

A Study on Housing Construction and the Carpentry Labor Market
—Subject of housing reconstruction of the Iwate coastal area after the
Great East Japan Earthquake—

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[S Y N O P S I S]

Three years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. However, there remain many issues to be addressed for reconstruction of the devastated areas. The purposes of this study are to determine the current condition of rebuilding homes in the devastated coastal areas in Iwate Prefecture, namely Rikuzen-Takatashi and Ofunatoshi and to examine the characteristics and transformation of the labor market, focusing specifically on the urgent needs of carpentry. ① The plans on rebuilding homes are greatly delayed due to the delay in land acquisition for mass-transference or public housing, rise in the price of construction materials and lack of labor. ② The employment structure of the construction industry has shifted since 1990, which resulted in lowering the number of carpenters for housing production by half and consequently deprived of its ability to meet the post-quake housing demand. ③ Training and education functions of the local builders have declined that they are currently suspending apprenticeship. On the other hand, local public industrial training schools are discontinued. Under such conditions, the main concern is to determine how to cultivate carpenters capable of meeting the increasing housing needs (even for a limited time). We are facing the time to hastily consider the conditions and training systems that allow for the reproduction of labors with carpentry skills from a long-term perspective. For example, Local builders, architects, wood suppliers etc. are working in concert to promote “regional restoration housing” construction. The expansion of such housing construction can facilitate the vocational training and conventional method of timber construction will be passed down the generations.