

Traditional technique : Shirone Kite Festival

Category : Festivals/events Sicle : 18th century

River : Shinanogawa (Shinano River), Nakanokuchigawa (Nakanokuchi River)

Site : Shirone City (Niigata Pref.)



Shirone Kite Festival

Source:<http://www.iris.dti.ne.jp/~j12/tako.htm> <http://toki.ed.niigata-u.ac.jp/~toda/tako/tako.htm>

Description:

The origin of the Shirane Kite Festival: The Nakanokuchigawa (Nakanokuchi River), a man-made river dug at the end of the sixteenth century, tormented the local people by flooding frequently. The mayors of the village, therefore, worked hard to improve the levees. The people in East Shirone and West Shirone, separated by the river, had always been in conflict about flood control. In May 1737, levee improvement work that had taken more than 40 years was completed. Around that time, the Mizoguchi family from which the lord of the region came from held a celebration for the birth of a boy, and the head of the village of East Shirone, Kamiyama Chubei, was invited to Shibata Castle. A large kite composed of 30 pieces of Japanese paper was displayed in the castle, and Chubei was presented with the kite. After returning to Hirone, Chubei, with the help of young people, flied the kite from the top of a just-completed levee. The kite fell on and damaged the roof of the house of a farmer (Mataemon) on the opposite bank. The Murakami clan, which governed West Shirone, and the Shibata clan, which governed East Shirone, were already in constant conflict with each other about matters related to flood control, and Mataemon had a deep-rooted grudge against East Shirone. Mataemon immediately made a large kike and slammed it onto the roof of Chubei's house, giving rise to a kite war.