

**Civil Society and Voluntary Actions in Japan**

**Instructor: Aya Okada**

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:10pm to 2:40pm

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● Course Overview

The significance of civil society and voluntary sector in Japan has never been greater than today. The longtime tradition of self-help groups and neighborhood associations has grown into more structured, institutionalized organizations in the recent decades. The number of citizens interested in taking voluntary actions – making financial donations, volunteering, and raising their voice through advocacy efforts – has also increased steadily.

Several events that took place in the recent years have particularly accelerated this trend. For example, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (or Kobe earthquake) of 1995 highlighted contributions that non-public, non-private organizations as well as individual volunteers make in responding to unexpected disasters. More recently, the triple disasters of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident in Northeastern Japan in 2011 became a momentum for the volunteer spirit of Japanese people to rise. Multiple surveys and reports find that more people in Japan today are interested in and are taking some sort of actions to help others. What Salamon called the “Global Associational Revolution” has indeed taken place in Japan over the past three decades.

Civil society organizations are also now considered key actors in solving urgent social issues such as the rising need for elderly care that emerges from an ever-aging society, increasing demand to prepare for natural disasters that strike Japan frequently, and efforts to revitalize rural communities. In 2010, the Japanese government has announced an initiative called “New Public Commons (or *Atarashi Kokyo*)” to further facilitate the commitment of civil society organizations in dealing with these social problems.

This course provides students an opportunity to understand the Japanese society from the perspective of civil society and voluntary actions. In case a student is involved in voluntary or nonprofit efforts in Community Involvement Project (CIP), this course may complement the analyses and understanding of their experience. The course does not require prior knowledge on the topic or related issues.

- Course Objectives

- 1) Students will be able to understand contributions and challenges that civil society organizations face as they emerge as one of the key actors in solving social issues in Japan today.
- 2) Students will be able to contrast Japanese civil society with that of their home country, and discuss what they see as the unique characteristics of civil society and voluntary actions in Japan.

- Assignments and Evaluation

- 1) Attendance and Class Participation (30%)

- 2) Mid-term project (30%)

Pick a Japanese civil society organization of one's interest and analyze its characteristics. The target organization can be anything that falls under the definition of civil society organizations studied in sessions 3 and 4. Students will make an oral presentation of their paper during class on sessions 8 (and possibly 9).

- 3) Final paper and presentation (40%)

Students will analyze what they see as the unique characteristics of civil society and voluntary actions in Japan.

\* Attendance policy: Missing two lectures without an appropriate reason will automatically drop your attendance grade by one full letter grade; egregious tardiness (three or more) will yield the same penalty. Four unexcused absences from lectures or recitations over the semester will result in the class participation grade turning to zero. I reserve the right to give pop quizzes or assign additional work if people are coming to class unprepared.

- Textbook: Copies of all readings, including book chapters, journal articles, reports, and newspaper articles, will be distributed in PDF format to the students.

- Schedule (subject to change depending on class size and students' interests)

### **Session 1** (January 14)

#### **Introduction: Civil Society and Voluntary Actions**

The session will provide an overview of the course, and highlight the significance of understanding Japanese society from the perspective of civil society and voluntary actions. The class will also review social issues that Japan face today, and discuss how civil society organizations contribute in solving the problems.

#### Required Readings:

Salamon, L.M. (1994). The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.73(4), pp.109-122.

Matsutani, M. (2012). Disasters Kick-Started Dormant Volunteer Spirit. *The Japan Times*. January 5.

Tabuchi, H. (2012). Tokyo Rally is Biggest Yet to Oppose Nuclear Plan. *New York Times*, July 16.

#### Recommended Reading:

Eberly, D. (2008). *The Rise of Global Civil Society: Building Communities and Nations from the Bottom Up*. New York: Encounter Books.

### **Session 2** (January 19)

#### **“Big Picture” of Japanese Civil Society**

The class will draw a “big picture” of Japanese civil society and explore the types of civil society organizations active in Japan. The class will take a short walk around the communities of Kamigyo Ward to observe the presence of civil society organizations and opportunities of voluntary actions in people's everyday lives.

#### Required Readings:

Pekkanen, R. (2006). Japan's Civil Society in Comparative Perspective (Chapter 2) in Pekkanen, R. (2006). *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members without Advocates*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yamauchi, N., Shimizu, H., Sokolowski, S.W. and Salamon, L.M. (1999). Japan. In Salamon, L.M. and Anheier, H.K. (Eds). *Global Civil Society: Dimension of the Nonprofit Sector*. Washington DC: The Johns Hopkins Center of Civil Society Studies.

#### Recommended Website to Explore:

“Nonprofit Homepage” of Cabinet Office of Japan (Japanese only)

<https://www.npo-homepage.go.jp/>

**Session 3** (January 21)

**Building a Common Understanding: Definition of Civil Society and Voluntary Actions - Part I**

The class will build a common understanding of key concepts in this course: “civil society” and “voluntary actions.”

Required Reading:

Edwards, M. (2014). Introduction – What’s the Big Idea? (Chapter 1). In *Civil Society Third Edition*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Recommended Reading:

Schwartz, F. (2003). What is Civil Society? In Schwartz, F.J., Pharr, S.J. (Eds.). *The State of Civil Society in Japan*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Session 4** (January 26)

**Building a Common Understanding: Definition of Civil Society and Voluntary Actions - Part II**

The class will continue to build a common understanding of key concepts in this course: “civil society” and “voluntary actions.”

Required Reading:

Salamon, L.M., Sokolowski, S.W., and List, R. (2004). Global Civil Society: An Overview. In Salamon, L.M. and Sokolowski, S.W. and Associates. (Eds.). *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector Volume Two*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Recommended Website to Explore:

Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies <http://ccss.jhu.edu/>

**Session 5** (January 28)

**Historical Understanding of Civil Society and Voluntary Actions in Japan**

Japanese civil society is heavily influenced by history. The class will take a historical perspective in this session and read how the sector developed from Meiji, Taisho, Showa, and Heisei.

Required Reading:

Garon, S. (2003). From Meiji to Heisei: The State and Civil Society in Japan. In Schwartz, F.J., Pharr, S.J. (Eds.). *The State of Civil Society in Japan*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Reading:

Kage, R. (2010). *Civic Engagement in Postwar Japan: The Revival of a Defeated Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

**Session 6** (February 2)

**Class does not meet** (Aya on duty for Doshisha's administrative task)

Watch a movie/documentary and write a commentary (list on pp.11-12) OR

Visit an event hosted by civil society or nonprofit organizations in Kansai region (list of sources on p.13) and reflect the learning in mid-term project

**Session 7** (February 4)

**Class does not meet** (Aya on duty for Doshisha's entrance examination)

Watch a movie/documentary and write a commentary (list on pp.11-12) OR

Visit an event hosted by civil society or nonprofit organizations in Kansai region (list of sources on p.13) and reflect the learning in mid-term project

**Session 8** (February 9)

**Student Presentations**

Each student will make a 15 minute presentation on their findings from the mid-term project, where students analyze the characteristics of a Japanese civil society organizations of their choice.

**Session 9** (February 16)

**Student Presentations**

Each student will make a 15 minute presentation on their findings from the mid-term project, where students analyze the characteristics of a Japanese civil society organizations of their choice.

**Session 10** (February 18)

**Student Presentations**

Each student will make a 15 minute presentation on their findings from the mid-term project, where students analyze the characteristics of a Japanese civil society organizations of their choice.

**MID-TERM PAPER DUE**

**Session 11** (February 23)

**Field-Focused Approach: Neighborhood Associations**

The class will review how neighborhood associations - civil society organizations that are perhaps the most closest to people's everyday lives - have developed and spread across Japan.

Required Reading:

Pekkanen, R. (2006). Neighborhood Associations and Local Civil Society (Chapter 4) in Pekkanen, R. (2006). *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members without Advocates*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Suggested Reading:

Laratta, R. (n.d.). *From 'chonaikai' to 'hojin': The Historical Background of the Welfare System in Japan*. Available at <http://www.kisc.meiji.ac.jp/~follow/topics/AP/RosarioLaratta.pdf>

**Session 12** (February 25)

**Field-Focused Approach: Community Development**

We will look at involvement of civil society organizations in community development or *machi-zukuri*. The class will plan a site visit a local organization to hear first-hand experience.

Required Reading:

Funck, C. (2007). *Machizukuri, Civil Society, and the Transformation of Japanese City Planning: Cases from Kobe*. In Sorensen, A. and Funck, C. (Eds.). *Living Cities in Japan: Citizens' Movements, Machizukuri and Local Environments*. New York: Routledge.

Recommended Reading:

Evans, N. (2010). Machi-zukuri as a New Paradigm in Japanese Urban Planning: Reality or Myth? *Japan Form*, Vol.14(3), pp.443-464.

**Session 13** (March 9)

**Field-Focused Approach: Disaster Management**

Voluntary actions in preparing to and responding to unexpected disasters has been a hot topic in Japan today. The class will plan a visit to a civil society organizations that have been active in Kobe, a city that experienced massive earthquake in 1995.

Required Reading:

Ito, A. (2007). Earthquake Reconstruction Machizukuri and Citizen Participation. In Sorensen, A. and Funck, C. (Eds.). *Living Cities in Japan: Citizens' Movements, Machizukuri and Local Environments*. New York: Routledge.

Recommended Readings:

Aldrich, D. P. (2011). The Power of People: Social Capital's role in Recovery from the 1995 Kobe Earthquake. *Natural Hazards*, Vol.56(3), pp.595-611.

Shaw, R. and Goda, K. (2004). From Disaster to Sustainable Civil Society: The Kobe Experience. *Disasters*, Vol.28(1), pp.16-40.

**Session 14** (March 11)

**Field-Focused Approach: Environmental Conservation**

The challenge of tackling environment destruction and pollution has been one key area in which we

observe citizens' active participations. We will review some of the recent movements as well as major advocacy campaigns.

Required Reading:

Asano, T. (2007). Citizens' Movements to Protect the Water Environment: Changes and Problems. In Sorensen, A. and Funck, C. (Eds.). *Living Cities in Japan: Citizens' Movements, Machizukuri and Local Environments*. New York: Routledge.

Suggested Reading:

Hasegawa, K. (2004). *Constructing Civil Society in Japan: Voices of Environmental Movements*. Melbourne, Vic.: Trans Pacific.

**Session 15** (March 16)

**Class does not meet** (Aya will be at The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction)

**Session 16** (March 18)

**Unique Characteristics of Japanese Civil Society? Part 1**

Scholars have argued that civil society in Japan is unique in comparison to other societies. We will first take a look at differences argued about the role civil society organizations play in Japan.

Required Readings:

Chapter 1 "Introduction" and Chapter 6 "Conclusion" in Pekkanen, R. (2006). *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members without Advocates*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Recommended Reading:

Remaining chapters of Pekkanen, R. (2006). *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members without Advocates*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

**Session 17** (March 23)

**Unique Characteristics of Japanese Civil Society? Part 2**

The class will continue to discuss unique characteristics of Japanese civil society that scholars have proposed in their work. We will look at arguments made about how the voluntary sector developed in Japan.

Required Reading:

Chapter 1 "Introduction: Activism from Above" in Reimann, K. (2010). *The Rise of Japanese NGOs: Activism from Above*. New York: Routledge.

Schwartz, F. (2002). Civil Society in Japan Reconsidered. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*,

Vol.3(2), pp.195-215.

Recommended Readings:

Pekkanen, R. (2003). The Politics of Regulating the Non-Profit Sector. In Osborne, S.P. (Ed.). *The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector in Japan*. New York: Routledge.

Reimann, K. (2003). Building Global Civil Society from the Outside In? Japanese International Development NGOs, the State, and International Norms." In Schwartz, F.J., Pharr, S.J. (Eds.). *The State of Civil Society in Japan*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**Session 18** (March 25)

**Giving in Japan**

Some people argue that Japan lacks a culture of giving. Is that true? How often do Japanese people make donations, and why? To what extent are people engaged in volunteering in Japan? The class will explore these questions and discuss whether the students identify any characteristics unique to Japan.

Required Reading:

Chapter 2 "Individual Giving" in Japan Fundraising Association. (2013). *Giving Japan 2012: The Annual Report on Giving and Volunteering for the Year 2011*.

Suggested Reading:

Ouchi, M. (2004). Charitable Giving in Japan: A Comparative Study of Japan and the United States. *The Nonprofit Review Vol.4, No.1*, pp.39-52.

**Session 19** (March 30)

**Volunteering in Japan**

To what extent are people engaged in volunteering in Japan? What kinds of volunteer activities do people participate? Why do Japanese people volunteer? The class will explore these questions and discuss whether the students identify any characteristics unique to Japan.

Required Reading:

Chapter 3 "Volunteering" in Japan Fundraising Association. (2013). *Giving Japan 2012: The Annual Report on Giving and Volunteering for the Year 2011*.

Suggested Reading:

Avenell, S. (2010). Facilitating Spontaneity: The State and Independent Volunteering in Contemporary Japan. *Social Science Japan Journal*, Vol.13(1), pp.69-93.

**Session 20** (April 1)

**Class does not meet** – (Aya on duty for Doshisha’s entrance ceremony)

Visit an event hosted by civil society or nonprofit organizations in Kansai region (list of sources on page 13) and reflect the learning in the final paper.

**Session 21** (April 6)

**Advocacy in Japan**

It is often argued that Japan lacks the culture of “advocacy” – that people are not used to standing up to have their voices heard to decision makers. The class will examine case studies on advocacy campaigns of environmental issues and energy policies.

Required Reading:

Tsujinaka, Y. and Pekkanen, R. (2007). Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan. *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 80(3), pp.419-437.

Chapter 4 “Sustainable Development and Advocacy NGOs in Japan” in Reimann, K. (2010). *The Rise of Japanese NGOs: Activism from Above*. New York: Routledge.

Suggested Reading:

Hirata, K. (2002). *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Aid and Development Policy*. Macmillan.

**Session 22** (April 8)

**Student Presentations**

Each student will make a 15-20 minute presentation on their analysis of unique characteristics of civil society and voluntary actions in Japan.

**Session 23** (April 13)

**Student Presentations**

**Session 24** (April 15)

**Student Presentations and Wrap-Up**

**FINAL PAPER DUE**

## **Suggested Movies and Documentaries** (for Sessions 6, 7, 15, 20)

\* This list will be updated throughout the semester. Most of them are only available in Japanese. Aya will provide language assistance if needed.

- 『僕たちは世界を変えることができない。But We Wanna Build a School in Cambodia.』  
A movie about Japanese college students organizing a nonprofit organization to build a school in Cambodia. In Japanese only.
- NHK スペシャル 『孤立集落 どっこい生きる』  
A documentary about people helping each other for survival in a small village in Tohoku region that was isolated in the aftermath of earthquake and tsunami in 2011. Aya will provide a DVD with English subtitles.
- 『「イクメン」で行こう！～男の育児が社会を変える～』  
A documentary about Japanese fathers becoming more and more involved in raising children with a support from nonprofit organizations. (In Japanese only. Short version of the documentary available online at [http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail\\_2944.html](http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail_2944.html))
- 『デモは社会を変えるか ～声をあげはじめた市民たち～』  
A documentary about increasing number of Japanese people participating in street demonstrations after the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear accident. The show also notes how social media is creating a new kind of relationship among the participants. (In Japanese only. Video available through NHK On-Demand. Details at [http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail\\_3235.html](http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail_3235.html))
- 『終の住処はどこに 老人漂流社会』  
A documentary about a nonprofit organization helping lonely elderly find a place to live. (In Japanese only. Video available through NHK On-Demand. Details at <http://www.nhk.or.jp/special/detail/2013/0120/>)
- 『「市民ファンド」が被災地を支える』  
A documentary about a new way of securing funds to restart business in Tohoku region after the 2011 disaster. (In Japanese only. Short version of the documentary available online at [http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail\\_3076.html](http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail_3076.html))

- 『被災者を「絆」で支える』  
A documentary about a nonprofit in Kyushu region helping the people who moved from Tohoku region after the 2011 disaster. (In Japanese only. Short version of the documentary available online at [http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail\\_3082.html](http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail_3082.html))
- 『シリーズ「未来をひらく 2 「物語」の力が社会を変える」』  
A documentary about how nonprofit practitioners in Japan learn the power of building a “story” to motivate and engage the Japanese people towards the cause that they advance. (In Japanese only. Short version of the documentary available online at [http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail\\_3448.html](http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail_3448.html))
- 『あの体験が世界中でいきている 神戸発 災害ボランティア』  
A documentary about a nonprofit organization engaged in disaster management in Kobe. (In Japanese only. Short version of the documentary available online at [http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail\\_2840.html](http://www.nhk.or.jp/gendai/kiroku/detail_2840.html))
- 『無縁社会～"無縁死" 3万2千人の衝撃～』  
A documentary about involvement of nonprofit organizations in deaths of people without a family in Japan. (In Japanese only. Video available through NHK On-Demand. Details at <http://www.nhk.or.jp/special/detail/2010/0131/>)
- Fukushima farmers fight for their land  
A short documentary about how farmers have organized to fight against the consequences of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident. (English subtitles available. Video available at [http://fukushimaontheglobe.com/video\\_/documentaries/1489.html](http://fukushimaontheglobe.com/video_/documentaries/1489.html))
- Fukushima Nuclear Protest  
A short documentary about Ruiko Mutou of the Fukushima Network Against Nuclear Power, who has been opposing the plants since the Chernobyl disaster. (English subtitles available. Video available at [http://fukushimaontheglobe.com/video\\_/documentaries/1548.html](http://fukushimaontheglobe.com/video_/documentaries/1548.html))

### **Suggested List of Sources to Find Events** (for Sessions 6, 7, 15, 20)

\*Aya will inform the class about specific events once they are announced in these sources. Most of them are only available in Japanese. Aya will provide language assistance if needed.

- 京都市福祉ボランティアセンター <http://v.hitomachi-kyoto.jp/>
- 京都 NPO センター <http://npo-net.or.jp/center/>
- 京都ボランティア協会 <http://www.kyoto-v.info/>
- 京都府国際センター <http://www.kpic.or.jp/>
- 京都府社会福祉協議会 <http://www.kyoshakyo.or.jp/>
- 大阪 NPO センター <http://www.osakanpo-center.com/>
- 大阪国際交流センター <http://www.ih-osaka.or.jp/>
- 大阪ボランティア協会 <http://www.osakavol.org/>
- KVnet <http://www.kvnet.jp/>
- 滋賀 NPO センター <http://shiga-npo.la.coocan.jp/>
- 滋賀ボランティアネット <http://www.shiga-volunteer.net/>