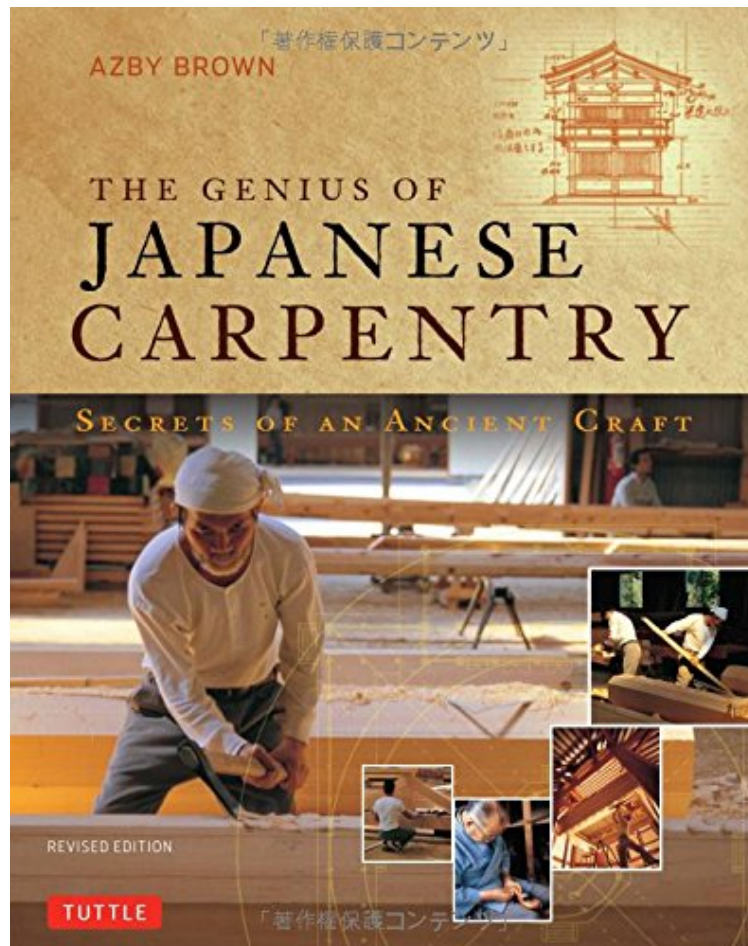


The Genius of Japanese Carpentry: Secrets of an Ancient Craft

Azby Brown

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Azby Brown : The Genius of Japanese Carpentry: Secrets of an Ancient Craft before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Genius of Japanese Carpentry: Secrets of an Ancient Craft:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Just like youBy Walter LiedkeAn excellent book. The author is able to capture the spirit of Japanese carpentry. I to was able to apprentice under a daiku. A bit on usual I admit but probably the best teacher I ever had0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book on making a shinto temple, but not so much as a step by step for carpentry.By JVSGUSCASDGreat book on the building philosophy, selection of materials and historical notes of building a traditional shinto temple. Not really an instruction manual on how carpentry. I was looking for a book to show me the in's and out's of wood working, but this is not really that book. It does go into detail on how to select the wood and why. It also has super great pictures on the actual temple itself.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Mindblowing!By RoninNot sure why people gave some harsh reviews of this incredible book? The book is centered around the restoration of Yakushiji shrine in Nara, with the original

grandeur expected to be complete in 2030. I do not agree that it is a beginners book, and it is not exactly a how-to book because this art can only be taught from master to apprentice; learning it from a book would be impossible. Further, it states in the intro that it is not a "how-to" book, but is rather an on-the-scenes account of the project; a mission the book excels at. The book explains all the basic techniques that go into this style of construction, from design, to wood selection, to the tools and joinery. It is filled with great b/w photos and diagrams of the architectural design and follows the story as a group of builders recreate an authentic reproduction of the "Picture Hall" in the Sanzo-in sub-compound from 1985-88. On this journey the book aptly demonstrates the intricate process and does so in a way that is easy to understand even though it is next to impossible for anyone not trained in this art to do. The book also tells the story of the fascinating master-builder Nishioka (born 1908) who was contracted for the project, and the author's experience as an apprentice in Japan learning this art. An amazing feature of Japanese temple architecture that Nishioka adhered to is the selection of trees. Giant Hinoki are selected according to orientation, so for example a tree on the north side of a mountain is marked, and the northern exposed side of the wood is used on the north facing side of the temple. I don't think westerners ever dreamed of this concept. One of Nishioka's first projects involved restoration work on Horyuji shrine. Built some 1300 years ago, Nishioka determined the original wood construction was good for another 2000 years! Amazing. If you are unfamiliar with Yakushiji, it is a 1,300 year old Buddhist monastery (built 718). It offered a stunning recurrence of the symmetrical composition of the Chinese prototypes, including 2 32-meter pagodas. This is one of my favorite books on traditional Japanese architecture, and I highly recommend it.

The Genius of Japanese Carpentry tells the story of the 1200-year-old Yakushiji monastery in Nara and the dedicated modern-day craftsmen who are working to restore what has been lost to the depredations of time, fire and warfare. Although the full monastery reconstruction will not be completed until 2030, one of the main temples, the Picture Hall, has been completely restored employing the same woodworking technology used to create the original building. This new edition of an architectural classic is by Azby Brown one of the world's leading experts on Japanese architecture. It contains a new preface and many new text materials and photographs most of them now available in color for the first time. Azby Brown chronicles the painstaking restoration of the temple through extensive interviews with the carpenters and woodworkers along with original drawings based on the plans of master carpenter Tsunekazu Nishioka. An inspiring testament to the dedication of these craftsmen and their philosophy of carpentry work as a form of personal fulfillment, The Genius of Japanese Carpentry offers detailed documentation of this singular project and a moving reminder of the unique cultural continuity found in Japan.

"My main impression throughout reading this book has been one of head shaking and disbelief, and sheer amazement at the ingenuity of Japanese carpenters current and old. If you have any interest in carpentry, timber framing, woodworking, or even Japanese history, I highly recommend this book" The Year of Mud blog
About the Author
Azby Brown is the director of KIT Future Design Institute in Tokyo. After studying architecture and sculpture at Yale College, Brown entered the Department of Architecture of the University of Tokyo under a grant from the Japanese Ministry of Education. After completing his Ph.D., he became an associate professor of architectural design at the Kanazawa Institute of Technology. He is the author of Just Enough, Small Spaces, The Japanese Dream House, and The Very Small Home. He lives in Tokyo.