

**THE PROBLEM OF JAPAN: A POLITICAL STUDY  
OF JAPAN AND OF HER RELATIONS WITH  
RUSSIA, GREAT BRITAIN, CHINA, GERMANY,  
THE UNITED STATES, THE BRITISH COLONIES  
AND THE NETHERLANDS, AND OF THE WORLD  
POLITICS OF THE FAR EAST AND THE PACIFIC**

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The problem of Japan: a political study of Japan and of her relations with Russia, Great Britain, China, Germany, the United States, the British colonies and the Netherlands, and of the world politics of the Far East and the Pacific by Sidney Osborne

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**SIDNEY OSBORNE**

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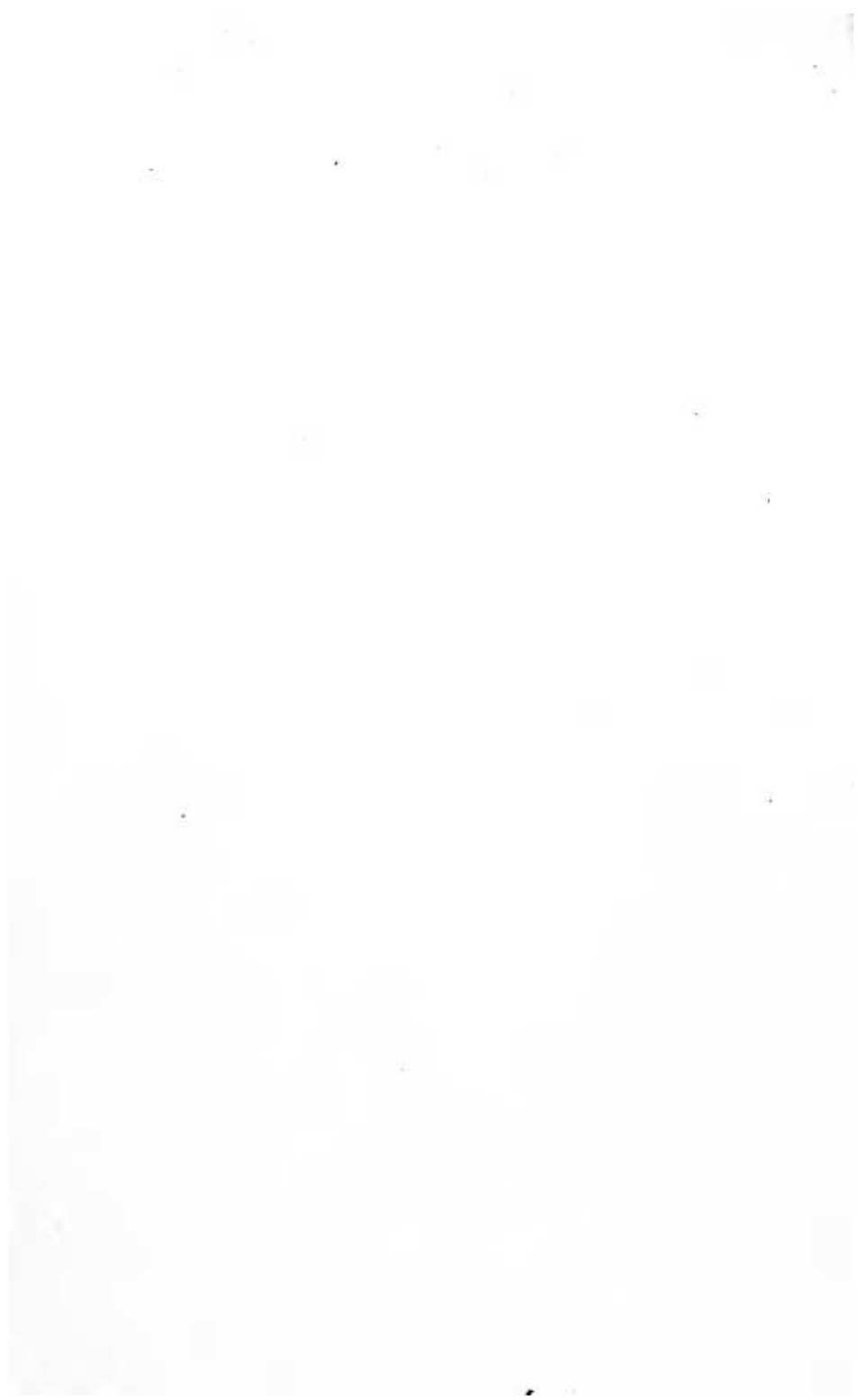
BY

AN EX-COUNSELLOR OF LEGATION  
IN THE FAR EAST

IN ONE VOLUME



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## INTRODUCTION.

The volume herewith submitted is a political study of Japan's relations towards the world war and of the results that may be expected to flow from her participation therein.

The plan of the book is to trace from its original sources the development of Japan's present political tendencies and to make clear the aims and policies of Japan in the Far East and the region of the Pacific. Accordingly, separate chapters are devoted to the consideration of Japanese relations with each one of the Powers with which it comes in contact in the region referred to—with Russia, China, Great Britain, Germany, the United States, the British Colonies, and the Netherlands. The problem of Japan is one that intimately concerns each one of the countries named, and it is the author's purpose to indicate the nature of the problem in each separate instance and to draw therefrom certain conclusions with respect to the manner in which all these interrelated questions will affect the future destinies of Japan.

Japan's attitude as a belligerent in the world war is the result of a foreign policy that was established by her real rulers, the small coterie of clan statesmen that stand behind the Throne, during the very first years of her 'Restoration' era that began in 1868. It is a policy that already in the sixteenth century occupied the minds of her great leaders, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, who were at the same time great military chieftains and great statesmen. After their death, Japanese progress along the lines these men would have

followed, was held in abeyance. For two hundred and fifty years the idea of the hegemony of the Far East slumbered in the bosom of Japan. With the coming of the Americans and Europeans soon after the middle of the last century, and the abandonment of her seclusion policy, Japan awoke to new life, and again took up the threads of policy that had been spun by Hideyoshi centuries before. In 1894 Japan went to war with China, in 1904 with Russia, and in 1914 with Germany. Each of these wars, equi-distant from each other in lapse of time, are like links in a chain in their relation to one another. Each of them in succession tends to bind firmer and firmer, Japan's grasp upon the East. What the future fate of Japan is to be will depend to a very great extent on the outcome of the present war. As the author indicates in the following pages, signs are not wanting of a complete change in the attitude of Japan towards the Powers with whom she is at present allied.

As the reader will perceive, it is the writer's opinion that the problem of Japan will be solved in one of two ways—by a new combination composed of England, Germany, and the United States, or by a new combination composed of Japan, Germany and Russia. One of these two combinations must inevitably arise out of the present war. The problems in the East that await solution are too complicated and too far-reaching to permit of any half-measures. Attention to these questions cannot be postponed. Moreover, Japan is fully awake to her danger, and her astute statesmen may be depended upon to anticipate events and, by strengthening her own position in the Far East, endeavor to hold in check the forces opposed to her while she works to establish for herself a condition of economic and financial independence, free from the dangers of isolation that would threaten her under certain conditions.

The writer believes himself fortunate in being able to take



an entirely independent attitude with respect to the questions discussed, and absolutely to free himself from any partisanship or bias for or against any nation or group of nations, by reason of the fact that having lived, traveled, studied and worked in various parts of the world, on widely separated continents, it has become a habit to examine all political questions, not from a national, but from an international point of view.

The writer does not presume to judge, either to approve or to disapprove the motives of any of the belligerents. Centuries will pass before the verdict of history shall have been uttered upon these questions, and even then the verdict is bound to be a Scotch one—Not Proven. All that we contemporaries can hope to do, is to attempt to throw a little light here and there, and in doing so, to preserve an impartial and unbiassed spirit. We may permit ourselves to point out perceived dangers, and we may indicate the direction in which certain policies lead, but in doing so, let us beware of treading the paths of falsehood, hatred, and prejudice.

THE HAGUE, October 5, 1918.

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I.

THE EUROPEAN WAR, JAPAN'S OPPORTUNITY.