

Research on the present condition of Japanese traditional thatched house and that continuation in Takashima city, Shiga prefecture.

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1. Background and purpose of the research

Thatched house in Takashima city, Shiga prefecture has continuously decreasing. At present, there are only several houses remained around the mountainous area. Simultaneously, the number of craftsmen who are able to use the indigenous technology rooted in the local is also decreasing. Unfortunately, in 2013, an active craftsman has disappeared in Takashima city after Mr. Hosoki who was the last craftsman in Takashima city had retired. Thatched house and together with technology in Takashima city are in a crisis of extinction.

2. The Present condition of thatched houses

I conducted a field survey to grasp the number of thatched houses remained. As a result, it was revealed that only 21 thatched houses (7 houses in Kutsuki, 6 houses in Imadu town, 8 houses in Makino town) were left behind. 11 of 21 houses are used as private houses, and 6 houses are vacant, 2 houses are used as museum, 1 house is used for thatched technique training performance by a university, and more 1 house is now regional communication facility.

3. Roofing technique

I interviewed Mr. Hosoki (former thatch craftsman in Makino town) about regional roofing technique. I found that two schools existed in the past in Makino town. One is called Wakasa style, which was born in Wakasa district, the other is called Hiroshima style, which was born in Hiroshima prefecture. The difference between two schools appears conspicuously in the application method of the flat part of the roof. Recently Wakasa style has become main stream because this style is suitable for climate in Makino town. Also the influence of the Wakasa school can be seen in Kote, which is one of the roofing tools. The ridge is consisted of Shitamune, Makura, cedar bark, bamboo or square timber. And it has two features. One is that there is a step between the ridge and roof surface because of existing of Makura. The other is that when you look at it from outside, you can find a white rhombus at edge of the ridge.

4. Conclusion

The continuation of the thatched house in Takashima city will become more and more difficult in future, one reason is that because active thatched craftsman disappeared. However, I found regional characteristics in not only the style of roof, but also details such as technique and the tools. The loss of thatched house means that regionality that included in thatched house is lost at the same time. It is very difficult to make it reappear again after they were completely lost. It is my pleasure if this paper can be even slightly useful to leave thatched house and the technique in the future.