

**Case Study- local building with local wood**

**Symbol of area rehabilitation created by large wood roof**

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Rikuzentakata City is one of the regions heavily damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the following tsunami disaster in 2011. “Takata-higashi Junior High School” is a project where three tsunami-stricken junior high schools were merged together and relocated to a higher ground. We proposed to construct a new school building covered with a large wooden roof on the site, which offers a view of the ocean, as a place for the students and the local residents to get together. We designed an RC building embedded in the gently sloping rise and placed a large wooden roof on it. The beams are made of Kesen cedar produced in the area. By installing longitudinal tension in members, very delicate materials supports the large span area.



On the upper floor of the two-storied building which is faced with an access road, we located a library and specific classrooms which are open to the residents, and on the ground floor, general classrooms are located. As is the case with other Japanese local cities, Rikuzentakata is confronting problems of declining birthrate and a growing proportion of elderly people, and depopulation is expected to continue. A school building in this kind of shrinking society might be partly converted to other local facilities in the future. This is the background of aiming flexible space by adopting a large span roof which has only few posts and frame walls.

While designing, we held workshops repeatedly involving students, parents, residents and teachers of the three school areas. There, we had discussions about how the new school should be, which was about how the local society should be at the same time. Though the layout planning and the floor planning have been drastically changed after receiving various opinions from related persons, the idea of spaciousness that the building with sea view is covered by a large wooden roof has not changed from our original concept.

I hope this generous space and scene, created by making the best use of wood, will be shared and used among people forever as the symbol of the society’s rehabilitation.



(Pictures courtesy of Makoto Yoshida)