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| Sommario/riassunto | In 1902 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) petitioned the Japanese government to abolish the custom of rewarding good deeds and patriotic service with the bestowal of sake cups. Alcohol production and consumption, its members argued, harmed individuals, endangered public welfare, and wasted vital resources. The petition was only one initiative in a wide-ranging program to reform public and private behaviour. Between 1886 and 1912, the WCTU launched campaigns to eliminate prostitution, eradicate drinking, spread Christianity, and improve the lives of women. As Elizabeth Dorn Lublin shows, members did not passively accept and propagate government policy but felt a duty to shape it by defining social problems and influencing opinion. Certain their beliefs and reforms were essential to Japan's advancement, members couched their calls for change in the rhetorical language of national progress. Ultimately, the WCTU's activism belies received notions of women's public involvement and |

political engagement in Meiji Japan.
