

Traditional technique : Hyakutaro Channel (weir + channel)

Category : Water channels Sicle : 18th century

River : Kumagawa (Kuma River)

Site : Taragi-machi (Kumamoto Pref.)



Hyakutaro Channel



Hyakutaro Weir (rehabilitated)



Plan of Hyakutaro Channel

Source: I Love the Kumagawa (Kuma River) (Civil Engineering) (in Japanese), Yatsushiro Work Office, Ministry of Construction

Description:

The Hyakutaro Channel was completed by farmers about 300 years ago. Extending from Okaharu-mura through Uemura to Nishiki-machi, this 19-km-long channel with an irrigation area of 1,500 ha withdraw water from the Kumagawa (Kuma River) in the Matsushita area of Taragi-machi. The original Hyakutaro Weir was 180 m wide and 18 m long, and consisted of 1.8 m by 1.8 m wooden cribs stuffed with stones. The water intake and the weir have been rehabilitated. Because the weir was washed away repeatedly, a human sacrifice was offered at the time of weir construction, and the weir thus constructed was not washed away. Hyakutaro is the name of a boy who was offered as a sacrifice. This work is one of the major projects carried out in the Kuma region in the pre-Meiji years.