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Sommario/riassunto	Winner of the 2010 Japan NPO Research Association Book AwardThe global discourse on civil society is both complicated and enriched in this participant study of Japan's volunteers, known as the third sector. In the wake of the Japanese government's failed response to the 1995 earthquake, volunteers took the lead in providing aid to victims. This recent sea change in Japanese society was quickly followed by the 1998 NPO Law (nonprofit organization law) that encourages third sector activities. Drawing on his fieldwork at one of the new NPOs, Akihiro Ogawa explores in detail the social and historical particularities of Japanese "civil society" or <i>shimin shakai</i> , revisiting how the concept is interpreted and practiced by the volunteers themselves. Civil society, Ogawa argues, can best be understood as an active, dynamic process

rather than as a static, abstract model.
