

# Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution - Forgetting forced labor to celebrate Japan's World Heritage Sites - Part 1

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**Abstract:** Katō Kōko is the pivotal figure behind the World Heritage inscription process and the controversial historical narratives of "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution." Several of these industrial sites used Korean as well as Chinese and Allied POW forced labor during wartime, and Japan agreed to present narratives of the victims forced to work at the sites when they were inscribed as World Heritage in 2015. The plans for the Industrial Heritage Information Centre for these sites officially agreed to document the remembrance of these victims, but a July 2021 UNESCO/ICOMOS report stated that the Centre conveys a message that no one was forced to work at the relevant sites. Katō Kōko, Managing Director of the Information Centre, was central in planning and collecting source material for its exhibitions. She is also UNESCO's direct contact as Managing Director of the Information Centre. Katō has created celebratory narratives of Japan that actively deny the history of its forced laborers. With the backing of powerful Japanese politicians, Katō has put on a false performance of cooperation for UNESCO and related international stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Japan World Heritage, Korean forced labor, Meiji industrialization, Tokyo Industrial Heritage Information Centre, Hashima/ Gunkanjima

Japan's Industrial World Heritage

## Inscription

In July 2015, the World Heritage Committee considered the agreement between Japan and South Korea on an essential condition for the World Heritage inscription of Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (hereafter the Meiji Industrial Sites, or the Sites) to be an "outstanding victory for diplomacy."<sup>1</sup> South Korea had previously strongly objected to the inscription because the nomination Japan submitted to UNESCO failed to mention the brutal history of Korean and other forced labor at many of the Sites during the Asia-Pacific War. The 23 Japanese industrial component sites,<sup>2</sup> which include the controversial Hashima ("Gunkanjima/Battleship Island") coal mine, were presented as collectively telling the story of Japan's transition from feudalism to modernization through its rapid industrial revolution "between the 1850s to 1910." Japan proclaimed this transformation "to be the first successful transfer of Western industrialization to a non-Western nation."<sup>3</sup>

The condition agreed upon by Japan, South Korea, and the UNESCO World Heritage Committee prior to inscription of the Sites was that Japan must acknowledge that "a large number of Koreans and others [...] were brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions in the 1940s at some of the sites."<sup>4</sup> Japan stated it was "prepared to incorporate appropriate measures into [an] interpretive strategy to remember the victims such as the establishment of [an] information center."<sup>5</sup>



**H.E. Kuni Sato, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO being congratulated at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee (8 July 2015). Katō Kōko is smiling in the background. © German Commission for UNESCO, Kolja Matzke.**

The Industrial Heritage Information Centre (IHIC) opened in Tokyo on 15 June 2020, with Katō Kōko as its Managing Director. Katō was the driving force behind the Sites' World Heritage inscription and the central producer of historical narratives presented in the Centre. As soon as the IHIC opened to the public, the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an official statement strongly protesting IHIC interpretations in exhibits that directly contradicted agreed conditions because these denied the history of Korean forced labor.<sup>6</sup> Korea's objections prompted UNESCO to send a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) expert mission to the IHIC to examine its narratives. This June 2021 mission reported that

[t]he oral testimonies displayed [in the centre], which were all related to Hashima Island [a.k.a. Gunkanjima/ Battleship Island], convey the message that there were no instances of [Koreans and others] being forced to work there. The mission has therefore concluded that the interpretive measures to allow an understanding of those brought against their

will and forced to work are currently insufficient.<sup>7</sup>

The UNESCO/ICOMOS mission examined the IHIC closely and had “comprehensive exchanges with [Katō Kōko].”<sup>8</sup> Based on their report, in July 2021 UNESCO requested that Japan improve related narratives and “submit by 1 December 2022 to [UNESCO] an updated state of conservation report.”<sup>9</sup> It appears that UNESCO still hoped that Katō and her aides would improve the Centre's narratives and save the “diplomatic victory” of the Meiji Industrial Sites' World Heritage inscription. Katō in fact simply concealed her revisionist agenda from UNESCO audiences<sup>10</sup> while pretending to respect the suggestions and warnings.

This article will reveal how Katō Kōko selected Japanese industrial sites and successfully had them inscribed as World Heritage with the backing of powerful Japanese politicians and business people. It shows how it became possible for Katō to use historical sites of wartime forced labor to celebrate Japanese industrial progress while denying the historical experience of its victims. It also relates how Katō abused Ku Yōnch'ōl—a Korean witness of forced labor—to slander Korean memories and divert attention from actual forced laborers' testimonies. First it is essential to understand the relevance of the IHIC to the World Heritage inscribed industrial sites.

### **The Industrial Heritage Information Centre and “Battleship Island”**

The IHIC is in Shinjuku Ward, which is one of Tokyo's most popular entertainment districts. As almost all the Meiji Industrial Sites are in and close to Kyushu, one might assume that for most international tourists who rarely venture west of Hiroshima, the Centre would serve as an alternative destination for the actual World Heritage sites. But the walking distance of over

2 km from Shinjuku Station to the residential area of Wakamatsu-chō makes the IHIC, housed on an uninviting property shared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the government’s National Statistics Centre, an unlikely stop for the serendipitous tourist. A further inconvenience is that the IHIC is closed on weekends. Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, only 30 pre-booked guests may visit each day, and the booking site reveals it is almost never booked full (as of October 2021).<sup>11</sup> As photography is strictly forbidden inside the Centre,<sup>12</sup> its exhibitions and interpretations are hidden from everyone who does not visit in person.<sup>13</sup> The centre is important not because many people will see it, but because it defines the historical narratives of the Meiji Industrial Sites. Especially significant is Hashima Island—the only site popular as a tourist destination. One out of three exhibition zones in the IHIC have “a special focus on Hashima Island during World War II.”<sup>14</sup>



**The uninviting entrance to the IHIC accessible through a back road in a residential area in Shinjuku, Tokyo. From UNESCO/ICOMOS July 2021 report, pp. 38.**

Hashima island is commonly known as “Battleship Island (Gunkanjima)” because from the sea its appearance resembles the shape of a battleship. It is popular with tourists not because it represents Meiji Era industrial modernization or wartime history, but because of its unique dystopian visual appearance, resulting from its concentration of abandoned and deteriorating Taishō and Shōwa-Era buildings.<sup>15</sup> The small, rocky island, located a short ferry-ride from Nagasaki harbor, was bought by Mitsubishi in 1890 for its coal deposits and mining continued until the island’s abandonment in 1974.

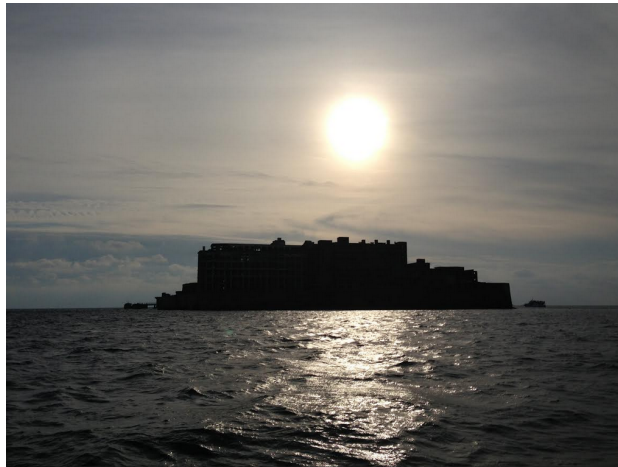
Hashima island, although not opened for tourism until 2009, was rediscovered in the 1980’s and has since featured in Japanese popular entertainment for its atmospheric landscape of urban ruins.<sup>16</sup> The island is also becoming iconic in the West, especially after featuring in the James Bond movie Skyfall in 2012.<sup>17</sup> Its iconic status is reflected in the fact that 15 of the first 30 pictures produced by a Google image search in English for the term “abandoned island” depict Hashima (as of October 2021). Presenting historical narratives of Hashima in the IHIC gives Katō and Japan a convenient excuse to leave Hashima in its popularized condition as the ever deteriorating “Battleship Island.” In this way, it can continue as a tourism playground, void of explanatory signs that might deter tourists enticed by the visual appeal of a picturesque ghost island reclaimed by nature.<sup>18</sup>

### **World Heritage Status as a Tourist Draw**

Hashima, or rather “Battleship Island,” is actively promoted as a World Heritage site by the Japanese tourism industry<sup>19</sup> as well as in Japanese mass media. In actuality, it is only the Hashima coal mine, not the island itself, that has been inscribed as World Heritage. The



iconic urban ruins making the island resemble a battleship are from buildings constructed after the end of the Meiji Era, and are thus not recognized as part of the Meiji Industrial Sites. No promotion seeks to draw tourists to see the small, blocked entrance to the Hashima coal mine.



**Silhouette of Hashima Island resembling a Battleship.**  
**Photo by Nikolai Johnsen.**

A table of visitor numbers for Hashima since 2009 has been compiled by David Palmer that compares Hashima to other popular Nagasaki visitor attractions.<sup>20</sup> It illustrates how tourist numbers rose steadily as the World Heritage inscription process proceeded, before dramatically increasing after successful inscription in 2015. Building on this table with new data while considering that Hashima was closed for long periods in the fiscal years 2016, 2018 and 2019 due to typhoons, it is clear that Hashima’s popularity as a tourist attraction significantly increased in comparison to other Nagasaki attractions. Between 2009 and 2019 over 1.8 million people visited Hashima island<sup>21</sup>— without being informed about its brutal wartime history of forced labor during their visit. Hashima has become a mainstream tourist attraction hardly comparable to the 22

other visually underwhelming Meiji Industrial Site components, which lack the visibly dramatic built environment of Hashima. Nagasaki also is the main tourist draw with its harbor, atomic bombing memorials and museum, and traditional bridges and Chinese Buddhist temples. In contrast, other sites such as Yahata Steel Mill outdoor museum, in a dreary industrial area of Kokura, are difficult to find and the few Miike Coal Mine buildings in the small town of Omuta, lack the broad appeal and natural beauty found in Nagasaki.

Hashima is the only industrial World Heritage site in Japan that has drawn thousands of international visitors. “Battleship Island” is the main “battlefield” of the ongoing “memory war” for and against Japanese forced labor history. Katō Kōko has obscured this memory war by keeping Hashima itself devoid of relevant information, while presenting a distorted historical narrative in the IHIC. The IHIC only mentions that Japan had a labor conscription policy from 1944 to 1945.<sup>22</sup> Narratives of Korean Hashima laborers do not differentiate between those who came by choice before the war, and those who were forcefully mobilized and forced to work in extreme conditions under Japanese government labels of “recruitment” and “conscription” between 1939-1945.



**Ruins on Hashima island.**



**The stairs in the picture led to the now blocked entrance of mine shaft no.2 of the island's coal mine, the only part of the island recognized as World Heritage.  
Photo by Nikolai Johnsen.**

**The Three Phases of Korean Forced Labor - The Case of Hashima**

The experiences of Korean and other laborers on Hashima and elsewhere changed greatly over the course of the Japanese colonial period. Survivor testimonies have been collected since the 1960's and the memories of racism, forced labor and torture at many of Japan's industrial sites have been published in Japan, Korea, and elsewhere. A brief look at working conditions and elements of force used against laborers helps to contextualize how the IHIC's selective and simplistic narratives distort and suppress the history of forced labor.

Before wartime forced labor, Mitsubishi experimented with Korean workers in its coal mines on Hashima and Takashima. Takashima is a lesser-known island 3 km from Hashima and its coal mine is also part of the Meiji Industrial Sites. By May 1918, Hashima and Takashima had 70 and 264 Korean laborers respectively.<sup>23</sup> Use of coercion and deception was common in the recruitment process, and accumulated debts were used as reasons to physically punish anyone trying to leave. Nevertheless, Korean laborers were usually paid, sometimes eligible for promotions, and could live with their families in family apartments on the islands.

Suzuki Fumio, the only ethnic Korean former Hashima resident whose memories are presented at the IHIC, was born on Hashima in 1933. His Korean father worked there until he escaped with his family during wartime as mining accidents increased steeply.<sup>24</sup> The family was able to successfully apply for a

temporary visit to the mainland enabling their escape,<sup>25</sup> because Suzuki's father was already living and working on Hashima before wartime. Suzuki inaccurately states—based on his childhood memories—that discrimination against Koreans did not occur on Hashima. A 1940 report based on Mitsubishi's experimenting with Korean miners recommended recruiting inexperienced workers directly from Korea as they had less "seditious tendencies" (sendō-sei), and stated that after training Koreans can "work in difficult spots that would not please Japanese laborers."<sup>26</sup>



**Ruins of the Hashima coalyard and its conveyor belts.  
Photo By Nikolai Johnsen.**

Korean wartime forced labor under colonial Japan, or Korean "labor conscription," went through three phases as labor demand increased: "recruitment (boshū)" from September 1939 to February 1942; "official mediation (kan-assen)" until September 1944, and "conscription (chōyō)" until the end of the Asia-Pacific War in August 1945.<sup>27</sup> It is a common misunderstanding that during the "recruitment" period Japanese companies

recruited Koreans without active help from the military government. In fact, colonial bureaucrats and the police in Korea were actively involved in recruitment to Japan as well as in clamping down on the heavy opposition from local Korean village leaders attempting to protect their much-needed farmers and laborers.<sup>28</sup> Legally, Koreans could decline recruitment, but with pressure from authoritarian colonial police, declining was usually unthinkable.

Kosako Masayuki worked as a supervisor on Hashima from 1939 to 1954. He told *Asahi Shimbun* in 1973 how he went on recruitment trips to Korea that in reality forced Koreans over to Japan to work in coal mines against their will.<sup>29</sup> With the help of local colonial authorities, he rounded up 40 to 50 Koreans from each village where he went, and only the few who managed to jump off the train on its way to the Korean port were spared from slavery on Hashima.

During the “official mediation” period from 1942 to 1944, the Korean Labor Association oversaw the recruitment of workers for Japanese companies.<sup>30</sup> Police and local authorities cooperated to fill labor quotas, and village “lotteries” were sometimes held to select Korean laborers against their will. Police enforced the mobilization.<sup>31</sup>

Ch'oe Changsöp was one of a number of former Korean forced laborers whose “testimony” is documented in the book *If You Listen Carefully to Gunkanjima: Records of Korean and Chinese Forced into Labor at Hashima*, compiled by Japanese and Zainichi community researchers based in Nagasaki. Ch'oe Changsöp was 14 years old in 1943 when Korean officials took him from his school and put him on the train to Busan port. He did not attempt escape due to his captors’ promises of a better life in Japan, but ended up in a hot, humid, and dark Hashima cellar dormitory shared with 40 other Korean forced laborers. With inhumanly small

rations, he worked 12 and 16 hour shifts in mine tunnels too hot to wear anything else than a loin cloth and soon sustained permanent injuries from a cave-in. Ch'oe Changsöp’s testimony includes descriptions of forcefully mobilized Koreans publicly whipped with rubber straps until their skin peeled off, as well as how the different, separated, class of Koreans who arrived before wartime had opportunities to temporarily leave the island. When the war ended, Ch'oe Changsöp was taken to Nagasaki to clean up in the aftermath of the nuclear blast before finally returning home with only 50 yen, having never received his promised salary.<sup>32</sup>



**Ch'oe Changsöp returned to Hashima in 2011 to give testimony.**

**Picture from *Gunkanjima ni mimi wo sumaseba*:**

***Hashima ni kyōsei renkōsareta Chōsenjin Chūgokuin no kiroku,***

**by Nagasaki zainichi Chōsenjin no jinken wo mamoru kai**

**(Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2016, p. 4).**

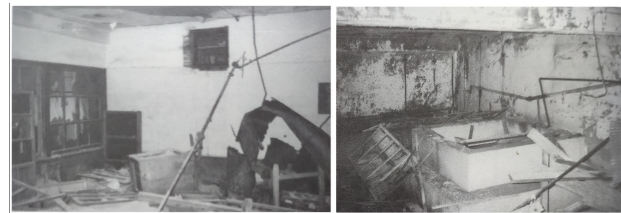
During the third phase, “conscription” from 1944 to 1945, Japanese government authorities selected Koreans for work, officially as labor conscripts. Japanese military police in Korea supervised the mobilization process, which

included physical violence against Korean resisters. Kang Tosi, already a Korean forced laborer in Japanese coal mines on Sakhalin, was forcefully transferred to Hashima in September 1944 when the so-called “conscripted” period started. He had been taken from Korea in 1940 to Sakhalin, and his Korean family followed two years later. When Kang Tosi and 409 other Korean men on Sakhalin were sent to Japan and divided between Hashima and Takashima coal mines, families remained on Sakhalin and did not regain freedom of movement even when this territory was returned to the Soviet Union. Kang Tosi was placed in the Yoshida dormitory on Hashima together with about 300 other Koreans and forced to work at a dangerous coal face with heavy gas and seawater leakage. Kang survived and returned to Korea but was unable to reunite with his family in Sakhalin.<sup>33</sup>

### Forced Labor or Conscripted Labor?

Japan rejects the term “forced labor,” insisting that Korea was annexed into “Greater Japan” rather than colonized. Koreans were considered subjects of Japan and thus could legally be required to work as conscripted Japanese.<sup>34</sup> This explains why Kishida Fumio, who was Foreign Minister in 2015 (Prime Minister since 4 October 2021) held an extraordinary press conference after the Sites’ inscription where he stated that the phrase “forced to work” did not mean “forced labor.”<sup>35</sup> Korea has consistently rejected the term “conscripted labor,” insisting that Korea was illegally occupied by Japan. In 2018, a historical decision by the South Korean Supreme Court ruled that Japan must compensate victims of forced labor because Japan’s colonization of Korea was illegal, and the forced mobilization of Korean workers was unlawful and violated the workers’ human rights.<sup>36</sup> It based its decision in part on the requirement that the

Constitution of the Republic of Korea requires defense of its people’s human rights and that this application of law encompasses Korea’s original declaration of independence of 1919.<sup>37</sup> It is certain that the Japanese government planned all three mobilization phases from 1939 to 1945 that resulted in Koreans losing freedom of movement and being forced into working under extremely harsh and deadly conditions.<sup>38</sup>



**Ruins of the apartment (left) and cellar (right) of Hashima building no. 66 used to lodge groups of Korean forced laborers.**

**Photos from Meiji Nippon no sangyō kakumei isan / kyōsei rōdō Q&A by Takeuchi Yasuto**

**(Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2018, p. 110).**

Foreign forced laborers and sex slaves (euphemistically called “comfort women”) are completely omitted in Katō’s historical interpretations. About 39,000 Chinese laborers were forced to work in Japan (including 204 on Hashima) during wartime.<sup>39</sup> Chinese victims at Mitsubishi’s Hashima, Takashima, and Sakitajima coal mines were officially recognized as forced laborers by the Nagasaki District Court in 2007.<sup>40</sup> “Comfort stations” for the Japanese army are well-known, but many coal mine owners including Mitsubishi on Hashima and Takashima created lesser-known “special comfort stations (Tokubetsu ianjo)” with sex slaves for Japanese and Korean laborers in order to “encourage increased



production and reduce escapes” during wartime.<sup>41</sup> Korean sex slaves on Hashima and Takashima were segregated and confined in brothels or wartime “special comfort stations” for Korean laborers, with no hope of escape. This operation started before other forms of wartime forced labor, as indicated by the account of an 18-year-old Korean “barmaid (shakufu)” who committed suicide on Hashima by drinking cresol in 1937.<sup>42</sup> Cresol was commonly used as a disinfectant in Japanese “comfort stations,” and drinking it was a well-known way of committing suicide among Korean sex slaves.<sup>43</sup> While such women were often illiterate and had usually no idea of what type of “job” they were recruited for, apologists such as controversial Mitsubishi Professor of Legal Studies Mark Ramseyer, at Harvard Law School, argues that these women actively chose careers as prostitutes by relying solely on Japanese documents of the time that deliberately deceived these women.<sup>44</sup>

Takeuchi Yasuto, one of the most prominent and widely cited Japanese researchers of Japanese colonial forced labor issues, estimates that about 800,000 Koreans were forced to work in Japan during wartime, including approximately 1000 Korean forced laborers on Hashima, based on available records.<sup>45</sup> Many Korean forced laborers died from accidents, malnutrition, and violence, and out of 122 recorded Korean deaths on Hashima, 27 deaths have been confirmed to have been those of wartime forced laborers caused by inhumane treatment and working conditions.<sup>46</sup> How is it possible for Japan to state that they take UNESCO resolutions and recommendations seriously, when they have failed to recognize a single victim of wartime forced labor? The IHIC presents a narrative in which Japanese and Koreans were treated equally and overcame harsh working conditions together as they fulfilled their duties for Japan.<sup>47</sup> This narrative is backed up by Japanese, whose childhood memories are of Koreans who arrived before the mobilization program. As children, these

Japanese did not work with forced laborers in the mine or personally experience the deadly conditions of the undersea coal faces. These childhood narratives deny the existence of all forced laborers and sex slaves on Hashima—victims of Japan’s colonialism and militarism whose experiences Japanese children would not have encountered or understood during their time on the island.<sup>48</sup>

### Who is Katō Kōko?

Katō Kōko is the Managing Director of the IHIC and Executive Director of the National Congress of Industrial Heritage (NCIH), which collects evidence for exhibitions in the IHIC. Katō Kōko has lobbied for decades to inscribe Japanese industrial historical sites as UNESCO World Heritage. Katō has long denied the history of Korean and other forced labor at what are now the Sites of the Meiji Industrial Revolution, claiming that Koreans mobilized during the Asia-Pacific War worked under the same conditions as Japanese employees, without experiencing any form of discrimination.<sup>49</sup> The extremity of Katō’s radical revisionism combined with the significance of the Meiji Industrial Revolution Sites’ official World Heritage narratives for Japan-Korea calls for a closer look at her background and powerful personal connections.



**Katō Kōko, photo from Nextage Sasebo promotional poster (Junior Chamber International - Sasebo, 2018) on the homepage of Sasebo City.**

Katō Kōko and her family have had close personal and political connections to the Abe family and to key figures in Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Born in 1959, Katō is the eldest daughter of the late Katō Mutsuki, who served as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and was well-known as the right-hand man of Abe Shintarō.<sup>50</sup> Abe Shintarō, the father of Japan’s longest sitting Prime Minister, Abe Shinzō, was Secretary-General of the LDP and a popular politician until both he and Katō Mutsuki in 1988 were exposed as key figures in a large-scale insider

trading and corruption scandal.<sup>51</sup> The Katō and Abe families have maintained intimate relations,<sup>52</sup> and Abe Shinzō, known for his revisionist views celebratory of Japan’s imperial past, has been a prominent supporter of Katō’s industrial heritage production.<sup>53</sup>

Katō Kōko’s initial career appeared to be following her family’s political path, but her ambition and personal determination led her in another direction. Kōko assisted her father, Katō Mutsuki, through his election campaigns<sup>54</sup> despite never receiving any praise from him.<sup>55</sup> Katō Mutsuki instead repeatedly told Kōko that his rank and position were the only reasons powerful people showed any interest in her.<sup>56</sup> In the 1980s, Katō Kōko at first agreed to her father’s wish that she marry his Private Secretary, Murosaki Katsunobu, who had useful connections to the Japanese Ministry of Finance, his place of employment.<sup>57</sup> But Katō Kōko decided to break the engagement and leave Japan to enroll in a master’s degree at Harvard University, focusing on urban renewal.<sup>58</sup> Katō was well qualified, with a literature degree from Japan’s Keio University, along with work experience as an interpreter at international conferences and conducting research for the American television broadcaster CBS News.<sup>59</sup>

As a student at Harvard University, Katō travelled across the US documenting cases of successful urban renewal projects.<sup>60</sup> In the seven years following graduation, she traveled to many countries to research cases involving industrial heritage, particularly those related to mining.<sup>61</sup> She published the book *Sangyō isan - ‘Chīki to shimin no rekishi’ he no tabi* (Industrial Heritage: A journey towards ‘the history of local communities and their citizens’) in 1999 that highlighted thirteen case studies. Her aim was to promote a re-evaluation of Japan’s industrial heritage. As a result, her father praised her for the first time in her life and insisted that she stay in Japan and focus on giving something back to her country.<sup>62</sup> She

subsequently presented at conferences across Japan as well as abroad, using her international network to invite World Heritage stakeholders to Japan as a way to promote her plan for a Japanese Industrial World Heritage inscription.<sup>63</sup>

Katō Mutsuki's former Private Secretary, Murosaki Katsunobu, became one of Katō Kōko's powerful supporters even though she had rejected their planned wedding. Murosaki Katsunobu married Katō Kōko's sister instead, presumably recognizing the elevated status he could obtain by marrying a Katō family member and taking their family name.<sup>64</sup> It is extremely unusual for Japanese men to take their spouses' family name. The efforts of newly named Katō Katsunobu to do so speaks to the strong political influence of the Katō name and family. Even though he was criticized for having no noticeable achievements, Katō Katsunobu has continued to climb the political status ladder and as of mid-2021 was serving as the Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan.<sup>65</sup> In a July 2021 press conference responding to the UNESCO criticism of Katō Kōko's IHIC, Katō Katsunobu stated "[w]e have always accepted in a very serious manner the resolutions and recommendations issued by the World Heritage Committee."<sup>66</sup>

Katō Kōko has also been a successful entrepreneur that has given her access to a large amount of funds, but not without controversy. When she returned to Japan in 1989, she co-founded Transpacific Education Network, a company that actually was importing wedding dresses and related accessories rather than providing educational services.<sup>67</sup> Katō is the official head of this company, which attracted public attention in 2016 when financial documents were leaked through the Panama Papers.<sup>68</sup> Katō's company owned a large number of shares in Tōkyō Kobetsu Shidō Gakuin (Tokyo Individualized Educational Institute), a major chain of cram schools (juku) in Japan. The Panama Papers

revealed that Tōkyō Kobetsu Shidō Gakuin owned 6.8% of shares of an offshore company established in 2005 on the British Virgin Islands, a well-known tax haven. The documents listed Katō's company, Transpacific Education Network, as the address for Tōkyō Kobetsu Shidō Gakuin, but did not mention Transpacific Education Network.<sup>69</sup> Both Katō and the cram school chain in Japan stated that they could not find any of these records in their own files.<sup>70</sup> Because Katō is not a well-known public figure in Japan, media presented her as a political and personal ally of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and speculated that he could be implicated given his close ties to her if tax avoidance could be proven.<sup>71</sup> Tax havens in places like the British Virgin Islands are a way to minimize company tax and technically are legal, but this practice has recently come under fire by financial authorities in the United States and other major economies.

### Producing Industrial World Heritage

After years of conducting international case studies, Katō Kōko was ready to create pragmatic plans for a Japanese Industrial World Heritage inscription. Katō has called herself an "industrial heritage producer," an ironically fitting title as the Meiji Industrial Sites demanded a carefully crafted story to fulfil World Heritage criteria.<sup>72</sup> Facilitating World Heritage inscriptions can be a meaningful way to serve one's country for multiple reasons. The basis for World Heritage sites being listed is that they must be of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), demonstrating international significance; it must "transcend national boundaries and be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."<sup>73</sup> A major reason many countries pursue World Heritage site listings, however, has been economic, as inscription of sites can generate increased economic gain through



tourism, new jobs and infrastructure.<sup>74</sup> Japan already had many inscribed World Heritage sites in and around the popular tourist destination of Kyoto and elsewhere. In contrast, industrial heritage inscriptions that focused on less visited areas could include Kyushu in southwest Japan, given its rich industrial history.

Shimadzu Kimiyasu, a wealthy businessman, former Mitsubishi employee and descendant of a Satsuma (Kyushu) warlord, contacted Katō in 1999 after reading her book on industrial heritage. He wanted Katō’s help for inscribing his ancestor’s Meiji Era arms factory complex in Kagoshima<sup>75</sup> as World Heritage and offered to sponsor events where Katō could promote her ideas.<sup>76</sup> However, Katō had to overcome many obstacles before any site could be nominated for inscription.

Each selected industrial site had to meet the UNESCO criterion as World Heritage that had OUV. Several serious attempts had been made by others to inscribe Hashima as World Heritage, but no narratives had convincingly made the case that the former coal mine had OUV.<sup>77</sup> Katō found a solution while touring Japanese industrial sites with international heritage experts who were part of her network. She often invited the people to industrial heritage events she sponsored. One such event held in Kyushu in 2002 involved Stuart B. Smith, who was the Secretary of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) and CEO of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust in England. He suggested to Katō that Japanese industrial sites could be recognized as having OUV because of their unique role in Japan’s modernization.<sup>78</sup> He believed that Japan’s earliest modernized industrial sites included coal mines such as the Hashima and Miike coal mines, which he contended had utilized a unique combination of Japanese endogenous techniques and Western machinery. This is a dubious claim, but Kato celebrated this “unique

combination” in her interpretations, even though the underground technology used up to 1910 was primitive compared to existing Western standards of the time, while profits from Mitsubishi’s Hashima and Mitsui’s Miike were derived heavily from exploitation of low-skilled Japanese workers, including women, and convict labor.<sup>79</sup>

The following year, Katō invited the International Mining History Congress to hold its congress in Japan and arranged an optional tour of Kyushu industrial heritage sites for those attending. On this tour German UNESCO commissioner Birgitta Ringbeck suggested that a serial nomination of multiple sites could qualify for World Heritage inscription.<sup>80</sup> With these two suggestions, Katō believed she could convince UNESCO and related bodies by combining narratives of a series of Meiji Era Japanese industrial sites to demonstrate OUV as the “the first successful transfer of Western industrialism to a non-Western country.”<sup>81</sup>

Katō’s next big hurdle was to gain sufficient support in Japan from central and local governments. Shimadzu, who wanted the Shuseikan arms factory in Kagoshima to be part of a serial World Heritage inscription, joined Katō in meetings with local politicians in 2005. The Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture, Itō Yuichirō, became one of their first local supporters.<sup>82</sup> That same year, Katō’s childhood friend, Abe Shinzō, advanced closer to becoming Prime Minister when he became Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan. Katō talked with him frequently (“mimi ni tako ga dekiru kurai”) about Japan’s industrial heritage.<sup>83</sup> Following these talks, Katō began to incorporate sites in Yamaguchi prefecture (in Honshu) into her industrial heritage serial nomination plans. Katō would certainly have been aware that Abe’s electoral district included the town of Hagi, less than 30 km from Abe’s traditional family home, in Yamaguchi.

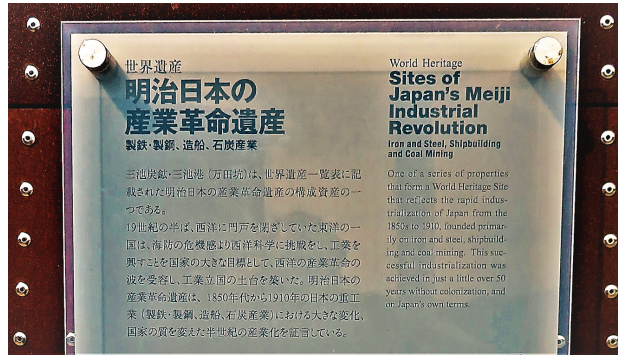


**Abe Shinzō. Photo by TTTNIS, Wikimedia Commons 2012.**

In November 2006, Katō applied to the Agency of Cultural Affairs for the inclusion of “The Modern Industrial Heritage Sites in Kyushu and Yamaguchi” in Japan’s World Heritage Tentative List, a World Heritage requirement prior to an official Nomination List. She had local government support in her submission.<sup>84</sup> Abe Shinzō began his first term as Prime Minister of Japan just two months before Kato’s submission, which made it easier for his wife to officially back a major conference on industrial heritage coordinated by Katō a month later in October. That same month, prior to filing the application, Katō rushed to Hagi City Hall with no prior appointment and convinced the incumbent Mayor Nomura Koji to support the inclusion of Hagi sites. Nomura initially declined because he was already working on a World Heritage nomination for the Hagi Castle

Town,<sup>85</sup> but Katō promised she would take care of all preparations to inscribe the Castle Town as an industrial component site.<sup>86</sup> Ultimately, both the Hagi Castle Town and the controversial military Shōkasonjuku Academy in Hagi were conveniently included and inscribed as industrial heritage, despite never having been industrial sites.<sup>87</sup> These sites are widely regarded as a way that Katō facilitated pork barrel operations for Abe and other Yamaguchi-based politicians, giving them strong reasons to support Katō’s heritage proposal over alternatives.<sup>88</sup>

Katō’s first application to the Agency of Cultural Affairs failed, but a second application in 2008 resulted in the Sites being added to Japan’s World Heritage Tentative List in January 2009.<sup>89</sup> After she gained strong support from Japan’s elite politicians, her next step was to create a proposal that would have particular appeal to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. While maintaining her support in Japan, Katō had to find a way to hide the biggest stumbling block—the history of Japanese militarism, colonialism, and forced labor intrinsically linked to Japan’s industrial revolution. The companies that benefitted from wartime forced labor at the Sites still exist today and have the Japanese government’s backing in their refusal to admit responsibility in the growing numbers of related lawsuits against them. Katō sought to protect the interests of these companies while also attempting to pacify South Korea, which had a representative on the World Heritage Committee.



**Explanatory panel at the Miike coal mines based on Katō’s historical interpretations. Photo by Takeuchi Yasuto used with permission, edited to make text clearer.**

South Korea would never agree to inscribe the Meiji Industrial Revolution Sites as World Heritage unless the history of Korean forced laborers was acknowledged. In Korea, Japanese companies linked to some of the sites still commercially operating are referred to as *chōnbōm kiōp* (war crime companies) due to their history of forced labor. Nevertheless, in the leadup to a decision on inscription Katō naively pushed for a narrative that did not mention Japanese colonialism. Since Katō presented her first UNESCO inscription

proposal in 2009, the timeline for relevant historical narratives of Japan’s Meiji industrial revolution has been dated 1850’s-1910. The Meiji Era ended in 1912 (two years after Korea lost its independence to Japan), but Katō’s interpretation was that “proactive importation of Western technology” ended in 1910,<sup>90</sup> and what happened afterward resulted from Japanese technological self-sufficiency, no longer reliant on the West. After 1910 Japan’s industrial revolution was complete. By ending the story in 1910, the control over Korea through annexation can conveniently be omitted from the historical narrative, including major investment by companies like Mitsui and Mitsubishi in Korea that led to resource acquisition used at production facilities that included several of the Meiji Industrial Sites. The historical inaccuracy of this timeline<sup>91</sup> only makes it more obvious that it was constructed with the aim of dissociating Japanese colonialism from the country’s industrial history.

This is the first of a two-part series. Part 2 will appear in the next edition of the *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 15 December 2021.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [WHC.15 /39.COM /INF.19](#), Summary Records from the World Heritage Committee’s 39th Session, Bonn, Germany, 28 June - 8 July 2015, pp. 223-24.

<sup>2</sup> The following free guidebook contains an overview of all component sites with details on those where wartime forced labor was used: Center for Historical Truth and Justice, and Network for Fact Finding on Wartime Mobilization and Forced Labor, [Sites of Japan’s Meiji](#)



*Industrial Revolution and Forced Labor: Korea-Japan NGO Guidebook.*

<sup>3</sup> [WHC.15 /39.COM /19](#), Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th Session, Bonn, Germany, 28 June - 8 July 2015, pp. 177.

<sup>4</sup> [WHC.15 /39.COM /INF.19](#), pp. 222.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Spokesperson’s Statement on Contents of Exhibition at Japan’s Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo](#), 15 June 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Etienne Clément, Judith Herrmann & Peter Phillips, [Report on the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission to the industrial heritage information centre related to the World Heritage property ‘Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and steel, ship-building and coal mining’ \(Japan\) \(c 1484\)](#), 2 July 2021, pp. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp. 11.

<sup>9</sup> [WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add.2](#), Document from the World Heritage Committee extended forty-fourth session, 12 July 2021, pp. 7.

<sup>10</sup> While Katō tactically avoids making her most extreme statements in English, Forward JAPAN of Sankei Shimbun has translated to English a Japanese interview with Katō with the inflammatory title: [“Ex-Abe Advisor Koko Kato: Research Exposes Korea’s Lies About Workers in Japan.”](#) Okuhara Shimpei, 29 August 2019.

<sup>11</sup> NCIH, [Industrial Heritage Information Centre booking website](#) (accessed 7 October 2021).

<sup>12</sup> According to the [IHIC FAQ on its official website](#), photography is forbidden to “protect copyrights etc.”

<sup>13</sup> Photographs of all public areas of the IHIC are included in Clément, Herrmann & Phillips, “Report on the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission,” pp. 38-56.

<sup>14</sup> JapanGov 2021, [“Emergence of Industrial Japan in the Meiji Era -Industrial Heritage Information Centre-,”](#) *We are Tomodachi*, Autumn 2020.

<sup>15</sup> David Palmer, [“Gunkanjima / Battleship Island, Nagasaki: World Heritage Historical Site or Urban Ruins Tourist Attraction?”](#) *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus*, vol. 16, issue 1, no. 4, Jan. 1, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> See for example trailers and footage for Japanese movies [“Jun”](#) (1980), [“The Kamikaze Adventurer”](#) (1981), [“Dioxin from Fish!!”](#) (1991), and [“Attack on Titan”](#) (2015), as well as music videos including B’z [“My Lonely Town”](#) (2009), and internationally well-known Japanese video game [“Forbidden Siren 2”](#) (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Joshua Synenko, “Geolocating popular memory: Recorded images of Hashima Island after Skyfall.” *Popular Communication* 16(2), 8 November 2017, pp. 141-153.

<sup>18</sup> In 2017, 102 Japanese tourists to Hashima were interviewed about their visitation motives as part of a field study on dark tourism. Not one single participating tourist said they had been motivated by the chance to learn about either Japan’s modernization and the history of industrial revolution or the Koreans and others who were forced to work there. Instead, the most popular motives were attraction towards the World Heritage status of Hashima (although only the coal mine is inscribed as such), attraction towards the scenery of Hashima, and general interest in visiting ruins. A number of interviewees had been intrigued by their former Hashima resident guide and his experience of post-war hardships, while others found that this took away from the enjoyment of sightseeing and photography. The interviewer and researcher concluded that there is a Japanese market for dark tourism with narratives of

Japanese suffering on Hashima, but not for narratives in which the Japanese are the perpetrators. See Itō Daiki, “Nagasaki gunkanjima ni okeru dāku tsūrizumu: ‘manazashi’ no kōchiku ni chakumoku shite” [“Dark tourism in Gunkanjima, Nagasaki: Focusing on the construction of the tourist gaze”]. *Hyōgo chiri* 63, 2018, pp. 57-76.

<sup>19</sup> See for example [Nippon Travel Agency](#), [Hankyu Travel](#), and Nagasaki Prefecture’s tourism federation [Nagasaki-ken Kankō Renmei](#).

<sup>20</sup> Palmer, “Gunkanjima.”

<sup>21</sup> Calculated from [Nagasaki City Statistical Yearbook 2020](#) available on Nagasaki City’s official websites.

<sup>22</sup> Clément, Herrmann & Phillips, “Report on the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission,” pp. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Shibata Hirotohi, “‘Kioku’ no mujintō Gunkanjima - Haikō no shima Nagasaki-ken Hashima” [“Remembered as the deserted Battleship Island - The abandoned mining island in Nagasaki Prefecture- Hashima”]. *Senshūdaigaku shakai kagaku kenkyūjo geppō* No. 566-567, 2010, pp. 59-75.

<sup>24</sup> Suzuki Fumio 2020, [edited video interview](#), 5 August 2020.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Document “Shōwa 15-nen sekitan kōgyōkai dai 2-gō A-a-11-147” 1940, as cited by Nagano Susumu and Kim Min-Young, “Senzen, Nippon sekitan sangyō ni okeru ‘Chōsenjin rōdōsha inyū’ no keika - 1940-nen (Shōwa 15 nen) ‘Chikuho sekitan kōgyōkai’ no shiryō wo chūshin toshite” [“The pre-war process of introducing Korean laborers to Japan’s coal industry - focus on 1940 documents from ‘Chikuho coal mining association’”]. *Saga daigaku keizai ronshū* 24(4), November 1991, pp. 75-109.

<sup>27</sup> David Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor at Mitsubishi’s Nagasaki and Hiroshima Shipyards: Big Business, Militarized Government, and the Absence of Shipbuilding Workers’ Rights in World War II,” in Marcel van der Linden and Magaly Rodríguez García, eds, *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 169-77; Takazane Yasunori, “Nagasaki to Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō: chōsa kenkyū no seika to kadai” [“Nagasaki and the forced mobilization of Koreans: results and issues of the investigative research”], *Ōhara shakai mondai kenkyūjo zasshi* 687, 2016, pp. 1-14; Tonomura Masaru, *Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō [Forced mobilization of Koreans]*, (Tokyo: Iwanami shinsho, 2012); William Underwood, “Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages (1): Reparations for Korean Forced Labor in Japan,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus* vol. 4 issue 9, 4 September 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Tonomura, “Forced Mobilisation,” pp. 81.

<sup>29</sup> Asahi Shimbun Nagasaki edition, 1973. “Gunkanjima. Shūsen ni kidzuki kansei. Sabetsu sareta Chōsen Chuugokujin” [“Battleship Island. Shouts of joy after realizing the war is over. The discriminated Koreans and Chinese”]. 25 October 1973. Pp. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor,” pp. 170.

<sup>31</sup> Tonomura, “Forced mobilisation,” pp. 112-16.

<sup>32</sup> Ch’oe Changsōp’s testimonies. Nagasaki zainichi Chōsenjin no jinken wo mamoru kai, *Gunkanjima ni mimi wo sumaseba: Hashima ni kyōsei renkōsareta Chōsenjin Chūgokuin no kiroku [If you listen carefully to Gunkanjima: Records of Korean and Chinese forced into labor at Hashima]* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2016), pp. 40-47.

<sup>33</sup> Takeuchi, “Coal mines,” pp. 277-78.

<sup>34</sup> Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor,” pp. 169.

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, [Extraordinary Press Conference by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida](#), 5 July 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Seokwoo Lee and Seryon Lee, “Yeo Woon Taek v. New Nippon Steel Corporation,” *American Journal of International Law* 113 (3), 11 July 2019, pp. 592-599.

<sup>37</sup> Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor,” pp. 172-173.

<sup>38</sup> Takeuchi Yasuto, *Meiji Nippon no sangyō kakumei isan / kyōsei rōdō Q&A [Meiji Japan’s heritage of the industrial revolution / Forced labor Q&A]* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2018), pp. 18; Underwood, “Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages (1).”

<sup>39</sup> Takeuchi, “Q&A” pp. 20; 102.

<sup>40</sup> Uematsu Seiji, “[‘Shakai-shi rōdō-shi’ ga ketsuraku shite iru Sangyō isan jōhō sentā tenji](#)” [[“Industrial Heritage Information Centre exhibition lacking ‘social history and labor history’”](#)] . *Shūkan Kinyōbi Online*, 5 November 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Takeuchi, “Coal mines,” pp. 265-67.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Yoshimi Yoshiaki and Yang Chingcha, “Zainichi no moto Nippon-gun ‘ianfu’ no kaiso – Son Shindo-san no shōgen” [“Recollections of Korean former military ‘comfort woman’ residing in Japan - Song Sinto’s testimony”], *Chūō daigaku ronshū no.* 40, Feb. 2019.

<sup>44</sup> John Mark Ramseyer, “[Contracting for sex in the Pacific War](#),” *International Review of Law and Economics* 65, 1 December 2020. For discussion see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “[The ‘Comfort Women’ Issue, Freedom of Speech, and Academic Integrity: A Study Aid](#),” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 19(5) nr. 12, 1 March 2021. Note that Mitsubishi Professor Ramseyer has also stated in a [2019 Japan Forward interview](#) that Koreans forced to work for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries were “lucky” because they avoided the battlefield.

<sup>45</sup> Takeuchi, “Q&A,” pp. 18-20; 100.

<sup>46</sup> Yun Chihyōn, [Basic Investigation through Death Records into Conditions of Korean Victims of Forced Mobilization to the Hashima Coal Mine](#). Seoul: Commission on Verification and Support for the Victims of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Colonialism in Korea, 29 May 2012, pp. 281; 328.

<sup>47</sup> Clément, Herrmann & Phillips, “Report on the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission,” pp. 5-6.

<sup>48</sup> Uematsu, “[Industrial Heritage Information Centre](#).”

<sup>49</sup> See for example [WWUK TV interview with Katō Kōko on YouTube](#), 16 September 2020; Okuhara, “[Ex-Abe advisor Koko Kato](#).”

<sup>50</sup> Daily Shincho, “[‘Ikinari ‘23 shisan’ tōroku no kage no tateyakusha ‘Katō Mutsuki’ moto nōsuishō chōjo intabyū – ‘Sekai isan’ 10nen no nemawashi to Kankoku no hakai kōsaku](#)” [[“Interview with former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Katō Mutsuki’s eldest daughter who was a leading actor behind the scenes of the sudden inscription of 23 heritage sites – 10 years of planning World Heritage and Korean Sabotage”](#)], 21 May 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Asahi Shimbun, “[Rikurūto kanren hikōkai kabu no jōto de seikai shunō no hisho-mei tōjō](#)” [[“Names of secretaries of top political leaders emerges in the transfer of unlisted stocks connected to Recruit Co.”](#)], 6 July 1988, pp. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Daily Shincho, “[‘Posuto Suga’ ‘Katō kanbō chōkan’ no rirekisho ... konyakusha ni furare , ōkurashō de wa medatazu](#)” [[“Post-Suga – Personal history of Chief Cabinet Secretary Katō... Dumped by fiancée and no noticeable achievements in the Ministry of Finance”](#)], 16 September 2020.

<sup>53</sup> For Abe Shinzō, historical narratives of imperial Japan are also personal as his grandfather Kishi Nobusuke (also formerly Prime Minister, 1957-60) spent three years in prison as an unindicted Class A war criminal for alleged atrocities committed in Japanese-occupied Manchuria.

<sup>54</sup> Daily Shincho and Yahoo News Japan, [Talk between Katō Kōko and Satō Masaru](#), 29 December 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Daily Shincho, [“Katō Mutsuki’s eldest daughter.”](#)

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Shūkanbunshun, [“‘Abe ni Suga ari, Suga ni Suga nashi’ - Katō kanbō chōkan to iu ‘shippai jinji’”](#) [“‘Abe had Suga, Suga have no Suga’ - Chief Cabinet Secretary Katō is a failed human resource”]. Shūkan Online, 28 January 2021.

<sup>58</sup> Daily Shincho, [“Post-Suga”](#); Okuhara, [“Ex-Abe advisor Koko Kato.”](#)

<sup>59</sup> Japan Institute for National Fundamentals, [“‘Watashi-tachi no kuni Kōgyō Nippon Kono kuni wo sasaeru jūkōgyō’ Katō Kōko moto naikaku kanbō san'yo”](#) [“‘Our country, industrial Japan, and the heavy industries that supports this country’. Kōko Katō, former Special Advisor to the Cabinet”], 28 December 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Yomiuri Shimbun Tokyo morning edition, [“‘Hon to hito’ ‘Sangyō isan’ no Katō Kōko-san - Migotona Beikoku no toshi saisei”](#) [“The book and the person ‘Industrial heritage’s’ Kōko Katō - Impressive urban regeneration in the US”], 21 February 1999, pp. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Daily Shincho, [“Katō Mutsuki’s eldest daughter.”](#)

<sup>63</sup> World Heritage Council for the Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution (WHCSJMIR), [Sekai isan tōroku made no michinori](#) [The way to World Heritage inscription].

<sup>64</sup> Daily Shincho, [“Post-Suga.”](#)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid; Shūkanbunshun, [“Abe had Suga.”](#)

<sup>66</sup> Asahi Shimbun 2021, [“EDITORIAL: Japan should redo Battleship Island exhibit to UNESCO’s liking,”](#) 27 July 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Daily Shincho, [“Panama bunsho keisai yuiitsu no ‘kōshoku’ - Katō Kōko naikaku san'yo wa ‘ichido mo kiita koto ga arimasen’”](#) [“The only mention of public office in the Panama Papers - Special Advisor to the Cabinet Katō Kōko says she ‘never heard of it’”], 19 May 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Transpacific Group, Transpacific Education Network [Company Profile](#); Tabe, [“Panama Papers.”](#)

<sup>69</sup> Tabe, [“Panama Papers”](#); Sankei News, [“Panama bunsho no shōgeki - Renrakusaki ni naikaku san'yo no gaishamei ‘mattaku kokoroatari nai’”](#) [“Panama Papers shock - Contact details connected to the company of a Special Advisor to the Cabinet - ‘I have no idea about it’”], Sankei News, 7 May 2016; Daily Shincho, [“Panama Papers.”](#)

<sup>70</sup> Sankei News, [“Panama Papers.”](#)

<sup>71</sup> Tabe, [“Panama Papers.”](#)

<sup>72</sup> NCIH webpage. [Soshiki taisei](#) [Organizational structure].

<sup>73</sup> [WHC.19/01](#), *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, 10 July 2019, pp. 20.

<sup>74</sup> UNESCO, [“Socio-economic Impacts of World Heritage Listing.”](#)

<sup>75</sup> Shuseikan Reverberatory Furnace, “Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution,” Kagoshima site. [The Shuseikan.](#)



<sup>76</sup> [Interview with Shimadzu Kimiyasu](#) for Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution website, 5 June 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Atsuko Hashimoto and David J. Telfer, "Transformation of Gunkanjima (Battleship Island): from a coalmine island to a modern industrial heritage tourism site in Japan," *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(2), 7 April 2016, pp. 107-124.

<sup>78</sup> [Interview with Shimadzu Kimiyasu](#).

<sup>79</sup> David Palmer, "Japan's World Heritage Miike Coal Mine - Where prisoners-of-war worked 'like slaves,'" *the Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 19(13), 1 July 2021.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*; Daily Shincho, "[Katō Mutsuki's eldest daughter.](#)"

<sup>81</sup> [WHC.15 /39.COM /19](#), pp. 177.

<sup>82</sup> [Interview with Itō Yuichirō](#) for Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution website, 16 October 2015; WHCSJMIR, "[The way to World Heritage.](#)"

<sup>83</sup> Daily Shincho, "[Katō Mutsuki's eldest daughter.](#)"

<sup>84</sup> WHCSJMIR, "[The way to World Heritage.](#)"

<sup>85</sup> [Interview with Nomura Kōji](#) for Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution website, 7 March 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Daily Shincho, "[Katō Mutsuki's eldest daughter.](#)"

<sup>87</sup> Officially, Shōkasonjuku Academy was included in the Sites because its historical teacher Yoshida Shōin's (1830-1859) ideas can be interpreted as blending Western industrial science and Japanese traditions. Yoshida is infamous for propagating Japanese militarism and colonial expansion in Asia, and his students included future prime ministers such as Yamagata Aritomo and Itō Hirobumi—the first resident-general of Korea after it was made a Japanese protectorate. Abe Shinzō holds Yoshida and his militarism in high regards and refers to him as *sensei*. See William Underwood, "[History in a Box: UNESCO and the Framing of Japan's Meiji Era,](#)" *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13 (2), 29 June 2015.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*; Mizui Takako, "[Kankoku hampatsu 'Meiji sangyō isan' wa Abe shushō no gorioshi! Shikakejin no josei ni 'ore ga yaraseteageru'](#)" [["The Meiji industrial heritage objected to by Korea is being pushed forward by Prime Minister Abe! Tells female key figure 'I'll let you do it'"\]](#). *Excite News*, 6 July 2015; Hiromi Mizuno, "[Rasa Island: What Industrialization To Remember and Forget,](#)" *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 15 (2), 1 January 2017.

<sup>89</sup> Despite Katō's efforts, the Japanese Agency of Cultural Affairs did not approve the first application for adding the Kyushu and Yamaguchi sites to the World Heritage tentative list. Out of the 24 applications received in 2006, the Agency approved four sites in 2007, one of which was the "Churches and Christian Sites in Nagasaki" in Kyushu. Soon after, Katō successfully invited Sir Neil Cossons, founder of TICCIH and incumbent Chairman of English Heritage, to promote Japan's industrial heritage at a conference in Hagi. A new application for inclusion in the World Heritage tentative list was filed the same year (2007). The Agency of Cultural Affairs stated the Sites may be appropriate for the tentative list in 2008, and months after "the Consortium for the Promotion of the Modern Industrial Heritage (Kyushu-Yamaguchi) to Inscription on the World Heritage" (renamed in 2016 to "World Heritage Council for the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution"-WHCSJMIR) was established with Itō Yuichirō, the incumbent Kagoshima Prefecture Governor, as the Chairman and Katō Kōko as the coordinator. The Kyushu Yamaguchi Industrial Heritage Expert Advisory Committee was established under the Consortium with Sir Neil Cossons as the Chairman. The Agency of Cultural Affairs approved the Meiji industrial heritage sites for the World Heritage tentative

list less than a month later. See [“The way to World Heritage.”](#)

<sup>90</sup> Consortium for the Promotion of the Modern Industrial Heritage [Kyushu-Yamaguchi] to Inscription on the World Heritage, 2009. [Emergence of Industrial Japan: Kyushu, Yamaguchi](#), 22 October 2009.

<sup>91</sup> The official explanation for ending the narrative of Japan’s Industrial Revolution in 1910 has been adjusted and given slightly more detail since inscription. The current explanation can be found on a display within the IHIC, as well as in the Sites’ Interpretation Manual from 2017. It states that the Japan-British Exhibition held in London in 1910 marked the time when “the world first acknowledged Japan as an industrial nation” (National Congress of Industrial Heritage 2017, 45-46). This claim is false. The 1910 Japan-British Exhibition’s focus was cultural more than industrial. This was Japan’s 37th international exhibition in the West since 1873 (Hotta-Lister 1999, 221-22). While the exhibition attracted many British visitors, it was widely regarded as a failure from a Japanese perspective. Japanese newspapers and politicians of that time expressed strong embarrassment over displays of rural Japan and its colonies that portrayed Japan, in their words, as uncivilized and barbaric. They further criticized how ethnological expositions featured Ainu and Taiwanese “natives” who lived in huts could imply to the West that their personal rights were not respected by Japan (Hotta-Lister 1999, 131-38). See Ayako Hotta-Lister, *The Japan-British Exhibition of 1910: Gateway to the Island Empire of the East*, (New York: Routledge: 1999); National Congress of Industrial Heritage, [Interpretation Manual: Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution](#), 10 October 2017.