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## Japan and the British world, 1904-14

Heere, Cornelis (2016) *Japan and the British world, 1904-14*. PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).



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### Abstract

This dissertation analyses the effect of the rise of Japan on the 'British world' during the early twentieth century, from the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) to the outbreak of the First World War. Victory over Russia in 1905 transformed Japan's international position, elevating it to the rank of a Great Power, and allowing it to become an increasingly significant actor in East Asia and the Pacific. As its presence expanded, so did the scope for interaction with the British imperial system, bringing Japan into closer, and often frictious contact with Anglophone communities from the China coast to western Canada. This dissertation seeks to analyse that process, and assess its significance both for the changing nature of the Anglo-Japanese relationship, and the evolution of the British imperial system. By incorporating sources from Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the China coast within a single study, this dissertation integrates disparate historiographies that have taken either the imperial metropolis or the colonial nation as their object of study. It reaches three primary conclusions. First, it demonstrates that the imperial 'periphery' came to play an increasingly central role in how the British relationship with Japan was construed. Second, it showcases that a sense of external pressure from Japan, often interpreted in racial as much as geopolitical or commercial terms, became a prominent factor in how colonial elites came to redefine their position in a wider British world. Third, it shows that diverging racial views, in particular, came to constitute a structural problem in the management of the AngloJapanese relationship. The following study opens with an analysis of British assessments of the Russo-Japanese War, and proceeds to scrutinise several contexts in which Japan's rise presented new forms of competition and rivalry: the British 'informal empire' in China; Japanese immigration to North America; and naval defence in the Pacific. Finally, it examines how these new controversies, in turn, forced the Anglo-Japanese alliance to evolve. As such, this dissertation aims to shed new light on both on the internal dynamics of the British imperial system, and its changing position in the world.

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Heere, Cornelis (2016) Japan and the British world, 1904-14. PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). This dissertation analyses the effect of the rise of Japan on the 'British world' during the early twentieth century, from the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) to the outbreak of the First World War. Victory over Russia in 1905 transformed Japan's international position, elevating it to the rank of a Great Power, and allowing it to become an increasingly significant actor in East Asia and the Pacific. As its presence expanded, so did the scope for interaction with the British imperial system, bringing Japan into closer, and often frictionous contact with Anglophone communities from the China coast to Japan – a nation that had only brought its policy of seclusion to an end 50 years earlier – was now the ally of the world's greatest power. The alliance came about because both countries were concerned about Russian expansion in the far east, but for Japan it was much more than this: it was also a symbol that it had been accepted by the west. The alliance was an important strategic pillar for both nations. On 8 December 1941 Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong and Malaya, sounding the death knell for the British empire in Asia. The Anglo-Japanese alliance had disguised the fact that the two countries had different wishes for China's future, with Britain supporting an 'open door' for trade and Japan attempting to carve out a sphere of influence for itself in the region. Russo-Japanese War 1904–5. Tensions between Russia and Japan had increased between 1895 and 1904. Russia, leasing Port Arthur and parts of the Liaodong Peninsula from China, stationed a fleet of warships off Port Arthur in December 1897; the port was soon fortified and construction started on railways that would eventually link it to Russia through China's Manchuria. Moreover, Japan's population is increasing rapidly and demands an outlet; and the Japanese laborers, small farmers, and petty traders would, if permitted, flock by the hundred thousand into the United States, Canada, and Australia. Shantung Peninsula 1914. After the First World War there was pressure by Japan's military to maintain its strength and even expand its size. However, Japan did not cut itself off from the outside world completely. Dutch books were still imported and the Japanese ruling class were quite well informed of what was happening in the outside world. The Tokugawa government went to great lengths to maintain order. They directly controlled about one-quarter of the land in Japan. When the First World War began Japan joined Britain's side. Japan took German colonies in Asia. However, after the war, Japan's growing economic and political power brought her into conflict with the USA.