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What to learn from historic way of building

A case of reconstructing the damaged historic quarter suffered by the big earthquake and tsunami

Abstract

Please forgive me to take the case of reconstructing a city where the historic buildings have been lost. The name of the city is Ishinomaki, Miyagi Pref. Ishinomaki is a historic town but almost all the historic buildings had been lost before the earthquake and tsunami. Still the urban form (street and block pattern, narrow and deep lots) remain unchanged, a few but important historic houses and crooked alleys have characterized the town. In the disaster of this time it was the post war developed area that was totally swept by tsunami and the damages in the historic quarter were comparatively minor. It is clear that the post war suburbanization on reclaimed land enlarged the damage. At present the reconstruction policy to accept the people who lost their houses is directed to development of new suburban area on the high ground. However this policy might have a lot of problems under depopulating Japan. The loyal road is to reconstruct the historic quarter and remake the city compact and sustainable. Of course even in the historic quarter the redevelopment is required to reconstruct houses and make the area safe. The key subject is how to design and implement the reconstruction. The high-rise apartment houses, towers in space, commonly used in modern japan are not appropriate. The street should be enclosed by compact and medium buildings with ground floor retail and commercial facilities. Large lump redevelopment is impossible and undesirable. It is desirable that the town recovers as a whole by small scale redevelopments by agreed land owners. It is the way of building that was realized in historic towns. The subject is how to apply the way to the present situation. In this presentation I will show how to apply the historic way of building to the reconstruction of Ishinomaki.