



Making Waves: Politics, Propaganda, and the Emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1868- 1922

J. Schencking

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This book explores the political emergence of the Imperial Japanese Navy between 1868 and 1922. It fundamentally challenges the popular notion that the navy was a 'silent,' apolitical service. Politics, particularly budgetary politics, became the primary domestic focus—if not the overriding preoccupation—of Japan's admirals in the prewar period. This study convincingly demonstrates that as the Japanese polity broadened after 1890, navy leaders expanded their political activities to secure appropriations commensurate with the creation of a world-class blue-water fleet.

The navy's sophisticated political efforts included lobbying oligarchs, coercing cabinet ministers, forging alliances with political parties, occupying overseas territories, conducting well-orchestrated naval pageants, and launching spirited propaganda campaigns. These efforts succeeded: by 1921 naval expenditures equaled nearly 32 percent of the country's total budget, making Japan the world's third-largest maritime power. The navy, as this book details, made waves at sea and on shore, and in doing so significantly altered the state, society, politics, and empire in prewar Japan.



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