This study begins with the question of how Britain, as a European Power, was attracted towards Japan, an Asian country, at the end of the nineteenth century and which necessitated Britain's coming out of the so-called policy of "splendid isolation". By that time, Japan had defeated China in 1895 and exploited the myth of Chinese superiority and reduced her to a "sickman" of the East. Both on account of Japan's emergence on the world's stage, and in spite of her ambitions in Asia which the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 confirmed, Britain concluded an Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902. Both Britain and Japan retained the Alliance as long as they could and till the Washington Conference of 1921. For Japan, the Alliance was the cornerstone of her foreign policy.

Japan made an all-out attempt to achieve rapidly a world-power status. She joined the war in 1914 to satisfy her ambition for political expansion and economic imperialism in the Far East, and in order to force the Western Powers to overcome racial prejudices. However, she used the Anglo-Japanese Alliance as an instrument and the British request for help and co-operation in the war as the guiding factor for joining the war in 1914.

It is worthy of note that Britain, in her campaign against Germany, could not do without the active help and co-operation of Japan, which she sought under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1911. Japan capitalized on the British request for help and co-operation, and covered her own ambition in the Far East and the Pacific. Legally, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance
could not become operative unless the Germans had taken the offensive, either by tampering with the British sea communications or by attacking a British colony in Asia. Ignoring strict legal interpretations, Britain sought Japanese help for defensive measure. Besides helping Britain, Japan used this opportunity in her policy of _revenge_ against Germany for the latter's part in the Three Power Intervention in 1895 which had compelled Japan to retrocede Liaotung Peninsula after her success over China in the same year.

Japan rendered a significant service to Britain in the World War. Her help had an impact on Britain's overall war strategy both in the Far East and in Europe. Japan helped Britain and the Entente Powers with men and material. She destroyed the German stronghold in the Far East and the Pacific and pursued the German warships out of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific and maintained Britain's communications with the Colonies. Her help to Britain after the German submarine warfare in the Mediterranean in 1917 was particularly significant. Thus, Japan made a substantial contribution to Britain's victory in the Far Eastern theatre in 1918. The German defeat confirmed Britain's predominance in European waters.

The war gave a tremendous impetus to Japanese commercial and industrial expansion. She presented China with the notorious "Twenty-one Demands". The absorption of the European Powers in the life-and-death conflict gave Japan the opportunity to secure a commanding position in China and South Manchuria. She used this moment for some gains in Siberia also. But the peace settlement at Versailles did not endorse Japan's plea for
equality of nations and the just treatment of their nationals. Even Britain, Japan's ally, refused to accept the proposal, in spite of the fact that the former was genuinely grateful for Japan's service in the war. For it was no part of British strategy to substitute Japan for Germany.

No single historian has made an adequate study of the subject viz., "Anglo-Japanese Relations during the First World War". In fact, most scholars very hastily sum up Japan's contribution to the British war efforts and ignore the relevance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to Japan's entry into the war. The special features of the present study are: firstly, why did Japan feel impelled to convert an essentially European conflict into a world conflagration? Secondly, the project brings out in the light of British Foreign Office Records and documents how far Japan was legally bound to support Britain in the latter's war efforts, without any immediate provocation from Germany or the Central Powers. Thirdly, the study seeks to explain to what extent the Japanese support had an impact on Britain's overall war strategy both in the Far East and in Europe. The Japanese support was much above British expectations and it quietened somewhat the "yellow peril" propaganda indulged in the British dominions such as, Australia, and New Zealand. Incidentally, as a result of the war, the future of the British Liberal Party was doomed.

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