was the basis for the United States refusing to accept it as complete and should have made Hughes more aware of this point. One cannot dismiss the Japanese definition of 'existing strength'

either but the British, who might perhaps have seen through the American bargaining strategy, essentially sided with the United States.

### Basis of Calculations

The figures produced by the United States and Japanese sides are exceedingly confusing. Indeed the old adage that "there are lies, damn lies and statistics" is amply borne out in the debate between the two teams of experts. One reporter, utterly confused by the 'experts' came up with the following formula for 'existing strength':

Divide the number of American submarines by the number of British dreadnoughts, and subtract the number of Japanese cruisers. To this result add the cube root of the sum of the coastlines of America, Japan and Great Britain. Multiply by the maximum distance between the coast of America and the coast of Japan. Add the average rate of exchange between pounds and dollars; divide by the sum of the national wealth of Japan, Great Britain and the United States and place the decimal point four figures from the right.<62>

The Japanese members had other matters than 'existing strength' which they wished to address. For example, there was the matter of pre-dreadnoughts. The Americans insisted that pre-dreadnoughts were excluded but Japanese calculations included that class of ship. According to the US advisors:

...it is the conviction of the American advisors that no contradictions exist. In no place in the United States original proposal is it stated that pre-dreadnoughts were used in determining existing naval strength. The American advisors feel that naval strength should not be measured by the inclusion of pre-dreadnought tonnage.<63>

But was this really the case? The Japanese had studied

the Hughes proposal most carefully and it did refer to pre-dreadnoughts and it most specifically did not exclude them! Hughes had proposed that Japan and Britain scrap all their pre-dreadnoughts and these were included in the total tonnage scrapped. In the case of the United States the term 'dreadnought' had been omitted but was, presumably, included in the phrase "all the older battleships up to, but not including, the Delaware and the North Dakota."<64>

However the Americans then offered statistics which included pre-dreadnoughts and arrived at the following:

1. Including pre-dreadnoughts and since the Japanese had apparently included the Fuji and the Shikishima, both over twenty years old the Americans included all their own over twenty years. This added 68,745 to their tonnage. Resulting basis if tonnage based on United States estimate of United States strength and Japanese estimate of Japanese strength was USA 1,143,509 (100) Japan 632,536 (55).

2. Including all Japanese dreadnoughts and excluding their own over twenty years of age gave USA 1,074,764 (100): Japan 632,536 (59)

3. Then the United States calculated according to the Japanese proposal which allotted 1/3 to pre-dreadnoughts, 2/3 to dreadnoughts and 1/2 to ships building,. This gave the USA 727,437 (100) and Japan 440,730 (60.5)

Figures in 3 above include the Mutsu as a completed ship.<65>

The Japanese, in their final dissenting opinion, calculated according to ships built and provided the following figures:

1. pre-dreadnought/dreadnought/super-dreadnought  
USA (100%) Japan (76%)

2. dreadnought and super-dreadnought  
USA (100%) Japan (67%)

3. super-dreadnoughts only  
USA (100%) Japan (86%)



Japan also produced calculations for Japan based on American-style calculations and stated on 1 (69%/68%\*), 2 (67%) and 3 (86%)

\*If ships over twenty years of age are excluded which was emphasised in the Hughes proposal then in 1 above 69% becomes 68%.<66>

In all the above calculations the American figures for Japan never come close to 70%. Nevertheless, the Americans were still including ships under construction in all their figures above. The lowest figure given by the Japanese experts was 67% for Japan. The United States could only allocate Japan figures above 60% by distorting the figures and including the Mutsu. There were also problems regarding the British figures. Hughes had stated in his proposal:

...their navies, with respect to capital ships, within three months after the making of the agreement shall consist of certain ships designated in the proposal and numbering for the United States 18, for Great Britain 22, for Japan 10. The tonnage of these ships will be as follows, of the United States 500,650; of Great Britain, 604,450; of Japan 299,700.<67>

The Japanese saw this as a ratio of 60:50:30 for Great Britain, United States and Japan respectively and the American documents provide the following explanation:

If we [USA] have given a ratio of 60, 50 and 30 by tonnage in the three navies why in replacement change to 50, 50 and 30. Answer - The war conditions caused Great Britain to suspend her building programme. In consequence her ships are relatively older in type than those of the United States and Japan. This fact was considered in allotting her 604,000 tons for the present, but the standard allotted on replacement was 500,000 tons.<68>

Plausible as this answer may be it is unsatisfactory on a number of grounds. First, having excluded ships over twenty years, the United States now wished to introduce a sliding

scale for vessels under twenty years of age on the British side only. Secondly, Britain, which had already suspended the Hoods (which were therefore not ships under construction) was now being allowed to count these as well as receiving an allowance for not having modern ships.

Katō's team then went on to query the American calculations regarding United States Navy vessels. Since the advisors figures did not agree with those of Hughes' this is hardly surprising. The Japanese were obviously familiar with the American Navy's Bureau of Construction and Repairs tonnage figures (the normal basis for official figures). The Americans however, countered that their figures were corrected to an agreed set of figures provided by the Bureau of Construction and Repairs, Steam Engineering and Ordnance. They then added that different methods of estimating tonnage had been carefully gone over as well.

Arguments about actual figures could easily have continued ad infinitum. The inconsistencies were clearly more marked on the American than on the Japanese side when it came to calculating Japanese, British and American tonnage. However the real issue, which could not be solved by recourse to any mutually agreeable basis for calculations, was the definition of 'existing strength'. This was the major impediment to any agreement at this level. Indeed reconciliation of American and Japanese definitions and calculations on this was impossible. It should be noted that Katō and his team, were not, at this time, arguing about national needs, nor for that matter on 70% as a strategic concept based on those 'national needs'. They



were arguing about a definition of 'existing strength' and, according to their definition of 'existing strength' Japan was entitled to very close to 70% and, in the case of super-dreadnought alone, 86%. There is no mention in the documents of Kato, at this time, taking a narrow, strategic-military viewpoint based on a theoretical 70%.

In the end the issue was taken out of the hands of the advisors on the Three Nation Naval Experts Committee and the Sub-Committee of Naval Experts and returned to the principal delegates for a political decision. The most significant point to emerge from an examination of these deliberations, is that it calls into question certain assumptions and conclusions regarding Katō Kanji's own position, especially in the negotiations. It is undoubtedly the case that many commentators on Katō's later political actions have based their conclusions, in part, on a negative and in some ways inaccurate view of his behaviour at Washington. The above account of events provides a firmer basis for interpretations of his behaviour during the London Treaty Crisis in 1930 and beyond.

Certain writers claim that Katō argued consistently and dogmatically for a 70% ratio for Japan based on strategic and military imperatives. This would appear somewhat inaccurate when discussing Katō's negotiating strategy at Washington. It is clear from the details given above, that he did not argue the strategic case for 70% in discussions with American naval experts. In the technical committees he argued that Japan was entitled to 70% or thereabouts on the basis of 'existing strength'. He did not pursue the

criterion of 'national need' in the sub-committees and simply argued that the American definition of 'existing strength' which included 'ships building' was not acceptable to the Japanese. In any case 'national need' as the basis for ratio decisions was a policy matter and therefore outside the jurisdiction of the naval technical experts. Kato, as far as can be discerned from the documentary evidence, did not attempt to enter this area of policy decisionmaking and discussed only technical aspects. As to whether the definition of 'existing strength' was a political or technical matter, that is rather more problematical. No policy decision had been taken explicitly by the delegates on the concept of 'existing strength' at this time. The available records indicate that Kato Kanji argued the Japanese case forcibly and at great length on technical grounds. He consistently maintained that ships under construction were not capable of doing battle at sea and therefore were not 'existing strength' though they might be regarded as 'potential strength'. Kato's team also questioned many of the American assumptions and there were numerous inconsistencies in the American naval presentations. Therefore, the numerous questions raised by Kato and his colleagues were probably based on genuine confusion rather than obstructionism. The 'stop now' formula presented by the Americans and the definition of 'existing strength' were the result of political decisions made by Charles Evans Hughes. This was policy made, not by the navy, but by the Secretary of State and the United States Navy's presentations were often at variance with

Hughes's own figures. This was in part due to the fact that Hughes had based his original presentation on secret discussions and the American Navy's General Board was not a party to those discussions. There seems little doubt that the American definition of 'existing strength', whether by accident or design, by a skillful focus on one's own strengths or a genuine belief in such a definition, favoured the United States far more than either Japan or Great Britain.

Katō and his team battled hard to convey the Japanese viewpoint, but it became increasingly clear that no solution to the Japanese-American deadlock would be forthcoming at the technical advisor level. Roosevelt noted in his diary that:

The upshot of the matter is that I believe, in the very near future Hughes should fire both barrels and take the matter out of the hands of the naval experts. They still maintain that ships in course of construction should not be considered as part of naval strength. If I can get them to limit themselves to this as their final and only objection, it will be possible for the whole matter to be referred back again to the delegates.<69>

On 30 November, the Sub-Committee of Naval Experts held their final meeting and the debate was transferred to the delegate level for solution. The 'Big Three', Hughes, Balfour and Katō Tomosaburō then began to negotiate a political compromise.

The problem as to what was a 'policy' as opposed to a 'technical' matter was to continue to plague the Committee on Arms Limitation. The Sub-Committee of Naval Experts had been created by the main Committee to consider technical questions arising from policy proposals. This had proved to



be ineffective in the case of the technical debate between Japan and America and had been referred back to the principal delegates. However there still remained the problem of further technical discussions and there were a considerable number of these. It was decided on 15 December that policy and technical matters were so interwoven that a new committee, actually a sub-committee, would have to be formed. This was the (Sub)-Committee of Fifteen on Naval Limitation. It was a mixed committee of Delegates and Technical Experts (one Delegate and one Adviser for each of the Five Powers). It too was beset with problems. Hughes later proposed that since most of the 'technical matters' could readily be discussed by Delegates they should be discussed by the Committee on Limitation of Armament itself. In order to make this more effective the Delegates were permitted to bring their expert advisors. Katō attended all of these as the principal technical adviser to the Japanese Delegation and attended many other committees. On the subject of policy versus technical matters, as it applied to the Sub-Committee of Naval Experts at least, Admiral Pratt, one of the US naval experts made an illuminating comment. Speaking off the record he told Katō and his colleagues:

Fundamentally the Hughes plan was prepared by politicians not by military specialists and therefore it cannot be resolved by expert discussion. It can only be decided by Plenipotentiaries. From the American naval specialist viewpoint we do not consider Japan's possession of a 70% ratio vis-a-vis the USA as a threat. But regarding Japan's naval policy the allocation of 70% is considered a danger by the American public. Since it was a political problem there was no method of solution at all open to the naval delegates.<70>

Many accounts of the conference allocate blame to the

experts and especially to the intransigence of Katō Kanji and the Japanese side for the deadlock. Pratt's comments indicate how aware these 'narrow' specialists were of the impossible task they had been given. The final decisions on ratios, fortifications and the retention of the Mutsu, were made in private between the three plenipotentiaries. However Katō Kanji had by then become a somewhat controversial figure. Indeed a certain amount of confusion was a result of the Katō Kanji's name. The press frequently attributed statements to the wrong Katō since Katō Kanji, while not a full admiral, could correctly be referred to as Admiral Katō. Some of the press began to refer to Admiral Katō Tomosaburō as 'the real Kato'. The British delegation had apparently resolved the problem differently by referring to Katō Kanji as 'Katō minor'.<71>

The so-called Tokugawa Incident occurred during the last days of the Sub-Committee of Naval Experts and focussed directly on Japan's position regarding the 70% ratio.

#### The Tokugawa Incident

On 28 November, Katō Kanji made the following public statement:

Owing to her geographical situation and her peculiar national conditions, the imperative need for a navy is recognised by Japan in no less degree than by any other country; but Japan has resolved not to possess armaments in excess of the minimum strength for the bare necessity of ensuring her national security. Japan is unable to accept the ratio of 60% because she considers it impossible to provide for her security and defence with any force less than 70%.

She desires to have the proposed ratio modified so that the relative strength of the three navies is 10:10:7.<72>



Such a public statement by Katō while the Sub-Committee of Naval Experts was still in session was possibly somewhat improper. However, since he made no mention of the negotiations nor the committee, it was perhaps not incorrect by a strict interpretation of the letter as opposed to the spirit of the 'guidelines' for sub-committee members. It is also worth noting that this statement refers directly to the principle of 'national need' and mentions a required strategic ratio of 70%. One can only speculate as to why Katō should have made such a statement at this particular time. He may simply have wished to state the naval specialists or his own personal opinion, or have been so frustrated with the deadlock in committee that he wished to make the issue more public. Alternatively, either as part of Baron Katō's strategy or indeed his own, he may have been stating the issue publicly to aid the Japanese side in further negotiations. It is possible that the statement was intended for a Japanese audience rather than for westerners. At such a crucial stage in discussions, it seems unlikely that the statement was made without Katō Tomosaburō's knowledge or permission, unless it was the result of a reporter catching Katō Kanji in an unguarded moment.

The Japanese press picked up the Katō Kanji statement but reported it in a rather low key fashion. The Chugai Shogyo newspaper reported:

Vice Admiral Katō, our assistant delegate, made a minute enquiry regarding the apportionment of naval power among the principal powers as was defined by the American plan and explained the reasonableness of our plans based on six different

plans. These plans were evolved with a view to effecting a rational and fair balance of naval power among the Powers concerned and it is inevitable for Japan to insist on the adoption of one of these plans if she wishes to place her national defences on a solid basis.<73>

The New York Times reported in rather more dramatic terms:

The armament conference is approaching its first great decision. It was announced tonight by Admiral Katō, Chief Naval Expert, that Japan sought a 70% ratio. At the same time it was announced that the American delegation stood firmly on Secretary Hughes' 5:5:3 ratio which means a 60% ratio for Japan. Vice Admiral Katō said that the 70% ratio was the minimum necessary for Japanese security.... Tomorrow navy experts hold their first meeting in nearly a week. Indications that actions by the committee's experts to sustain the American estimate of naval facts and figures was expected. Whether the Japanese experts will submit minority views in this case has not been disclosed.<74>

The press in Washington, eager to add substance to the rumours that the technical naval sub-committee were deadlocked, were presented with a much more sensational development by the entrance into the debate of Japan's Chief Plenipotentiary, Prince Tokugawa Iesato. Katō Kanji may have expected a certain response from the Americans to his 'demand' for 70% but he must have been quite taken aback to find himself in the midst of controversy involving the senior member of his own delegation, Prince Tokugawa. On 1 December, the Washington Post carried the following statement:

The attitude of Japan's principal delegate [sic] differs from that voiced by Prince Tokugawa who expressed the positive opinion that the Katō Kanji interview merely represented the personal views of Japan's naval experts.<75>

The Japan Advertiser also carried the story commenting that:

"Katō Kanji's expression of personal opinion"

Prince Tokugawa said. He would not say whether the decision to press for 70% which the Vice Admiral urged had been reached. He declared that Vice Admiral Katō's statement was not the result of Japan's delegation conferences.<76>

One noted authority on the Washington Conference, Sadao Asada, wrote of the incident as follows:

Violent quarrel between Vice Admiral Kanji Katō and Prince Tokugawa became an open secret. The naval adviser lost his 'face' when the Prince told the Press that the Vice Admiral's views, far from reflecting those of the delegation, were merely opinions held by a technical adviser.<77>

The press now sought out Katō Tomosaburō for his comments. When asked whether the Japanese delegation had given permission for the Katō Kanji interview the Navy Minister replied "I cannot criticise what other people have said". He was then asked if he, like Prince Tokugawa, felt that Vice Admiral Katō was merely pressing his own personal views. Katō Tomosaburō responded:

I would like to be excused from answering because if I say anything it would be interpreted as my own opinion and I am not yet ready to present my own opinion.<78>

The Washington Post took this rather evasive statement to be more supportive of Katō Kanji than of his distinguished superior, Prince Tokugawa. The Asahi Shinbun newspaper, on 2 December also published an article in support of Kato Kanji.

An anonymous admiral is quoted in the Asahi as saying that Prince Tokugawa's declaration that the 70% ratio represented the personal views of Vice Admiral Katō is very peculiar because Katō's claim was the result of instructions from his government.<79>

On 4 December even Japan's Prime Minister became involved, Premier Takahashi said:

If Prince Tokugawa and Katō Kanji disagreed it



was because of the difference in their viewpoints. It is clear that Vice Admiral Katō maintained Japan must be allowed 70% from a strategic viewpoint while it is equally clear that Prince Tokugawa based his opinion on a political consideration of the matter. I should explain Prince Tokugawa's statement as one prompted by the desire to remove any misunderstandings which might have arisen by the insistence of the 70% ratio by Vice Admiral Katō.<80>

The Osaka Mainichi newspaper criticised the delegation in general:

We regret that our delegates have taken awkward and clumsy tactics in presenting our counterproposals for modifications of the Hughes plan.<81>

Prince Tokugawa's statement may well have been intended as a rebuke of Katō Kanji or a genuine effort to smooth things over but The Times carried a report saying:

Denial was made tonight by Prince Tokugawa, one of Japan's conference delegates, that he repudiated or disapproved of Vice Admiral Kanji Katō Chief Naval Aide to the Japanese delegation to the effect that Japan required a 70% ratio in capital ship tonnage to safeguard that nation's security.<82>

In fact, far from 'losing face' to the Prince, Katō had angrily reprimanded his superior for his remarks to the Press, who "shrank back when Katō spoke to him."<83> The Press in Japan were very aware of the dangers presented by such a schism in the delegation:

The American Press is attempting to exploit what is considered Prince Tokugawa's rebuke of Vice Admiral Katō Kanji on the subject of naval ratios as indicating a divergence of opinion within the Japanese delegation. Washington official circles feel natural divergence of civilian and military views also to be seen in other delegations.<84>

Roger Dingman has also explained that the Navy Ministry were quick to explain the rifts as a natural conflict between experts and generalists. However, he felt it

possibly connected with negotiating tactics. Dingman pointed out that:

news of such differences worried official Tokyo.... But, coupled with Katō Tomosaburō's silence, Japanese differences raised doubts in Washington. Was Tokyo toying with negotiating tactics or did something larger loom behind Japanese objections?<85>

The Miyako Shinbun newspaper declared:

Prince Tokugawa declared that the claim for a 70% ratio is nothing but the private opinion of our naval expert. On the other hand, Admiral Baron Katō has proposed the retention of the ratio formally at the conference. We feel queer at the declaration made by Prince Tokugawa. Perhaps this may be a result of the tactics adopted by our delegation that, while our naval advisers stick to the ratio, our delegates do not necessarily remain obdurate with reference thereto.<86>

'Washington' may well have wondered at the tactics of 'Tokyo' but the real decisionmakers in Washington, led by Charles Evans Hughes, were less concerned about Tokyo's intentions. Japanese diplomatic codes had already been broken by American cryptographers and communications between Tokyo and the Japanese delegation were being made available to American decisionmakers. What Hughes did not and could not know, was whether Katō Kanji's statement was part of a tactical plan developed within the Japanese delegation in Washington independently of the Tokyo authorities. The Miyako theory has a certain plausibility but it also raises a further issue. What was Katō Tomosaburō's position at this time? Was he on the side of the civilians or the naval experts in the delegation. Katō Tomosaburō is normally portrayed as standing against the navy in discussions at Washington and adopting the role of statesman rather than professional naval officer. Ito Masanori, a



journalist with excellent naval connections, was in no doubt. As late as 13 December he was writing:

Japan is not presenting a united front in the controversy over ratios and Admiral Baron Katō and the naval experts are insisting on 70% while the diplomatic element of the delegation and the majority of the newspapermen here are openly or secretly in opposition to this stand, insisting on the acceptance of the 60% ratio.<87>

Katō Tomosaburō's evasiveness when asked by the Press to comment on the 'Tokugawa Incident' may, far from being a part of a grand strategy, have been merely a way out of his embarrassment either with Prince Tokugawa or Katō Kanji or even with both. The Times report does however seem to imply some sort of retreat on the part of the Prince and this may hold the key to the problem. Prince Tokugawa has always been regarded, in the Western and Japanese literature, as a mere figurehead at the conference. It was said that "as an amateur diplomat, Tokugawa was pathetically ineffectual".<88> Having "neither knowledge nor interest in naval limitation" he probably was not involved in any of the important discussions.<89> It is interesting to note that despite their 'violent quarrel' Katō was, according to his diary, immediately invited to dinner by the Prince, on the latter's return to Tokyo!

The above dispute throws considerable light on the problems faced by Japan's negotiating team at Washington and the problems which a persistent press could generate whilst negotiations were in progress. The related problem which this incident raises is the position of Katō Tomosaburō and, in particular his 'dispute' with Katō Kanji. The relationship between the 'Two Katōs' has been widely covered

in the literature and poses a number of problems for interpreting the relationship between these two men at the conference.<90>

### The Two Katōs

Existing writing on the Washington Conference contains numerous references to the differences of perspective between Katō Tomosaburō and Katō Kanji. These differences and the reasons underlying them led some contemporary commentators and certain later scholars to speculate on the nature of the 'rift' between Plenipotentiary Katō and Vice Admiral Katō Kanji.<91> Here I propose to examine the scope and extent of the differences between the two Katōs. In order to do this, one first needs to clarify the elder Katō's position prior to and during the conference.

Since taking over as Navy Minister in 1914 after the 'Siemens Scandals', Katō Tomosaburō had worked assiduously at restoring the credibility and budgetary influence of the navy. He had succeeded in his efforts to increase naval budgetary allocations for the expansion of the navy and had successfully piloted the 8-4, 8-6 and 8-8 Fleet plans through the Diet. This alone would have guaranteed him his place amongst the 'founding fathers' of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Yet it would be wrong to label him simply as a naval expansionist. As far back as 15 October 1918, he had sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister Hara Kei, outlining fiscal requirements for the navy which would enable completion of the 8-8 Fleet but at the same time proposing the immediate suspension of building on two cruisers and the postponement

of two scheduled for the following year.<92> A shrewd politician and a realist Katō was aware of the increasingly difficult financial position that Japan was finding herself in after the Great War. One can see, in his activities, his metamorphosis from an advocate of gradual expansionist to a cautious advocate of arms reduction and limitation. Since arms limitation as well as certain aspects of disarmament can be seen as weapons in power politics, where a freeze or slowdown may suit a particular country at one time, the shift in Katō's attitude can be seen as relatively slight. Katō was fully aware that Japan's real competitor in a naval arms race was the United States. He was only too aware that Japan needed funds to keep pace with United States construction programmes and, ironically, the only postwar power capable of providing Japan with loans was the United States.

Until 1919 Hara Kei and Katō Tomosaburō appeared to believe that continued naval expansion, whilst expensive, was not impossible. But, by early 1919 Katō was paring 100 million yen from the naval budget, 'mothballing' one fleet and part of another, and withdrawing from bases in Asia and in the Pacific (or proposing to in the latter case). This caused considerable concern and an outcry, not only from navy officers but from the army as well. Inter-service dissension was especially marked over proposed naval withdrawals from Siberia.<93>

On 28 March 1920, in an interview with the Associated Press Katō was reported as follows:

The Minister also emphasised that Japan's project of having eight battleships and eight



cruisers not eight years old was not the irreducible minimum.<94>

Katō went on to describe the historical development and background to the 8-8 Fleet concept and stated that Japan was already a party to the League of Nation's efforts on arms reduction and would be happy to participate in an international armament reduction conference. He then said:

I don't believe our relatively inferior navy should lead in reduction or curtailment of our established plan. But, if a dependable international agreement comes into being whereby all naval powers agree to restrict their naval forces I would be only too glad to do this to a reasonable extent, if a reasonable formula can be found. Therefore in certain cases I don't insist on completion of the so-called eight-eight program.<95>

These comments reflect the findings of the naval research committees as much as they do Katō's own particular predilections. The naval research teams had stated that, in certain circumstances it would be possible, and even advantageous, to agree to a curtailment of the 8-8 Fleet. Katō Tomosaburō, however said nothing publicly about the 70% ratio although he did state it was necessary to have such a ratio in the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs.<96> The final instructions to the delegates did not explicitly state that 70% was the absolute minimum but the case for this ratio however was clearly implicit in the phrasing of certain instructions. Moreover, Katō had explicitly instructed Katō Kanji to take the research committee findings as his guide and these stated that 70% of the American Fleet was the absolute minimum ratio.

Katō Tomosaburō's position prior to arriving at Washington might best be described as conditional approval

of curtailment of the 8-8 Fleet under the right circumstances, but no public declaration on the 70% ratio.

During his passage to the United States aboard the Kashima Maru, Plenipotentiary Katō stated that Japan wished to maintain a fleet sufficient to cope with any force another power could send to far eastern waters. He also indicated that he was not prepared to advocate the dismantling of American fortifications in the Pacific. However he did warn against either America or Great Britain enlarging their bases in the Pacific saying that Japan would have no other choice but to respond appropriately to such a move. Then, rather prophetically, Plenipotentiary Katō said:

Japan believes that the strength of the bases in the Pacific is a question directly linked with the problem of naval curtailment. Therefore, it is probable that efforts will be made to settle the two matters simultaneously.<97>

Immediately prior to the 'Hughes Statement' at the opening of the conference, Plenipotentiary Katō had found it necessary to issue a denial regarding a story carried in the Tribune that Japan was continuing with her 8-8 Fleet.<98>

On 15 November, at the second plenary session, Katō responded to the Hughes proposal in the following way:

Gladly accepting, therefore, the proposal in principle, Japan is ready to proceed with determination to a sweeping reduction in her naval armament. It will be universally admitted that a nation must be provided with such armaments as are essential to its security. This requirement must be fully weighed in the examination of the plan. With this requirement in view, a few modifications will be proposed with regard to the tonnage basis for the replacement of the various classes of vessels.<99>

Katō Tomosaburō was criticised for this statement. It



appeared to some as reneging on his previous 'acceptance' of the Hughes proposal. But that 'acceptance' as stated previously, was a careful and qualified reply. Roosevelt and other more perceptive observers were aware of this but the Press appeared to misinterpret it.

What is interesting is that Katō referred to 'national needs' (a criterion specifically excluded from consideration in the Hughes proposal), that the tonnage allocation be raised in Japan's favour and that any alterations be applied to replacement tonnage. Since the latter was not to take place for ten years then Katō assumed that the new ratio of 5:5:3 would be applied ten years hence, not immediately after the Conference. On 17 November Katō Tomosaburō apparently told the Japanese press, in Japanese, that 70% was absolutely essential in the eyes of the Japanese naval experts. But, a few hours later he told the western press, rather more cautiously, that Japan ought to have 'slightly greater' than 60%. On 19 November Katō met Balfour and Hughes and informed them that Japan was agreeable to the scrapping of old ships and ceasing construction of almost all new ships but that the ratio allocated to Japan required modifications. He then explained why Japan had to have 70% and stated that such a ratio had not been hastily drawn up in Washington but was based on lengthy studies by the Japanese Navy. Moreover he added the 70% ratio was in accordance with the government's statements in the Diet and also represented the wishes of the Japanese people. Plenipotentiary Katō had of course, previously instructed Katō Kanji to press for 70% in the Sub-Committee of Naval

Experts. As a result of the naval experts failing to reach agreement the issue was now passed directly to the Plenipotentiary level and a meeting was arranged between Hughes, Balfour and Katō Tomosaburō.

Plenipotentiary Katō contacted the Japanese authorities in Tokyo on 23 November and proposed the following options and requested instructions:

1. To stick to our proposal [10:7]
2. To make the ratio at about 10 to around 6.5 and include the Mutsu.
3. To make the ratio 10:6 and include the Mutsu.
4. To agree to the American proposal as it is.<101>

He had prefaced the telegram with a request that, because of difficulties in communication etc, he might not have sufficient time to contact Tokyo repeatedly for further instructions. Therefore he wished to be allowed to proceed as follows:

We would make our utmost efforts to carry through the undermentioned plan 1, but would seek settlement, if obliged to by plans 2 or 3, depending on the situation and agree on plan 4 only as a last recourse.<102>

Katō made it very clear in this communication that, if the Conference failed, Japan would:

...bear the sole responsibility if we should clash with the United States on the question of naval armament limitation and lead the conference to failure.<103>

The government in Tokyo, having received this plea to avert a clash, consulted the Advisory Council on Foreign Relations and sent a reply to the effect that such a clash was indeed to be avoided and:

If there is no alternative you will strive to settle at the ratio of 10 to 6.5 (Your plan 2). If, despite your excellency's efforts, further



concessions become inevitable, in view of the overall situation and general interests, you will strive to have ample room where we can make clear that we have agreed to the ratio of 10:6 only on a firm understanding of reducing Pacific defences or at least leaving them as they are now. Thus weakening the concentrated activities in the Pacific and maintaining the present equilibrium. We would like you to do your utmost not to agree to the United States proposal as it stands (your plan 4).<104>

Despite the fact that Plenipotentiary Katō argued fiercely and stubbornly for the retention of the Mutsu, which he claimed was a completed ship, it was not mentioned in this communication. Katō made no mention of the fortifications issue in his 'proposals' to the Japanese government but the authorities in Tokyo were very clear on the need for an agreement in this area. The initiative for giving up the 70% ratio is to be found in the government reply since it made no mention of plan 1 (10:7).

Armed with these guidelines from the Government, Katō now began a series of discussions first with Balfour alone and then with Hughes and Balfour together. On 2 December Katō's explanation to Hughes was recorded as follows:

Baron Katō stated he definitely associated himself in the views of his technical experts. The ratio of 10 to 7, which the Japanese had supported had as a matter of fact been worked out some time ago in Tokyo. Moreover these views were supported by the Japanese government and Parliament. On the present occasion however he had no desire to argue the question on technical issues, as such a controversy was likely to lead to no result. He would only say that he himself believed that Japan was entitled to a ratio of 70% in capital ships.<105>

Balfour, unfortunately for Japan, had supported 10:6 in this discussion thus undermining the Japanese position. The Japanese government, on 10 December despatched instructions on their opinions as to the form a defence agreement and

Four Power Entente agreement should take and pressed for the retention of the Mutsu at the expense of another ship, the Settsu. Baron Katō then met Hughes and Balfour again on 12 December and explained the Japanese position with regard to 70%, Pacific fortifications and the Mutsu. On the 70% ratio he said:

The Japanese government considered the 10 to 7 ratio necessary to Japan's security. He himself considered the calculations of the Japanese experts were perfectly reasonable and he really regretted that they had been unable to obtain the agreement of their American and British colleagues on it.... He was ready to consent to the ratio of 10:10:6 on condition that he obtained a definite understanding in regard to the status quo on fortifications and naval bases in the Pacific.<106>

Baron Katō then argued most forcefully for the retention of the Mutsu and steadfastly refused to accept Hughes' repeated assertions that she was an uncompleted ship. Katō claimed she was fully crewed and had steamed hundreds of miles. The Mutsu had not, in fact, officially joined the fleet but this was simply an administrative matter. December was traditionally the month for commencement of new programmes, promotions and ships joining the fleet. Katō did concede that the retention of the Mutsu would necessitate an alteration in the ratio to 5:5:3.1 for America, Great Britain and Japan respectively. Responding to a comment by Balfour on the 10:10:6 (5:5:3) ratio, Katō replied that "this ratio he understood was to apply at the end of ten years". He went on to say that the present ratio was actually 6:5:3 for Great Britain, America and Japan. Kato therefore wished to know why the Americans had decided to change the British ratio to five when her existing



strength was six. Hughes interjected at this point that British ships were older and America had made allowances for this. Katō continued to refuse to concede over the Mutsu even though it now became apparent that retaining that ship would almost certainly compel America and Great Britain to recommence building cruisers. This was deemed necessary to preserve the ratio of 5:5:3. The American side continued to claim that the Mutsu was an unfinished ship despite considerable evidence to the contrary. Hughes then decided that if Japan retained the Mutsu he would discard the 'stop now' formula. Thus, the American side were so determined to preserve the ratio that they were prepared to discard what was for many the most important element of all, namely the 'stop now' proposal. Moreover, America now literally forced an unwilling Britain to recommence a building programme it could ill afford.

In the end, Plenipotentiary Katō was able to obtain an agreement on preservation of the status quo on Pacific fortifications and retention of the Mutsu provided he accepted a 5:5:3 ratio in capital ships and some further building by America and Great Britain.

Asada Sadao in particular has devoted considerable attention to the relationship between the two Katōs at Washington. He has implied that there was a major split between these two men. Asada's case relies heavily on the assumptions that Katō Kanji opposed his superior on the 70% ratio issue and that the elder Katō based his understanding of arms limitation on political, rather than narrow professional and strategic grounds. Finally, Asada implies



that Katō Tomosaburō, almost singlehandedly, succeeded in obtaining an agreement favourable to Japan despite the "machinations" of subordinates such as Katō Kanji.<107>

The available evidence however does not sustain these contentions. Great care is needed in reading sources such as biographical studies of Katō Tomosaburō and of Shidehara Kijūrō as well as autobiographical writings by the latter.<108> These biographies and memoirs tend to exaggerate and rationalise the roles and acts of these men. Moreover, there is also a tendency for contemporaries such as Shidehara, as well as later writers, to interpret Katō Kanji's behaviour at Washington in the light of his later political actions during the London Naval Treaty Crisis of 1930.

It has already been demonstrated that Katō Kanji did believe that Japan was entitled to at least a 70% ratio as a sovereign state entitled to define her own 'national need'. But he did not pursue this case in committees as Asada Sadao has repeatedly asserted. Katō Kanji argued in committee that Japan was entitled to a 70% ratio vis-a-vis the United States based on Japanese interpretations of 'existing strength'. Moreover he pursued 70% in the sub-committees on Plenipotentiary Katō's instructions, not in opposition to his superior's wishes. Katō Tomosaburō made it clear on a number of occasions to both Balfour and Hughes that he fully supported Katō Kanji's advocacy of 70%.

During the conference Plenipotentiary Katō did appear willing to sacrifice some of the main elements in the Japanese Navy's pre-conference strategy. He was prepared to

forego completion of the 8-8 Fleet, the 70% ratio and America as the potential enemy. Whether he made such decisions based on his personal views or on the basis of a wider perspective of national defence is difficult to assess. However one should also bear in mind that naval views in general, as reflected in the pre-conference naval research were rather more moderate than has hitherto been supposed and therefore Katō Tomosaburō may have simply reflected such views. Plenipotentiary Katō was a politically ambitious man and this may well have made him pliant in negotiations with the political authorities in Tokyo. Nevertheless, many of his statements do provide evidence of a statesmanlike approach to the impasse in Washington. These statements may have been the post-facto rationalisations of someone taking responsibility (and credit) but with no real power of ultimate decision. The telegrams to and from Tokyo indicate that the home authorities occupied a major and continuing role in the decisions. Baron Katō also continually reminded Balfour and Hughes in negotiations that he needed to consult his government although this may have also been a delaying tactic in negotiations.

Katō Kanji was well aware that his superior had to adopt a wider viewpoint than the naval experts even though he was Navy Minister and said so before, during and after the conference with no apparent malice. The younger man however, one is continually told, held out for 70% based on a "strategic imperative". In other words he viewed national security in very narrow, military-strategic terms. The



existing evidence shows that in fact he based his arguments at Washington concerning the 70% ratio on the basis of Japanese calculations of 'existing strength'. Katō's advocacy of 70% was also based on his consistent view of the arms limitation process. Katō saw arms limitation as a form of power politics. He believed that Japan, as a sovereign power, was entitled to equality "in principle". For Katō Kanji the 70% ratio was a symbol of both Japan's defensive posture, and a major concession. As to his narrow view of national security there again is no real evidence for this at this time. On the contrary he publicly stated his approval of Kato Tomosaburo's thinking at Washington. In a lecture at the Naval War College on his return Katō said:

Chief Plenipotentiary Katō Tomosaburō believed that we ought to possess complete facilities for total mobilisation for national defence. At the same time as planning for the consolidation of armament he wished to advance the actual power of the state. Furthermore he wished to improve international relations, prevent Japan from being isolated and without allies, and minimise the chances of war. These are things which he [Baron Katō] truly believed were necessary to complete national defence. From this viewpoint he argued patiently and respectfully with Balfour and Hughes and provided inner guidance to us in Washington and at home. Moreover he was able to continue negotiations with the government in Tokyo. In the final analysis he was able to prevent the conference from breaking up and we were able to achieve our objectives. However the hardships and suffering he underwent were truly awful.<109>

Such a detailed and sympathetic opinion seems somewhat at odds with the predominant belief in a major rift between the two men.

Most comments on Katō Kanji's views on arms limitation are consistent in that they portray Katō as a strong opponent of the naval compromise reached at Washington. It

has been said that:

His attitude to the treaty was hostile and he was to draw up a detailed memorandum attacking the whole idea of naval limitation as 'irrational' and showing that any formula of limitation based on naval ratios would not suit Japan's interests.<110>

Katō was and remained hostile to the London Naval Treaty of 1930 and he increasingly placed the blame for Japan's naval unpreparedness on the Washington Treaty agreement on capital ships in 1921/22. However he cannot be said to have been hostile in the immediate aftermath of the Washington Conference. He was, it is true, dissatisfied with many aspects of the treaty, especially the ratios but he also publicly praised the conference as a great achievement. Moreover, Katō was not an opponent of arms limitation and stated this publicly and privately on numerous occasions. He did change his mind about the benefits of the Washington Conference, especially after 1930, but he maintained a consistent stand on arms limitation. Katō approved of arms limitation and arms reduction provided that it was carried out in a fair manner. He did object strongly however to the allocation of a ratio which was inferior and possibly permanent. He believed that a sovereign nation was inherently entitled to parity and that all nations ought to decide their own needs. Thus he felt Japan should have, in principle at least, a ratio of 10:10 with other Powers. He did not say that Japan must actually possess 10:10 since he knew this to be economically impossible and strategically unnecessary for minimum defence.

The detailed memorandum from which the quote above was taken was not "attacking the whole idea of naval limitation



as irrational". It stated that "the whole basis of the Washington Conference agreements was irrational".<111> Auxiliary vessels and land armaments were not included. The 'existing strength' propounded by the Americans was clearly not 'rational' to Katō and his technical staff. Katō did not accept that the need to solve economic problems was a rational basis for convening an international conference on naval limitation. Katō of course believed that arms limitation was merely treating the symptom (arms racing) of international tension rather than the cause (international misunderstandings). It is accurate to say Katō was and remained only a lukewarm supporter of arms limitation and reduction. What he opposed vehemently and consistently was the ratio system proposed by the United States. He saw the imposition of 'inferior ratios' as a means of permanently relegating another power to an inferior position on the basis of some transient superiority. Navies in any case were important for prestige as well as conflict and an inferior ratio effectively meant, for Katō and many others, second rank status. Katō did concede that the great naval powers, America and Great Britain, could set upper limits to naval power. This one power standard would be acceptable to Japan and she would promise not to exceed it.

There is no doubt that during the conference Katō Kanji was, at various times, extremely upset. He was incensed with the attitude of American negotiators, civilian and military and totally frustrated by their almost total failure to understand the Japanese position or accept carefully researched proposals from the Japanese naval

experts. Plenipotentiary Katō was reported as saying:

Katō [Kanji] is really indignant. Those staying with him thought he would die in a fit of resentment and I told them to watch over him.<112>

Thus it is not surprising that rumours circulated in Washington and Tokyo that the younger Katō was contemplating suicide.<113> Katō's indignation was, no doubt, sometimes directed at his superior Baron Katō or, at the very least, voiced in the latter's presence. However, it was primarily directed at the Americans and to some extent the British especially Balfour. The elder Katō, already ill from his tremendous exertions at this complex and long drawn out conference, told Plenipotentiary Shidehara:

He [Katō Kanji] is also my subordinate in the navy and does not have any special ambitions. But he is enthusiastic for the sake of the navy. So last night, although I was not well I heard him out without saying anything in reply. For that reason I had a very hard time.<114>

This could be interpreted either as Katō Kanji arguing with his senior or merely that the elder man had permitted his junior to vent his indignation over the Americans in his presence. Baron Katō's task in Washington was an immense one. He had to deal with his diplomatic staff, his naval staff, the press, the civilian and naval authorities in Tokyo as well as the delegates from other countries. One oft-cited statement of Katō Tomosaburō rebuking the younger Katō is as follows: "Now that you have become vice-admiral what about keeping those below you under control".<115>

This can be interpreted either as indicating Katō Kanji and his subordinates were causing problems or, Katō Kanji's subordinates such as Suetsugu Nobumasa were at fault.

Undoubtedly there must have been occasions when Baron Katō



felt it necessary to rebuke his junior Katō Kanji and the latter's intense frustration at the 'unjust' nature of the compromises clearly affected his behaviour. It is probable that Katō Kanji's reputation for being impetuous had its origins at Washington and possibly reflected inexperience of the give and take of international politics at this level. Katō Kanji had amongst his staff the likes of Suetsugu Nobumasa. Suetsugu, by his various intrigues in naval and national politics, was to continue to embarrass Katō Kanji on numerous later occasions.<116>

Existing descriptions of both Katōs at Washington are open to question on a number of points. However, the question does remain as to whether there really was a split between the elder Katō, the statesman and diplomat and his younger colleague Katō the narrow, professional sailor and expert? If so then what form did it take?

Ito Masanori was one who did not accept that there was a split. He wrote that the two Katōs were on the same side with the other technical experts. Opposing this group were the diplomats and the majority of the Japanese press corps in Washington. The position adopted by the Japanese press brings into question the authenticity of their reports. There is ample evidence that the majority of the Japanese press were strongly in support of a compromise solution almost from the beginning and tried repeatedly to pressure Katō Tomosaburō.

Katō Kanji's official biographers, led by Admiral Abō Kiyokazu, who knew both Katōs intimately, may have identified the real basis for stories of a rift between the

two men. They conceded that:

Katō (Kanji) did have great difficulty in reaching mutual understandings with Katō Tomosaburō. This is a truth which cannot be disguised but this was simply in official matters. Privately there was not a trace of estrangement.<117>

They offered the following observations, regarding the selection of the two men:

Katō Kanji, the naval specialist, was an outstanding man of high intelligence and decisive action whilst Katō Tomosaburō, on the other hand was very careful and considered every factor even down to the smallest detail. Because of this it was seen, by people at the time that there would be differences between the two.<118>

Katō Kanji was later described as one who "would not wait for the plums to ripen and fall but would knock them down with a stick".<119> One can see here that personality, rather than grand or narrow views of national security were probably at the root of any clashes between the two men. Katō Kanji, often referred to as impetuous, was a typical command type officer, used to making instant decisions. Katō Tomosaburō, on the other hand, was an administrator/politician who always considered every angle. In a sense, this reflects also the two organisations in which the two men reached the top, the Naval General Staff for Katō Kanji and the Navy Ministry (and premiership) for Plenipotentiary Katō. Katō Kanji is often referred to as simple and straightforward whereas what is really meant is not 'simple' in the general sense but the opposite of devious that is frank, straightforward and possibly even blunt. As the Naval Attache in Tokyo reported to his British superiors 'his enemies call him narrowminded and a radical' whilst others referred to him as 'worldly, highly



intelligent and knowledgeable'.<120> He was certainly somewhat impetuous at Washington and, since he was obviously highly competent in English, his instant comments to pressmen were to render his skill in language, in the highly sensitive environment of an international conference, rather more a burden than an advantage.

One other factor almost completely neglected in assessments of the two men is that they were merely reflecting the particular 'official' position they found themselves in at the Conference. They were therefore simply carrying these responsibilities out to the best of their ability. Katō Tomosaburō was in Washington as a cabinet minister and the needs of the nation took priority over the needs of one particular service, irrespective of his own personal inclinations. Katō Kanji was the Chief Naval aide and was present in an advisory capacity only. Therefore his primary mission was to consider the needs of the Japanese Navy and indeed he had been so instructed, by Katō Tomosaburō himself, immediately prior to leaving Tokyo.

In the end one is left with speculation and hypothesis. So too were the many pressmen both Japanese and Western at Washington. However, documentary evidence suggests the possibility that much speculation, particularly on Kato Kanji's split with the Japanese plenipotentiaries, was in the nature of informed guesswork based on a minimum of facts. Finally, one can also speculate, as Roger Dingman and sections of the press in Tokyo did at the time, whether the differences between the two Katōs were the result of a strategy by the Japanese delegation or alternatively

represented the strategy of the Western press seeking to make capital over 'alleged differences' and 'splits' within the Japanese group.

For the remainder of the conference, Kato Kanji dutifully attended other committees but the real work had been completed earlier.

The conference lasted from early November to February 1922 and, in all, produced seven treaties and twelve resolutions. The most important for our purposes here were the 'Five Power' and 'Four Power' treaties. The "Five Power Treaty" (USA, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy) laid down capital ship reductions, stipulated precise capital ship and aircraft carrier tonnages and placed specific reductions on future building programmes for capital ships. The "Four Power Treaty" (USA, Great Britain, Japan and France) was an attempt to replace the Anglo-Japanese Alliance with a quadruple entente in the Pacific in order to maintain the status quo. Also important was the "Nine Power Treaty" (USA, Great Britain, Japan, France, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Belgium and China) which focussed primarily on Chinese affairs. These latter treaties were integral to the naval limitation question since they bridged political and arms limitation issues.

Kato arrived home earlier than the main group and, whilst he praised the conference for its achievements he was also somewhat critical, <121> especially of its failure to reach agreements on auxiliary vessels. He said later that that French and the Italians had been badly treated over the capital ship issue and this again seems consistent with his

belief in parity in principle for all sovereign states. He sympathised particularly with the naval representatives of France and Italy and their 'humiliating exclusion' from the important negotiations. He felt bitter towards the British for siding with Hughes and, in a lecture given shortly after his return home he said Balfour 'betrayed' Japan.<122> He also criticised Britain and the United States for not being more supportive over the abolition of gas warfare. What annoyed him most, and was to continue to rankle was the inferior ratio. His determination to prevent this ratio from being applied to auxiliary vessels was eventually to consume all his energies and gravely affect his future career.

## CHAPTER SIX

### FROM WASHINGTON TO LONDON: THE YEARS 1922-29

As the Washington Conference drew to a close Katō Kanji had begun to feel distinctly unwell. He had complained of severe head pains and was eventually permitted to return home in advance of the main party. In fact, he merely preceded them by some four days and after all the real work had been completed. Not surprisingly the tremendous political and linguistic pressures had taken their toll on the health of some members of the Japanese delegation. Katō Tomosaburō stated, on his return "I felt I was going to die in Washington" and there were reports of him vomiting blood.<1> It has been suggested that Katō Kanji may have reasons other than ill health for returning early, namely distaste for the Washington settlement.<2> It is true that in Japan, there is a tendency, perhaps more marked than elsewhere, for people to have 'political' or 'diplomatic' maladies. At Washington, Plenipotentiary Shidehara became very ill with gastro-enteritis. It happened at a crucial point in the negotiations over the ratio issue and one irreverent reporter diagnosed the illness as 'congestion of the cables'!<3> In Katō Kanji's case, one cannot conclusively refute the suggestion that he was avoiding a situation (the signing of the treaties) he found unpleasant or unacceptable. However certain evidence tends to cast doubt on this hypothesis. First, at this time, Katō was not as opposed to the Treaties as has hitherto been supposed.



Second, on his arrival home Katō was in a position to speak first to the home press and publicly praised the conference's achievements. Third, he was present for all the key decisions in Washington and sailed for home when only ceremonial matters remained. Finally, Katō's diary clearly showed that he was in considerable pain and confined to bed for most of the Pacific crossing to Japan.

Katō Kanji arrived at Yokohama on 2 March 1922 and one newspaper reported:

Vice-Admiral Katō, although suffering intensely from a carbuncle on his neck and expressing a desire to go immediately to the hospital cordially greeted naval officers, officials and newspaper men who met him on the ship.<4>

Kato's words were reported in most newspapers. He praised the work of the American delegation and naval advisers and suggested that the major share of the credit for achieving an agreement should go to Charles Evans Hughes. He felt that the conference had been successful but stressed that success would depend on the responsibility and honesty displayed by the signatory nations. He went on to say that:

The adoption of the ratio, the status quo for the Pacific Islands and the Four Power Pact meant the placing of Japan among the leaders of twentieth century civilisation.<5>

Kato also praised Katō Tomosaburō's achievements highly but regretted the failure to achieve an agreement on auxiliary craft. He felt that the decisions on submarines, whilst not going far enough, aided Japan. He also commented on other limitation decisions singling out the banning of poison gas and crediting America for changing from opposition to support on that issue. If Katō was negative in these reports, it was British intransigence, over poison

gas, submarines and auxiliaries rather than American behaviour to which he directed attention. Katō was quoted as saying:

In my opinion the Washington Conference was one of the greatest events in the history of the world if judged solely by results.<6>

and concluded:

I must not forget to say that I regard as one of the great results of the conference what I shall call the 'creation and appearance of a new international state of mind' which certainly has supplanted the old attitude of distrust and misapprehension.<7>

It is impossible to know what Katō's innermost thoughts were at this time. He probably harboured deep resentment at the 'inferior ratio' but had probably calmed down during the long ocean crossing. He may not have been in a powerful enough position to risk speaking out against the conference and creating a domestic and international scandal. One might add that it was unlikely that anyone would be permitted to return home, in advance of the main party and the leaders of the delegation and say anything to the press which had not been previously vetted or indeed prepared by them in advance. Nevertheless, at least in the immediate aftermath of the Washington Conference, Katō Kanji could not be said to be strongly opposed to the agreements reached even if one is sceptical of his statements to the press.

Katō soon entered a private clinic where his illness was confirmed as being caused by a large carbuncle on the neck. After some twenty days in hospital he then convalesced and returned to duty at the Naval War College on 25 April.

No sooner had he returned to duty than he was promoted

to Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff, his promotion casts some doubt on his popularity. He had fallen into disfavour with Katō Tomosaburō. The latter is often described as all-powerful in the Navy.<8> One must assume that Katō Tomosaburō, who had, a few years earlier, removed Admiral Satō Tetsutarō from this position for incurring his wrath, was either not as powerful as had been hitherto supposed or, as seems more likely, was not as angry with Katō as the American press and certain scholars would have us believe.

Katō's superior as Chief of the Naval General Staff was Admiral Yamashita Gentarō. Katō had a longstanding affection and respect for his chief and had Yamashita's total confidence. Katō's energy, organising ability and other skills, were soon put to good use as the Naval General Staff carried out a number of important reforms. First, Katō took over the reform of various navigation tables, signal books and telegam codes. Regarding the latter, his recent experience in the First World War and his visits to the West, especially as head of the technical mission to Germany at the end of the war, were to prove invaluable. These internal reforms were soon accomplished and Katō received much of the credit. Next, Katō began to look at possible reforms of the relationship between the Naval General Staff and the Navy Ministry, but only a brief treatment can be given here.<9> Moves in favour of a system of civilian service ministers were accelerated by the First World War and these developments were helped by the Washington Conference and the support of the Navy Minister

Katō Tomosaburō for such a change.<10> Thus, the Naval General Staff were anxious to strengthen their position in the event that a system of civilian service ministers was implemented. In the end, Katō shelved the reform proposals, probably because he knew they would not be approved by the elder Katō. The latter was totally opposed to strengthening the Naval General Staff and favoured the reverse.

The third area of reforms, which had begun just before Katō was appointed, was the Second Revision of the Imperial National Defence Plan.<11> The decisions at Washington had naturally necessitated such a revision and the Army, having witnessed the temporary disappearance of its primary potential enemy, due to the Russian Revolution, also had good reasons for carrying out revisions. The original plan and the subsequent revision in 1918 had been carried out under army leadership. The key figure in both these earlier developments was Tanaka Giichi. However, in the Second Revision negotiations, the navy played a greater and much more positive role.<12> Planning for the revisions had begun in March and Katō became involved in May. Despite the results of the Washington Conference, and Katō Tomosaburō's avowed support for the principle of 'no war with America', the revised plan designated America as the primary hypothetical enemy for the navy (and the army too). At the same time, the Requisite Armaments plan was promulgated indicating a massive build-up in auxiliary vessels to compensate for the Washington ratio. In addition, the individual tonnage and firepower of cruisers, destroyers and submarines were increased but within treaty limits.



Finally, a new outline of strategy was decided. What is perhaps worthy of note here is that Katō Tomosaburō was excluded from this planning and only 'consulted' after decisions had been made. One possibility is that his assumption of a political post (the premiership) weakened his hold on the navy rather than strengthened it. Thus, while James Crowley may be correct in saying:

...after 1922 there appeared in Japan an approach to foreign and security policies which placed primary emphasis on an adherence to the Washington treaties and cooperation with the Anglo American Powers.<13>

this did not apply to the military leaders responsible for revising the National Defence Plan. Therefore, whilst the government may have been adhering to both the letter and spirit of the Washington Treaties, the military adhered only to the letter. As a result of the second revision of the INDP the navy commenced a major building programme in auxiliary craft. Defence planners believed a conflict with America 'was inevitable' leading Asada Sadao to state that this all bore the "unmistakable imprint of the thinking of Katō Kanji".<14> The new revised plan stated:

The United States, as a result of a policy of economic invasion of China, menaces the position of our Empire and threatens to exceed the limits of our endurance ... longstanding problems, rooted in economic problems and racial prejudice [discrimination against Japanese immigrants] are extremely difficult to solve.... Such being the Asian policy of the United States, a clash with our Empire will become inevitable sooner or later.<15>

It is certainly true that at this time, Katō Kanji so utterly dominated the Naval General Staff that one officer wrote that "The Naval General Staff at this time might well be described as Katō Kanji's one man show".<16> Certainly,

in combination with his subordinate Suetsugu Nobumasa, Katō's forceful nature was probably in large part responsible for the greater role played by the navy in the revision of the National Defence Plan. But it is by no means clear that he was the principal architect of the navy revisions in the INDP. First because he was not involved at the initial stage and second because it is possible that he was reflecting the views of this organisation and not imposing his views on his subordinates throughout the Naval General Staff. The revisions of the INDP are not mentioned at all in the biography and therefore his biographers did not credit these to Katō. A crucial element in the revised INDP was the navy's auxiliary building programme. The vast expenditures now required for naval construction programmes were being subjected to considerable domestic criticism. In a New Year Speech message for 1923, Katō was obviously defending the building programme.<17> He stressed the need for military prowess for preservation of his country and added: "History furnishes many examples of warfare carried on for preservation of a race, a religion or an idea." He commented that "the present condition of the world fails to convince him that permanent peace may be obtained outside of Paradise." Katō referring to President Harding's speech at the Washington Conference stated: "ending warfare is quite remote." Again, here we see Katō's "realist" approach in response to what he considered the misguided "idealist" approach of many people on arms limitation. Katō went on as follows:

More than a year has passed since the Conference but the situation today is considered a

temporary phenomenon, a calm before the storm, as history reveals and the world is striving to revert itself to self preservation, wide awake from the terrors of carnage. The world has not become Utopia. Imperialism is clearly visible behind the avowed principle of international cooperation. In Europe, Poland and other young countries show a remarkable inclination towards Imperialism. England, France, Italy and the other Major Powers are concentrating their energies on protection of their own interests as may be seen from the results of many recent conferences. Reparations conferences have ended in virtual deadlock, and there is no hope entertained in Europe of an economic revival, rendering political stability. Warlike preparations in Poland, maintenance of a mighty army by France, hostilities between the Angora and Greek governments and consequently annulment of the Sevres Treaty are evidence of the political instability. European arenas have become chaotic as was once the case in the Balkans and there is no guarantee of peace so far.

The newspaper report then carried a sub-heading "Arms Limitation Useless" but this would appear to have been journalistic license. What Katō actually said was:

Unless the apples of discord are done away with, arms limitation will become useless. Human feuds continue incessantly and war never comes after the completion of armaments. Constant warfare among mankind testifies to these facts and men want armaments to defeat their enemies and to obtain objectives needed for their existence. Under such circumstances, it is very dangerous for us to expect peace at once unless perfect methods for solving, to the minimum, international strife are found. It is quite evident that very often war comes through a struggle for economic rights and fair critics agree that the World War was born of commercial rivalry between England and Germany. Economic strife is not based on the ambitions of statesmen and warriors....

One could postulate that the tone of this "message" reflected the institutional 'realist' approach of the Naval General Staff or that it was deliberately designed to present a negative world view simply to support increased naval budgets for auxiliary craft construction. However, even if true, it is also consistent with Katō Kanji's own

thinking. The only omission, probably deliberate, was the absence of a mention of the United States in events at that time. It was clearly different in tone from other New Year Speeches but, given his position and given the rising criticism against defence expenditures, it was a fitting speech. It did not, however, as the paper implies, say that arms limitation was "useless". It reflected his consistent view that other factors than armaments and the ambitions of military men, namely economic clashes of interest, might yet render arms limitation useless.

Katō, was promoted to Commander-in-Chief Second Fleet on 1 June 1923. This undoubtedly pleased him since it allowed him to return once more to sea duty and also because it was his first Imperial appointment which meant he was personally attested by the Emperor. In theory, he now had direct access to the Emperor under the prerogative of the Supreme Command. Boarding his flagship the battleship Kongo, Katō was immediately involved in exercises off Korea with the First Fleet. On the afternoon of 1 September the Fleets received their first news of the Great Kantō Earthquake which had commenced at two minutes before noon that day. After conferring with his superior, Admiral Takeshita Commander-in-Chief First and Combined Fleet, it was decided that ships should immediately be despatched to Tokyo. Katō appears to have been the prime mover in this decision. No sooner had they begun making preparations than word was received from the authorities in Tokyo ordering the cancellation of the exercises and the return of all ships to Yokohama and Kure as soon as possible.



Katō's Flagship entered Sasebo on 4 June and began embarking relief stores and coal. Katō's diary tells us little of his personal feelings, the first entry stating only that Admiral Count Yamamoto, now forming a cabinet, narrowly missed death whilst at the Suikosha club in Tokyo and "the Prince Regent is safe".<18> One can therefore only imagine his shock on seeing the damage which had been caused.

Leonard Humphreys, who described the army's role in disaster relief at this time, in detail, stated, "when the holocaust ended, the Japanese nation realized that they had experienced one of the most fearful disasters in human history" and this seems to have been no exaggeration.<19> Tokyo and Yokohama were especially hard hit, first by the earthquake itself, which registered 7.6 on the (richter) scale, then by the fires and floods that followed. In Yokohama, thousands were crushed by collapsing buildings, particularly in areas of reclaimed land. Thousands more perished in the fires and firestorms which raged for three days. Telephones and telephone lines were cut, the transport system was thrown into chaos and the police and fire agencies were swamped by the enormity of the problem. The army and navy were effectively the only real centres of stability at this time. The government, stunned by the death of the Prime Minister days earlier, were merely caretakers until Count Yamamoto could form a cabinet. The threat of a continued breakdown in civil order and of starvation and disease in the wake of the disaster made military aid to the community the only real hope.

In this crisis situation Katō took over control of all ships in the Tokyo area. The most urgent problem was the requisitioning of transport and tugboats for relief work. It was estimated that at least 100 ships and 25 tugs was the minimum requirement. Eventually, Katō acquired 60 and 15 respectively. The whole operation was complex and highly dangerous and collisions occurred. For example, the launch from the battlecruiser Hiei sank after colliding with a tugboat and 46 men were drowned.

On 9 June, Katō was able to go ashore for the first time. He went immediately to see the Navy Minister and then was able to travel to his own home. It must have been an extremely difficult few days for naval crews, many of whom had families billeted in the area but were unable to find out what had happened to their kin and homes. Katō's diary read as follows:

2 pm this afternoon went to my home. 2nd floor badly damaged. If it rains heavily there will be a problem. I feel the house is dangerous to live in but I can't do anything about that. Family is OK, there was danger at one time, but the children are safe.<20>

The damage caused by the earthquake was truly awesome, in human and economic terms. One source lists the figures as follows:

Dead	99,331
Injured	103,733
Unaccounted for	43,467
Houses completely demolished	128,266
Houses half demolished	26,233
Houses Lost in fires	47,128
Houses Washed away	868 <21>

In all, the victims of the Great Earthquake and fire numbered some 3.5 million. For the navy the costs were high, many ships under construction were badly damaged, for

example the Amagi, which was in the process of being converted from a cruiser to an aircraft carrier, had to be scrapped. Many navy shore facilities were destroyed or badly damaged in Tokyo and Yokosuka. The expenses incurred in the rescue work were also vast. The result was that the navy was faced with a choice of postponement or even reductions in its building plans given the parlous state of government finance after the disaster. It was finally decided that the Auxiliary Replenishment programme was to be extended by one year and the completion of new aircraft units postponed for three years.

The army too incurred tremendous outlays which greatly hampered plans for modernisation of equipment. Yet in one sense, the armed forces gained considerably because of this tragic event. After the First World War, the armed forces were held in very low esteem by the populace and regarded as feudal reactionaries or tax robbers (Zeikin Dorobō) although the former appellation applied principally to the German influenced army. The decline in the prestige of the military, however, was halted by the earthquake. It is of course, well known to military planners that aid to the community as a very effective public relations weapon and events in 1923 clearly substantiate that. Uniformed men in the disaster areas were being welcomed when only weeks before they had been looked down upon.

Katō occupied a very visible position during the earthquake operations and it provided the opportunity to display his considerable qualities of leadership and decision. He then spent a month with fleet units at

Shinagawa Bay on guard duties. On 8 November he gave a lecture at Etajima. He told the assembled students there that he could not find the words to describe the earthquake. He did say he was glad that the Academy was not in Tokyo, not he added, because of the disaster but because "Tokyo is too influenced by western materialism".<22> Later Katō sailed for a tour of the coasts of Korea and Manchuria, memorable only for a meeting with Chang Tso Lin and taking the latter's son for a trip to Manchuria. On his return, Kato attended the sinking of the Satsuma which was carried out in accordance with the Washington agreement to scrap certain vessels. For Katō and other naval men, this use of serviceable ships with great traditions as target practice, must have touched a raw nerve and it was clearly an emotional event. Indeed, it is said that Katō, on seeing the Satsuma and Aki being sunk, declared tearfully, "From this day on we are at war with the United States".<23>

On 1 December 1924 Katō was appointed Commodore of Yokosuka Navy Yard. This was yet another key position in the naval hierarchy. Katō had already served as Chief of Staff at Yokosuka in 1918. His principal duties now involved improvements in the dockyard, promotion of morale, the spreading of military discipline and the improvement of educational training. These were all areas in which he was well qualified. Apparently, he also had certain duties in local politics, no doubt liaison with the local government authorities vis-a-vis civil defence. This is a subject the biographers omitted for "reasons of national security". His first major task was to officiate at a burial ceremony for



the crew of a ship lost in Fukui bay (the Kantō in Tsuruga Bay). Then, later he attended a rather more pleasant ceremony to install the Mikasa (Japan's HMS Victory) as a form of Naval Museum.<24> Katō had served as Chief Gunner under Tōgō on the Mikasa during the Russo-Japanese War.

In February 1927, Katō was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the First Fleet and Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet. This was a great honour for Katō, not least because this highest command position afloat was now to be occupied by a second Fukui man. Katō's predecessor Okada Keisuke, later Navy Minister and Prime Minister, had held the post before Kato and both men came from the same village. Katō, unlike Okada, went to Fukui during his period of office and received a tumultuous welcome. At the time of his appointment, Katō was still only a Vice Admiral and this was most unusual. In April 1927 he was promoted to full Admiral. Katō's principal duty was, as the title Commander-in-Chief, Combined Fleet suggests, to keep the Japanese fleets up to combat readiness and he spent a considerable amount of time on exercises in the seas surrounding Japan. Unfortunately, documentary records and logs of the Commanders-in-Chief were apparently destroyed at the end of the Pacific War.<25> During this tour of duty the major naval powers met at Geneva for a second naval arms limitation conference. Katō Kanji was not directly involved in this conference, although a most interesting document indicating his feelings at the time the conference was convened, has come to light.<26> Before commenting on

Kato's connection with this conference however, the Geneva Conference itself will be discussed in some detail.

### The Geneva Naval Conference of 1927

The Geneva Naval Conference of 1927 or Coolidge Naval Disarmament Conference, has been described as "one of the most dramatically unsuccessful international gatherings of the twentieth century".<sup><27></sup> This failure, primarily the result of an American-British deadlock on cruiser ratios, has been somewhat neglected by historians and international relations specialists and this is particularly true of treatments of Japan's role in the conference.<sup><28></sup> The second naval disarmament discussions at Geneva, throw considerable light on naval developments since Washington, as well as giving certain indications of likely future developments at London in 1930. An analysis of the conference will therefore be supplemented by Kato's thoughts on it, such as they were. The latter will help to show the development of his own thinking on the subject of naval arms limitation.

As is well-known, the Washington Conference achieved a ratio of 5:5:3:1.5:1.5 for America, Britain, Japan, France and Italy respectively on capital ships. A decision on a similar ratio for auxiliary vessels was attempted at Washington but, in fact, the Washington Treaty only defined an auxiliary; any vessel up to 10,000 tons with up to 8" guns.

Whilst the United States had been keen to apply the ratio to all ships at Washington, this had met with

considerable opposition from the other nations, especially France and Britain. France's Chief Delegate at Washington, Admiral Donbon, told Katō Tomosaburō, "if the ratio for capital ships is extended to auxiliaries, the French representative will not be able to return home". The French placed great faith in auxiliaries, especially its own massive submarine programme and simply would not accept an overall ratio of 1.5 vis-a-vis Britain and the United States in these areas. Kato replied that if the French were to propose scrapping the auxiliary ratio "we will not oppose it".<29> However, Plenipotentiary Katō had seemingly given approval to a future extension of the Washington Treaty agreement to cover auxiliaries. The British supported the French proposal in part, because they could not permit limitations on their auxiliaries if the French were not to be similarly limited. In addition whilst the British were reluctantly prepared to accept parity in capital ships with the United States, they were certainly not prepared to accept overall naval parity at this time. The French were credited with initiating the proposal to scrap discussion of auxiliaries at Washington and were much criticised for their negative approach. However, with the benefit of hindsight, it may be claimed that France's efforts to exclude auxiliaries made an agreement on capital ships possible.<30> This was because all nations could continue to develop national defence plans by turning to auxiliaries. Saitō Shichogoro (First Section of the Naval General Staff) commented after the conference "won't a race in auxiliaries begin in the near future?"<31> This is precisely what

happened. In effect the re-channelling of the naval race from capital ships to auxiliaries, casts considerable doubt on assumptions that the Washington Conference was a disarmament conference and that it stopped the naval arms race. It is perhaps best to describe the inter-war conferences as arms limitation or arms control conferences reflecting power politics as much as, if not more than, the quest for disarmament. In the immediate aftermath of Washington, amidst the euphoria which it undoubtedly engendered, the three great powers, America, Britain and Japan, announced major auxiliary vessel building programmes. Moreover, a new type of vessel, a heavy cruiser, built right up to the conference limits, was established. This was the 10,000 ton 8" gun cruiser often called the 'Washington Treaty Cruiser'.<sup><32></sup> It must be said that Japan bears a certain responsibility for initiating construction of this type of vessel. Whilst the 'treaty cruisers' may have adhered to the letter of the Washington Treaty, these new cruisers did not seem to be in accord with its spirit. Britain, and in particular America, followed suit by building these vessels. The great emphasis on "Treaty Cruisers" by the United States and Japan is principally attributed to two developments. First, there was a perceived need for increased cruising distances due to the limits on fortifications in the Pacific. Second, existing cruisers (7,500 ton 6" gun) could be offset in time of war by arming merchantmen. This in effect transformed the latter into a form of light cruiser. America in both cases, was greatly concerned with its Pacific strategy



relating to distance and unfortified bases as well as its inferiority in merchant fleet size compared to either Japan or Great Britain and therefore had most to fear. However, despite the fact that the apparent threat was greatest for the Americans, they had the greatest trouble in getting budgetary allocations through the Executive and Congress. Indeed many assumed after Washington, that the United States ought to stop building altogether.

Britain immediately set about planning its two permitted battleships (35,000 tons) converting two battle cruisers to aircraft carriers and planning new "Treaty Cruises" causing Stephen Roskill to state:

All in all the first effect of the limitation treaty on Britain was to produce greater activity in naval building than at any time since the armistice.<33>

The second result in Britain and elsewhere, was the commencement of a massive research and development effort in weightsaving, in order to build the most powerful ships possible within the permitted tonnage limitations.<34>

The naval plans of the Americans and the British in the period 1922-1927 are relatively well documented but what was happening in Japan?

The Second Revision of Japan's Imperial National Defence Plan, incorporating an auxiliary vessel replenishment programme and the creation of the new "Treaty Cruiser" were all implemented immediately after the signing and ratification of the Washington Treaties. The Japanese navy had anticipated a second conference and further League of Nations disarmament efforts in naval armaments and established a committee to investigate future arms

limitation policy.<35> In 1925 it produced a report based on "the lessons of the Washington Conference". Its findings may be summarised as follows:

- 1) Japan's "failure" at Washington was due to inadequate preparations rendering Japan's role a passive one. Japan must establish a firm, concrete and clear-cut policy well in advance and carry out preliminary negotiations so as to obtain clear recognition of Japan's basic contentions prior to the conference.
- 2) Japan needed to get public opinion in Japan firmly on its side, and
- 3) That "the utmost caution must be taken never again to be confronted by joint Anglo-American coercion".<36>

The Committee was absolutely opposed to the extension of 10:10:6 ratio to auxiliaries which they expected the Americans to put forward and also was at pains to point out, that the next conference be regarded a 'separate' not an extension of the Washington Treaty agreements. Finally, the committee favoured an 80% ratio if the Anglo-Japanese powers refused to accept a Japanese plea for 'parity'.<37>

In December 1925 the League of Nations established an Armament Reduction Commission. Its remit was armament in general although proposals were put forward and adopted for separate committees for land, sea and air. The United States and Germany remained outside the League of Nations but were permitted to attend. All efforts failed and this was probably because the various countries involved had vastly differing requirements on security.

Interestingly, there is evidence that Shidehara Kijūrō, the famous liberal and advocate of peace, told the Japanese delegation to this League of Nations committee that he was flatly opposed to Japan being allocated less than 70% in

auxiliary vessels and indeed he was secretly opposed to any restrictions for Japan in auxiliaries at all!<38>

In 1927 President Coolidge finally gave in to domestic pressures for a conference on naval auxiliary vessels. Initially, the League of Nations Commission was suggested as the venue for this international gathering, but eventually it was decided to hold a separate conference for the five principal signatories at Washington; the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy.

France flatly rejected Coolidge's invitation, preferring to link the issues of land, air and sea armaments under the auspices of the League of Nations. This is not surprising, in that France's geographic position rendered her more vulnerable than America, Britain and Japan to air and especially land attack. Moreover, France preferred her status as leader of a 'European block' in the League of Nations, to that of 'minor power' status in a five-power naval conference. Italy, whose armaments policies were inextricably linked with French military planning, naturally followed suit. France eventually sent an 'informant' and Italy an 'observer' to attend. France's refusal placed Great Britain in a dilemma, especially over defence policy in Europe but she consented to participate.

Japan also agreed to participate but the Japanese Navy had strong reservations over accepting an invitation, particularly at this point in time. Navy leaders reported that:

We are striving amidst great difficulties to complete auxiliary ships under construction. Our consolidation plan enabling us to possess 70% vis-a-vis the United States and Britain [in

auxiliaries] only received approval from the Diet at the end of 1926.<39>

1928 was the year when Japan would achieve and possibly exceed 70% of the United States and Great Britain in this category of ship. Thus a 1927 conference was, to say the least, inconvenient for naval planners.

The Minseito Cabinet under Wakatsuki Reijirō, was still wrestling with the financial and social consequences of the Kantō Earthquake as well as the beginnings of a financial depression. They decided that they had too much to lose by rejecting the invitation and therefore cabled acceptance. The next problem was the selection of delegates. The Japanese government possibly had in mind another naval officer of the calibre of Katō Tomosaburō and selected Admiral Saito Makoto, Governor General of Korea and former Navy Minister, to lead the delegation. Saito had refused the same position at Washington and still felt that events in China made it inadvisable for him to leave Korea. He was finally persuaded and a diplomat, Ishii Kikujirō, Japan's representative at the League of Nations Commission on Disarmament, was also appointed as Delegate. Rear-Admiral Kobayashi Seizō, son-in-law of Katō Tomosaburō and Chief of the Navy Ministry General Affairs Bureau, was appointed Chief Technical Adviser to the delegation.

The United States delegation was headed by Hugh Gibson, Ambassador to Belgium, a man with little knowledge of naval affairs but America's representative on the League Commission on Disarmament. United States Secretary of State Kellogg, had originally preferred Charles Evans Hughes who had been so successful at the Washington Conference. He had



refused and urged Kellogg not to send anyone of high rank since Hughes believed the conference was not a good idea and any failure must not be allowed to rebound on the present American administration. Kellogg then offered to attend himself but the President refused permission and eventually the relatively young, inexperienced and 'lightweight' Gibson was chosen. His co-delegate (originally 'adviser') was Admiral Hilary Jones who was primarily responsible for the fact that American naval views dominated the United States delegation.

Britain sent W.C. Bridgeman, First Lord of the Admiralty and Viscount Robert Cecil (a cabinet minister). Although of a much higher calibre than the American delegates they did not have the ultimate power of decision, and as a consequence of being over-ruled during the conference, Cecil was to resign from the cabinet.

The appointment of Admiral Jones caused great concern to Japanese naval officers. Jones was well known for his hard line public statements on ratios vis-a-vis Japan. During the Washington Conference he was reported as saying that the American public and American politicians would never tolerate allowing Japan a 70% ratio. Also he indicated that on the China Question, American naval power ought to be 166% of Japan (a Japanese ratio of 60% or less) "in order to bring Japan to its knees over China".<sup><40></sup> This caused much resentment in Japan at the time since, as Viscount Ishii wrote later: "whether correct or not, the Japanese people resent the 'inferior ratio' allocated to Japan at Washington and considered it a slight against

them".<41> Plenipotentiary Ishii carried out discussions with Gibson on the 'inferior ratio' at the beginning of the conference. Thus a clash between the United States and Japan over ratios seemed inevitable. This increased the already tense relations between the two countries. For the Japanese in particular, the American Immigration Bill of 1924 and America's massive Pacific naval manoeuvres in 1925 engendered great suspicion and fuelled anti-American feelings.

No detailed negotiations were carried out between the countries prior to the conference, although Admiral Jones (USA) had hoped for an Anglo-American accord as a lever to force Tokyo to maintain the 5:5:3 ratio in auxiliaries. Admiral Beatty (UK) felt that Britain should not allow the United States to know its position prior to the conference. His intention was to use surprise as a tactic, in much the same way as Secretary Hughes had done for the United States at Washington.<42> The Americans came to the conference with two clear aims, parity with Britain in auxiliaries and a 5:3 ratio vis-a-vis Japan in auxiliaries. However, parity with Britain at a high overall level would mean that America would be required to increase building in order to maintain a 5:3 ratio with Japan. Therefore they needed to achieve parity at the lowest possible overall tonnage. The United States not only wished for a 5:5:3 ratio and a maximum overall tonnage but also that the ratio be extended to each class of ships, cruisers, destroyers and submarines. It proposed the following levels:

	Cruisers (tons)	Destroyers (tons)	Subs (tons)
GB & USA	250-300,000	20-25,000	60-70,000
Japan	150-180,000	12-15,000	36-54,000 <43>

But Japan's Imperial National Defence Plan of 1923 had laid down the following targets:

40	10,000 ton cruisers	400,000 tons
144	destroyers	201,600 tons
	submarines	133,640 tons <44>

Britain proposed a reduction in the size of capital ships, reduction in the size of guns and an extension in the age for replacement of capital ships. It wished to apply the ratio of 5:5:4 to treaty cruisers (10,000 tons) but on 7,500 ton cruisers it put forward the "doctrine of requirements" stating that the Empire would have as many as it needed.<45> Japan not only wished to include ships built but those building or planned. Japan's Plenipotentiaries had not been specifically instructed to hold out for 70% but the Chief Naval Adviser had been so instructed.

Nevertheless, the delegation was specifically instructed that the completion of the auxiliary building programme in 1928 was to be regarded as sacrosanct and this would have, in effect, guaranteed 70%. Japan stated "the auxiliary vessels, scheduled to be completed by the end of 1928, constitute the minimum essential strength".<46> Japan's basic assertion was:

	US-UK	JAPAN
Surface Auxiliaries	450,000	315,000
Submarines	103,000	72,000 <47>

The British proposal, apart from falling far short of America's proposals, amounted to about 600,000 tons, almost double the American upper limit and included 25-10,000 ton

and 55-7,500 ton cruisers. Saito and Ishii initially avoided specifying a need for 70% for Japan in auxiliaries. Regarding the American proposals, Japan was most unhappy with the breakdown of ship categories and of course the application of an overall 5:5:3 ratio in auxiliaries. They did not much care for the British proposals either, especially limitations on size and armour.

However the Japanese unease at other countries proposals paled into insignificance compared to the diplomatic battle between America and Great Britain. The conflict was clearly based on political grounds rather than on technical ones. The issue for America in this conference centred on ratios. It is true that most writings on the subject focus on the debate over types of cruisers but the ratio issue always lay behind any debate. The United States Navy's quest for a navy "second to none" is best summed up by their Navy General Board's statement regarding the conference: "Equality with Britain is the sole basis on which a just treaty limitation can be imposed".<sup><48></sup> America in stipulating 5:5:3 in each category of vessel clearly sought parity with Great Britain in strict mathematical terms. The British on the other hand, had been prepared at Washington to concede parity in capital ships, but content in the knowledge that her strength in auxiliary craft still enabled them to retain overall world naval supremacy. Great Britain was prepared to concede parity in heavy cruisers, provided that this was at a very low level, but she still wished to retain superior numbers in other vessels including light cruisers. This was in order to ensure protection of



Imperial trade routes and to cope with the European threat. The British cabinet claimed that parity was relative and that what Britain was prepared to grant America might perhaps not be mathematical parity but it was relative parity according to needs. The Americans totally rejected this proposal.

Admiral Jones infuriated the Japanese by continually insisting that a 5:4 ratio was parity for Japan! In preliminary talks he threatened:

...if the application of the 10-10-6 ratio should fail to materialise, the United States will achieve it through a naval race backed by its unlimited wealth.<49>

The Japanese delegation was increasingly fearful of the formation of a joint Anglo-American understanding and on 6 July came out openly for the 70% ratio (5:5:3.5).<50> It is not true that the principal motivation for Japan entering into bilateral talks with Britain was primarily designed to prevent this Anglo-American collaboration. Anglo-Japanese talks emanated from a request by Hugh Gibson, to try and break the Anglo-American deadlock over cruisers. He told the Japanese and British delegates that if they could reach an agreement between themselves on the issues, the United States "would have no difficulty in completing the triangle".<51> At the public session on 14 July, he stated, rather optimistically:

if some basis can be found which is naturally acceptable to the British and Japanese delegations, I feel sure that it will be possible for the American delegation to make the agreement complete.<52>

The Anglo-Japanese plan arrived at by Admirals Field (GB) and Kobayashi (Japan) was 500,000 tons surface vessels for

the United States and Great Britain and 325,000 ton for Japan thus establishing a 5:5:3.25 ratio. On submarines, Britain agreed to parity for Japan giving 60,000 tons for all three. The Americans rejected this proposal and so, surprisingly, did the British cabinet. In addition the Japanese government, under Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi, rejected the proposals on 18 July and followed this with a strongly worded directive from the Navy Minister Osumi not to go below 70%.<53>

There can be little doubt that but for the deadlock between Britain and America over auxiliaries, there would have been a major clash between Japan and the United States over the 70% ratio. The available evidence suggests that neither Prime Minister Tanaka nor the naval authorities in Tokyo would concede on this and the United States too was equally determined to make no concession which would give Japan 70%.

The conference ended unsuccessfully, due to the Anglo-American deadlock and Japan emerged from the conference with a rather less tarnished image than the others. In fact, Admiral Saitō's work, both in keeping his own delegation in place and in patiently mediating between the Americans and the British, was widely praised. However the preliminary skirmishes between Japan and the United States were not good omens for any future conference. Saitō had controlled the delegation and regarding the compromise Anglo-Japanese plan had stated that the proposal had the support of the "entire delegation" but he was over-ruled by Tokyo. In the end, power in all three delegations rested

with the home authorities. Itō Masanori was in a sense, correct, in referring to Delegations at Geneva as mere "message boys".<sup><54></sup> It is generally assumed that political appointees were dominated by technical experts at the conference and this was one of the major causes of failure.<sup><55></sup> This is open to question in that, whilst the American delegation was largely dominated by Admiral Jones and thus by the United States Navy General Board's views, the same could not be said of Japan and Great Britain. The technical committees had been abandoned, as at Washington, since no agreement could be reached. The fact that no prior consultation took place and that all parties stated clear positions at the outset of the conference, was certainly not conducive to obtaining agreements. At Washington the Americans had been negotiating from strength in that its capital ship superiority gave it a clear advantage in negotiations. At Geneva, America negotiated from weakness due to congressional resistance to increased naval expenditure. The crucial issue for the three major naval powers, complex and inter-related as it was, rested with arguments over parity. Britain grudgingly conceded parity at the conference to America, only to have the British cabinet redefine the concept of parity away from a strict mathematical parity. This relative parity in effect meant a semblance of superiority for Britain in auxiliaries. Japan made no impression at all on the American position regarding ratios. The Americans wished to keep British overall tonnage low, in order to restrict Japan, but it was to be 10:6 not 10:7 as Japan proposed. The Anglo-Japanese

compromise plan would have achieved 10:7 overall for Japan but it was ultimately rejected by all three powers.

### Katō's Role in the Geneva Conference

Katō's role in the debate over arms limitation at Geneva was peripheral and documentary evidence on his involvement is almost non-existent. There is no diary for this period nor are there any records of the Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet. It should be borne in mind that whilst holding this position Katō could not speak out. Despite his undoubted knowledge of arms limitation and the fact that events in Geneva might directly affect his fleets, the Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet was by tradition, purely a military officer and as such had to remain apolitical.

Adolph Clemensen has stated that "Kanji Katō headed the naval committee which produced the plan for the Geneva Conference" but there is no evidence for this at all and Clemensen provides no source.<56> It is possible to argue that Kato had some influence on the 1923 National Defence Plan which formed the basis for the building programmes after Washington and he was Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff when the Naval Arms Limitation Committee began its research.

At this time, Katō did write a very interesting letter to Admiral Saitō Makoto attempting to dissuade the elder statesman from accepting the Geneva appointment.<57> Katō pointed out that the United States delegate [Gibson] was inexperienced and of low prestige and the British delegate



[Cecil] was an idealist. Therefore the conference would end in failure. Katō believed that the United States was not serious since she was sending such a low-ranking figure. Katō therefore recommended that Saito had more important things to do in Korea, "on which the fate of the Empire depended". Katō also indicated that the appointment of a leading naval figure such as Saitō, would be disadvantageous to the navy as was shown at Washington. Katō did concede that by appointing someone of Saitō's administrative and political experience, this would express Japan's wishes for peace and this would benefit the Empire. However the conference might well fail, Katō continued, and then it might be said that Japan had ruptured the conference by sending a naval figure. Katō urged Saitō to consider the complexity and speed involved in the negotiations and stated that he might benefit from having a confidante and Katō offered to send one. Katō finished by saying that if Saitō went to this conference, which Katō felt would fail, it would damage Saito's career.

Based on this letter, Asada Sadao reached a number of interesting conclusions. He wrote:

The move to appoint Saitō as Chief Plenipotentiary caused Katō Kanji deep concern ... in an exceedingly audacious manner he requested Saito decline the offer.<58>

Katō's reasons, according to Asada, were first that Gibson, the American delegate, was young and lacking in weight and could not in any way be compared with Saitō.

Second Kato made reference to the:

most powerful lessons of the Washington Conference and, as for the sending of a leading naval figure a Chief Delegate from the position of

the navy this was disadvantageous.<59>

Asada believes that what Katō feared above all was that Saitō, like Katō Tomosaburō at Washington, would place considerations taken from an overall political perspective above narrow strategic military needs. Asada states clearly that the letter indicates that Katō believed Saitō to be lacking in both experience and ability and that Katō's offer of a 'trusted person'; a confidante, turned out to be a 'hardliner' who would in effect be a watchdog. Asada concludes that Katō placed very little value on Saitō's diplomatic ability and that Katō implied that Saitō lacked the requisite qualities for the job.

The letter in question does tell us a considerable amount about Katō but its text does not substantiate many of Asada's conclusions. The first thing to note is that Katō believed that the conference would fail. His assessment of Gibson was shrewd and his conclusions were proved to be correct. Incidentally Katō did not, as Asada tells us, compare Gibson to Saitō. Katō wrote that the position of Chief Delegate in no way compared with that of Governor-General of Korea! Katō believed that the absence of a powerful figure such as Charles Evans Hughes meant the conference would fail. This being the case, Saitō was wasting his time and there was a good chance that Saitō's reputation (and Japan's) would be damaged as a result of the failure. Katō was well aware that Saitō could and would be capable of carrying out a policy which was unpalatable to the naval authorities. While Katō, from a narrow naval basis, may have feared this, his letter is surely evidence

of how highly he rated Saito not the reverse. The offer of a specialist was, as with the other advice, probably borne of Katō's own experience at Washington. Katō knew better than anyone else how important good and timely technical advice was and the Chief Naval Adviser to Saito at Geneva was Admiral Kobayashi, a bureaucrat from the Navy Ministry.

Contrary to Asada Sadao's conclusions, one finds it difficult to interpret the letter as "exceedingly audacious". Katō's relationship with Saitō went back over thirty years and they corresponded regularly.<60> Whilst Katō should perhaps not have written the letter at all he was the leading expert on the subject of naval limitation within the navy and his advice seems both well intentioned and sensible.

Just prior to Geneva Katō had been reported as saying:

A formula of arms limitation based on 'existing strength' is motivated by a desire on the part of the United States and Great Britain to maintain a superior ratio. This is completely irrational and goes against the spirit of arms limitation. For this reason we do not accept its establishment as permanent and find it regrettable that the United States and Great Britain have forced such an unfair ratio upon us.<61>

However, his position as Commander-in Chief Combined Fleet probably prevented him from being more visible on this issue during conference negotiations. Only one public statement by Kato during the conference has so far come to light. In a newspaper interview Katō was quoted as follows:

The most pleasing element in the discussion of the current conference is that not only the Navy but also the Foreign Ministry officials and public opinion are united.... Public opinion matches the opinions of the major newspapers which form the opinion of the nation. These are at one this time

and this is perhaps because the government has worked very carefully on this. Unfortunately this unity was lacking at Washington thus forcing us into great difficulties at that conference.<62>

The statement was perhaps, open to question regarding "unified opinion" and cooperation between the government and the press and was rather bland, being very much a public relations statement. Nevertheless, in this interview Katō returned to one of his favourite themes, namely that the unification and guidance of public opinion behind a negotiating team, was crucial if Japan was to be successful at such international conferences. Although Katō probably learned much from Secretary of State Hughes' masterly control of the press at Washington, Katō had remarked on the need for the guidance and unification of Japanese public opinion in foreign relations before the First World War.

It is also clear that Katō was now openly critical of the Washington settlements and one must assume that this was because of the consequences of the ratio for naval planning in the intervening years. The ratio in capital ships had distorted naval planning, as the navy vainly sought to compensate for an inferior ratio in capital ships by a buildup in auxiliary vessels. In addition, the Washington agreements had required the sinking of serviceable ships, many with long traditions. There were also cuts in officer training. Such matters were undoubtedly damaging to the navy's morale.

Yet another area where the 5:5:3 ratio was causing problems was in training for combat. In naval exercises in August 1927, a major collision occurred between a cruiser and destroyer carrying out night combat training and a great



number of lives were lost. The main responsibility, ultimately, rested with Katō Kanji as Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet, and he offered to resign but this was not accepted. It has been suggested that Katō was at fault for conducting such relentless night exercises in an obsessive effort to make up for deficiencies resulting from the inferior ratios allocated to Japan at Washington.<63> It is undeniably correct that the Japanese Navy did place greater emphasis on intensive and night combat training after the Washington Conference. Admiral of the Fleet Tōgō for example, on Kato's return to Japan in 1922, had impressed upon the younger man that if international conferences limited the amount and size of equipment, then one must improve the quality of men and available equipment.<64> Night combat training was not Katō's idea, although he was a strong advocate of it, as he was of intensive and continuous training of all kinds. He was, like Tōgō whom he so admired, a hard taskmaster. No one in the navy criticised Kato personally for the accident and Navy Minister Okada Keisuke, later a strong critic of Katō stated, "It can't be helped, this sort of thing will happen more and more".<65> This seems to indicate that though the naval leadership were aware of the hazards of night drilling, they continued to believe night exercises were indispensable. But it is correct to link night drilling with the Washington Conference. Katō later addressed the officers of the Combined Fleet and told them:

...with a 5:5:3 ratio exercises such as the one held the other day will become more and more necessary.... Training and drilling are vital to overcome the 5:5:3 ratio and obtain victory in

As with the army, the increased emphasis on fierce training and fighting spirit in the navy in the mid-twenties, appears at first to be a return to premodern samurai training advocating spiritual superiority over technology. In fact, there were undoubtedly officers in both the navy and the army who believed that a return to premodern values would be of benefit. But one can argue, that this emphasis on 'spirit' was a natural and 'rational' response to limitations in the size of an army or navy, brought about by domestic or international arms control developments. Although this emphasis may have eventually had extremely negative consequences and resulted in a regression to a fervent belief in the innate superiority of Japanese spirit over western technology, it does not alter the original 'rational' reason for emphasising 'fighting spirit'.

Katō was immensely popular with the officer corps of the navy and during his period of office, he greatly increased popular support for the Commander-in-Chief Combined Fleet.<67> On 10 December 1928 Katō was transferred and appointed to the Supreme Military Council. A little over a month later he was appointed to the highest 'command' post in the navy, Chief of the Naval General Staff.

One may reasonably conclude that, in the years from Washington to the aftermath of the Geneva Conference, Katō's dislike of the 'inferior ratios' as well as his doubts on naval limitation, were being reinforced by the damage he

perceived it was doing to the navy. In this he may, at times have been ahead of or even created trends within the navy whilst at other times he was clearly being influenced by or reflecting such trends. Nevertheless, his pessimism about Geneva had been wellfounded and his scepticism concerning the motivations behind the calling of such conferences did not auger well for the future. Yet another naval conference was on the horizon and this time Katō Kanji was to be in a very powerful and visible position and he soon found himself at the very centre of a major domestic political crisis.