

High Flying Art

Kites from Around the World

Part One

Origins

Kites are the oldest known heavier-than-air craft designed to gain [lift](#) from the wind while being flown from the end of a flying line, or tether.

Over the millennia, kites have been used to ward off evil, deliver messages, represent the gods, raise banners, discover natural phenomena, propel craft, drop [propaganda](#) leaflets, catch fish, spy on enemies, send radio signals, measure the weather, photograph the Earth, and lift passengers skyward. Modern kites are flown mostly for pleasure and sport, in addition to being a folk form of artistic expression. The kite was the ancestral aircraft that launched manned flight.

<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/flying-objects-in-art-kites/>

History

Nearly 3,000 years ago the kite was first popularized, if not invented, in [China](#), where materials ideal for kite building were readily available: [silk](#) fabric for sail material, fine, high-tensile-strength silk for flying line, and [resilient bamboo](#) for a strong, lightweight framework. The earliest known Chinese kites were flat (not bowed) and often rectangular. Later, tailless kites incorporated a stabilizing bowline. Kites were decorated with mythological motifs and legendary figures; some were fitted with strings and whistles to make musical sounds while flying.

After its appearance in China, the kite migrated to Korea, [Japan](#), Myanmar (Burma), [India](#), Arabia, and [North Africa](#), then farther south into the [Malay Peninsula](#), Indonesia, and the islands of Oceania as far east as [Easter Island](#). Since kites made of leaves have been flown in Malaya and the South Seas from time immemorial, the kite could also have been invented independently in that region.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_KP08iwgbw



<https://www.surfertoday.com/kiteboarding/the-worlds-oldest-known-kite>

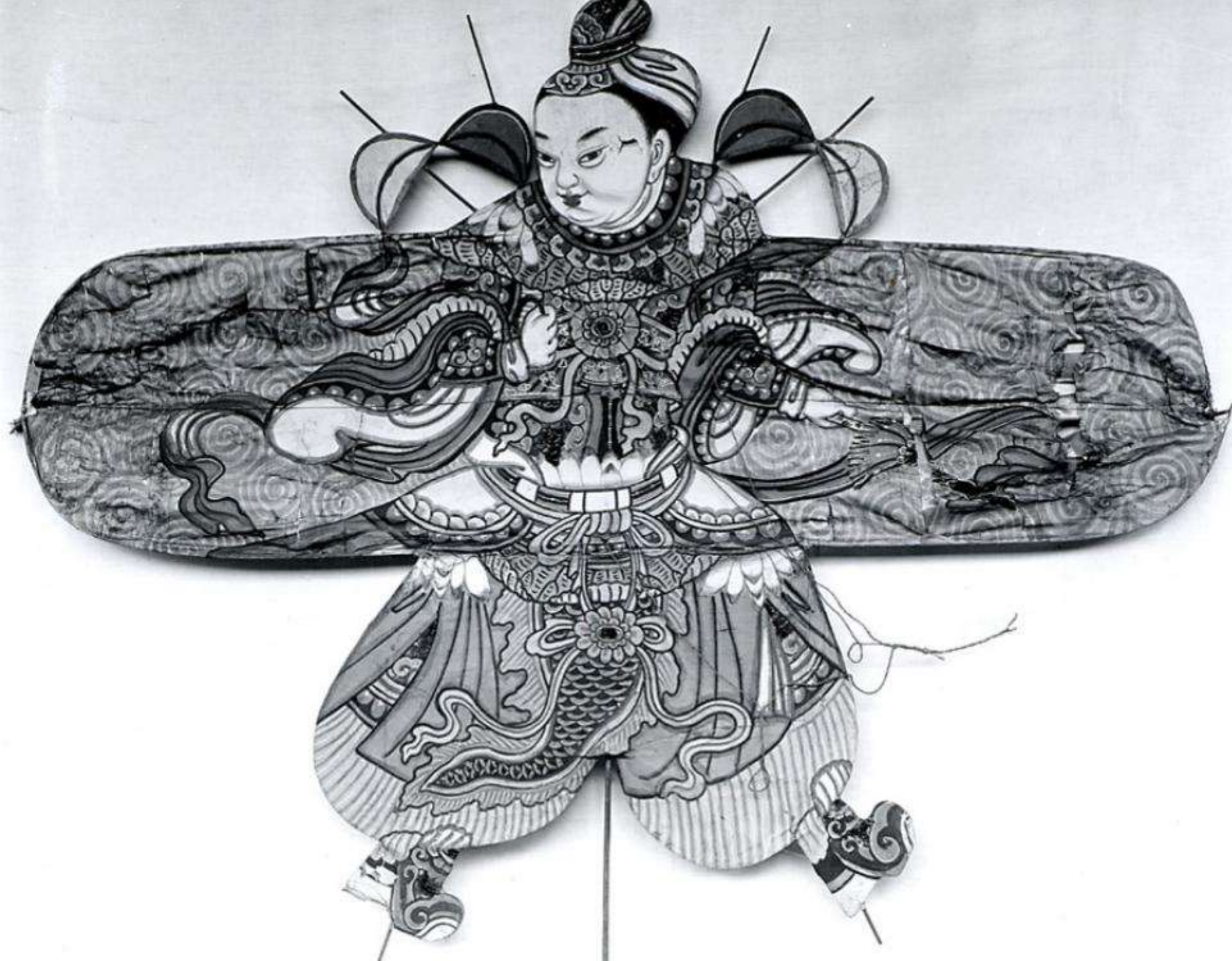
China

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjuOvBP1yTk> (cultural heritage music too loud)

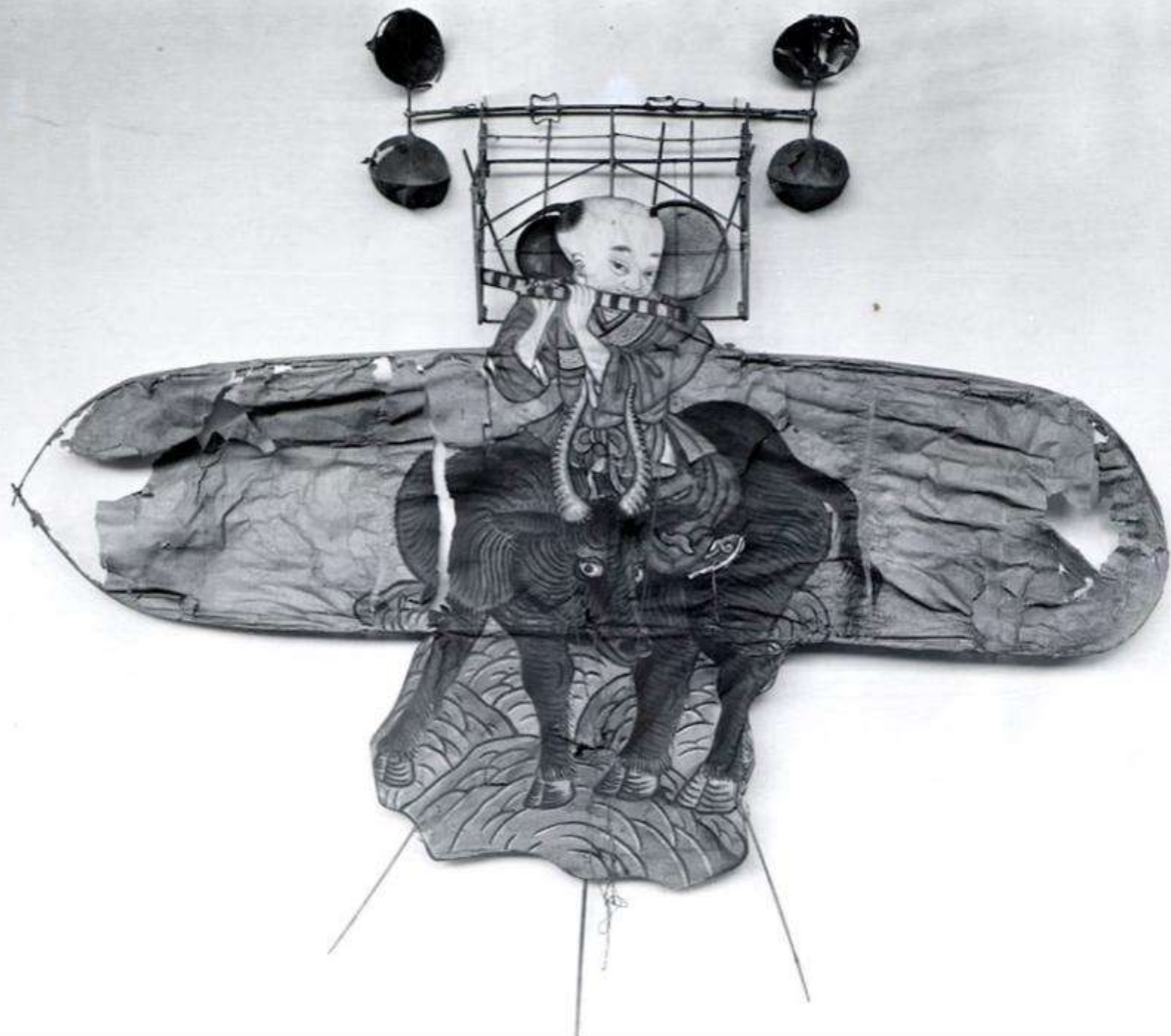
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KM6MzxcQgyM> (dynamic kite--good)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90VRwubEqCM> (Beijing Royal Kite)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCncPau0dRQ> (contemporary)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8W9jxNI98Q> (start at 3:21—dragon)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt3zCsE6b2Y> (another dragon)
- <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/exploring-history-our-chinese-kite-collection> (conserving Chinese Kites--Smithsonian)















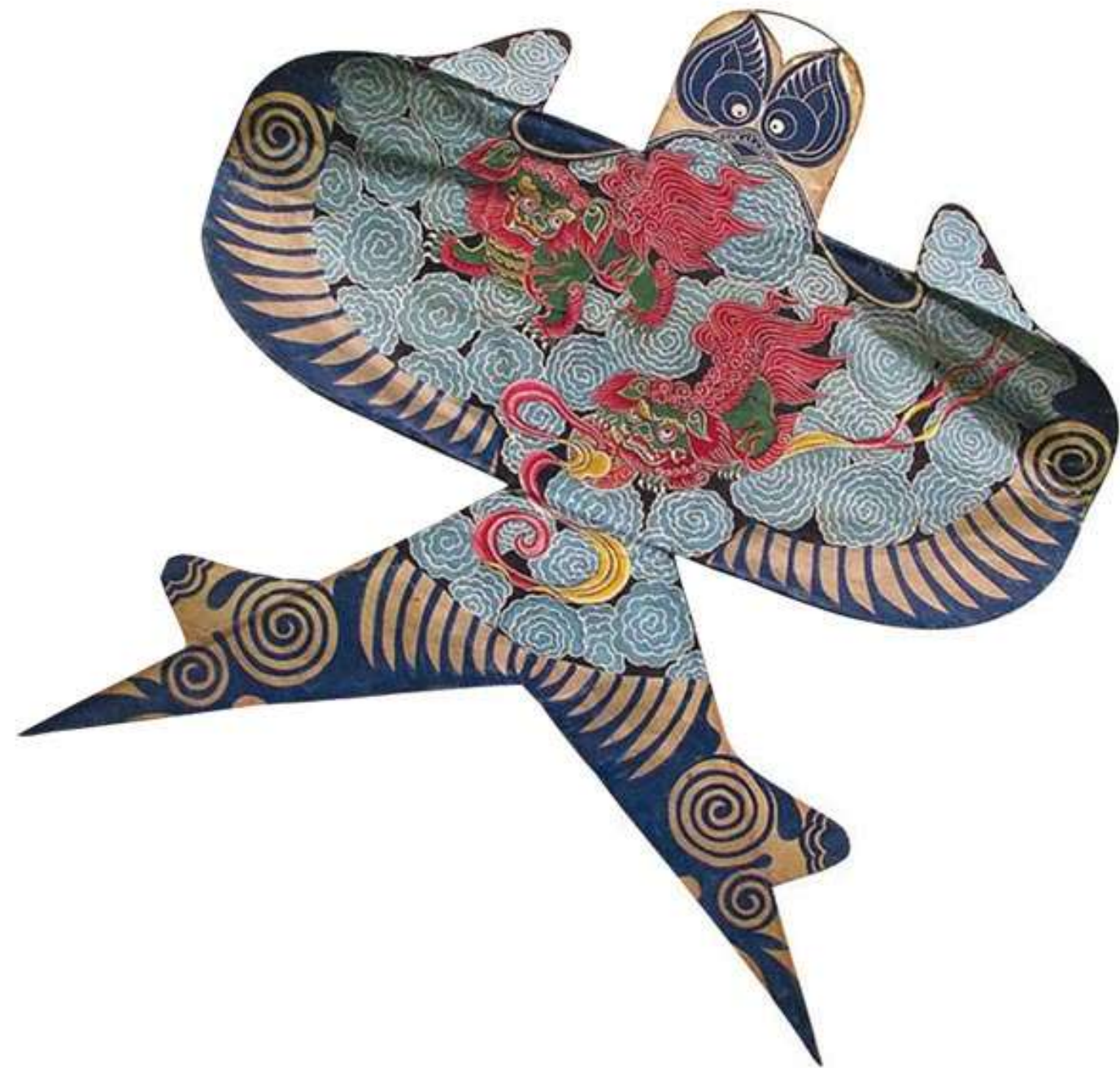




165762987



gettyimages
visualgo



shutterstock.com • 1051250360





Japan

Kites, or “tako”, were first introduced to Japan during the Nara period (710-794 AD) by Chinese Buddhist missionaries. Originally used in religious ceremonies and celebrations, the Japanese have largely assimilated Chinese culture, but have also **developed their own varieties of kites and their use.**

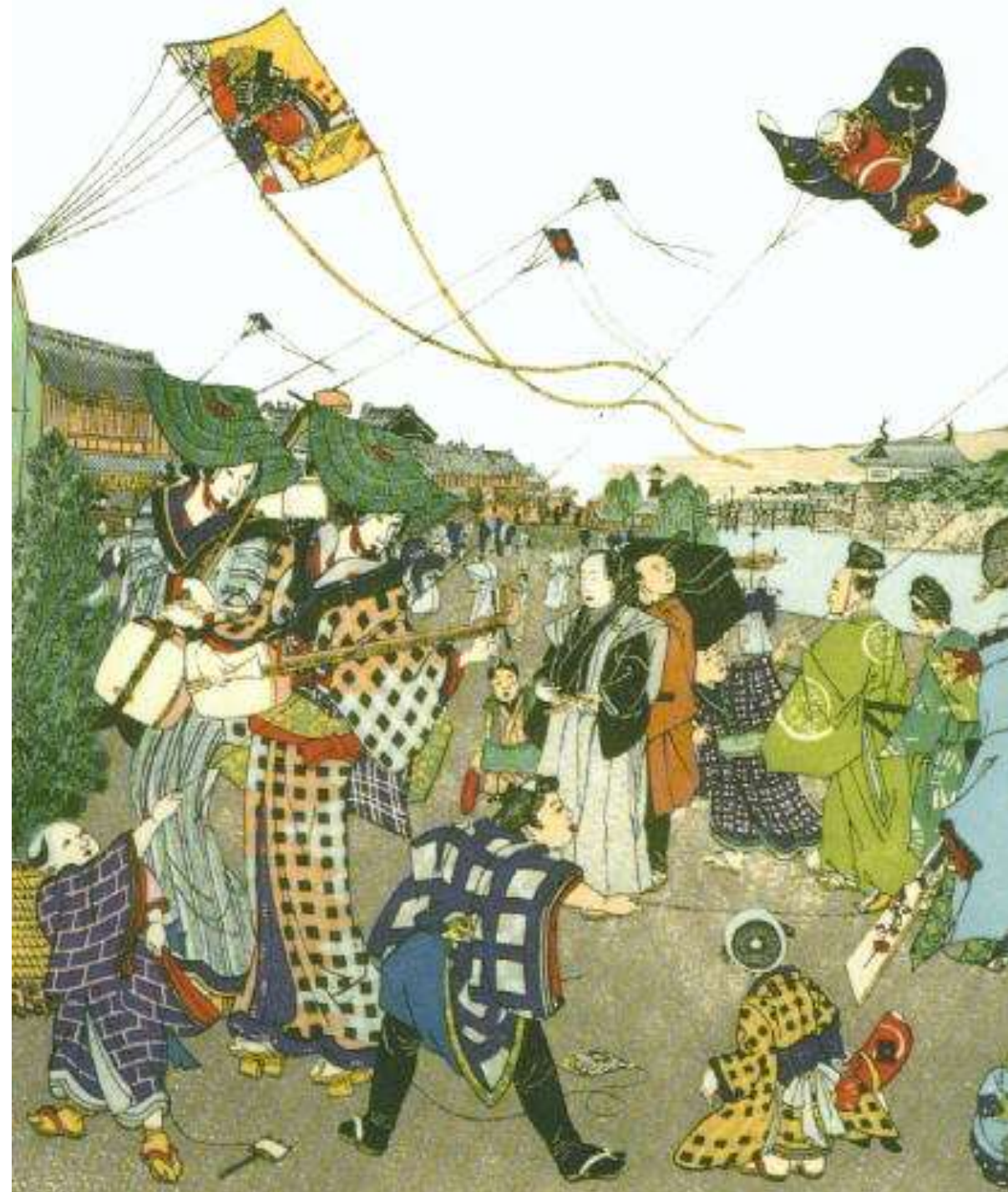
It was during the Edo period (1603 – 1868), when Japan closed its trade with foreign countries, that most of the Japanese kites we know today flourished. The rectangular shape of the Chinese kite has given way to many new shapes: cranes, dragons, fish, etc. These new representations symbolized longevity, prosperity and strength. Kites were then used as **talismans to avert evil spirits.**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTXM0GmlPcs> (history—start at 1:17)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA3ZP64z-Qg> (good)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKY8VWfhG5k> (good)

The history of *Sagami* Giant Kites began during the *Tenpou* period (around 1830) in the *Edo* era. The kites got larger over time until they reached their present size during the middle of the *Meiji* era. Initially the kites were flown by individual people to celebrate the birth of a child. Over time the tradition expanded to other areas and the reasons for flying them also changed. The kites were eventually flown as a form of prayer to help ensure a good harvest. They were flown mostly by the young men of the community. During the *Showa* era four young men’s associations in *Shindo*, *Kamiisobe*, *Simoisobe*, and *Katsusaka* regions began to build and fly very large kites in four different districts almost every year.

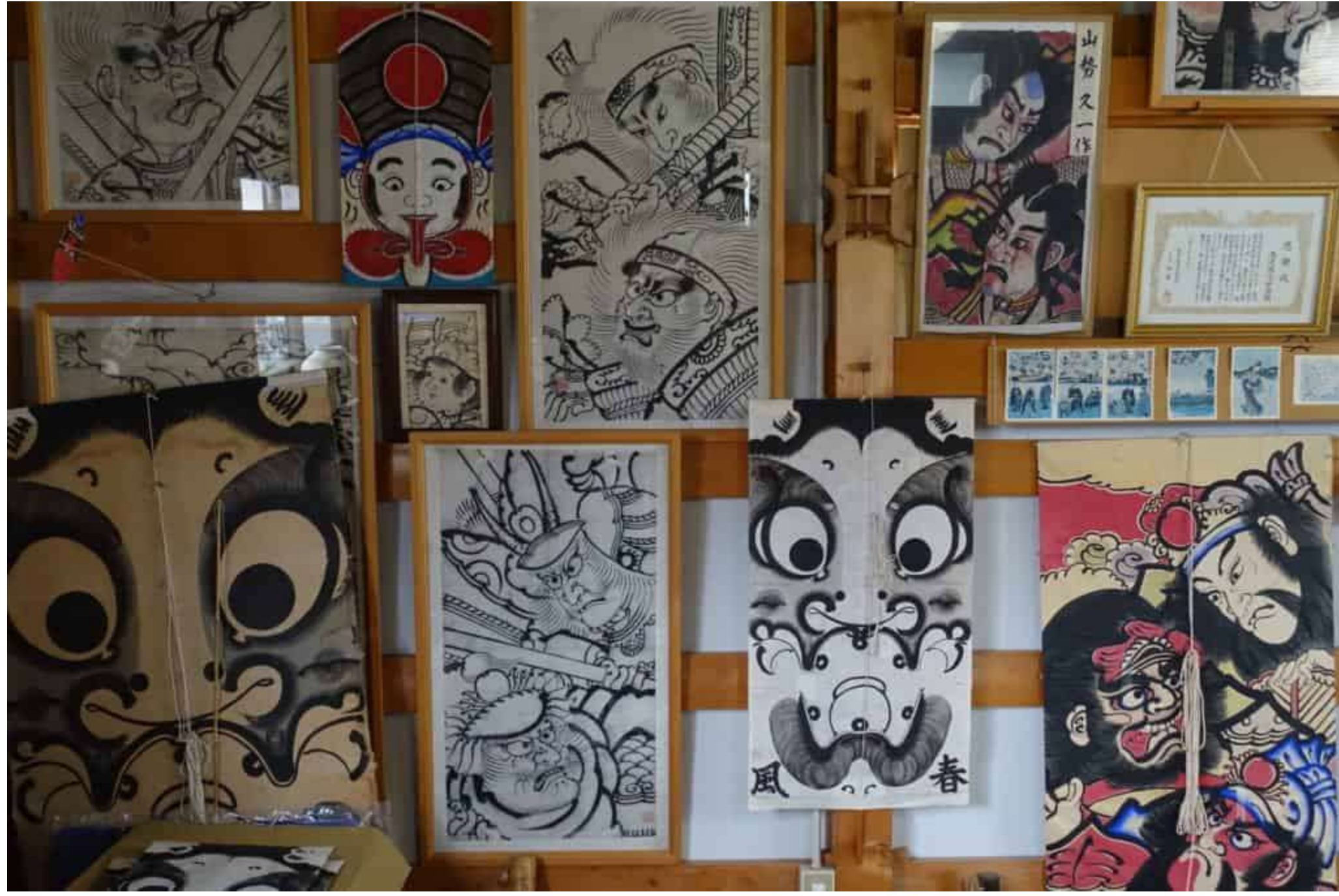
https://www.google.com/search?q=Japanese+kite&source=lmns&tbm=vid&bih=732&biw=1583&client=firefox-b-1-d&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi_tozVrLb8AhUklQIHSl8CigQ_AUoA3oECAEQAw#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:0518ca82,vid:hPK6xNzP48c

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBftssMHgKw&t=82s> (The Great Kite Fight)





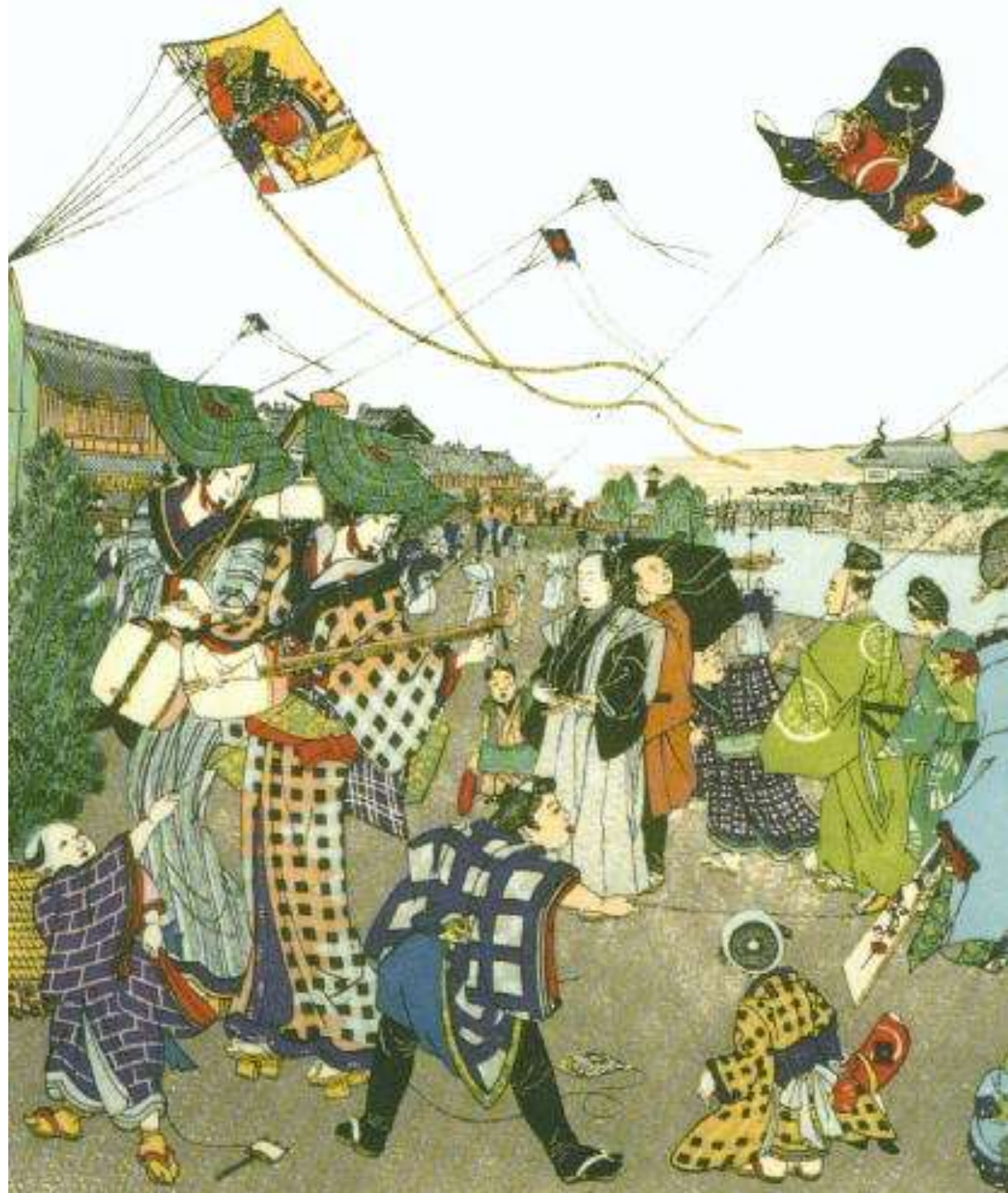












Koinobori—Japanese Carp Kites

Koinobori, meaning "carp streamer" in Japanese, are [carp](#)-shaped [windsocks](#) traditionally flown in Japan to celebrate [Tango no sekku](#), a traditional calendrical event which is now designated as [Children's Day](#), *Kodomo no hi*), a national holiday in Japan.^[1] *Koinobori* are made by drawing carp patterns on paper, cloth or other nonwoven fabric. They are then allowed to flutter in the wind. They are also known as ***satsuki-nobori***.

Children's Day takes place on May 5, the last day of [Golden Week](#), the largest break for workers and also a week in which many businesses, state schools, and some private schools close for up to 9–10 days for the designated national holidays. Landscapes across Japan are decorated with *koinobori* from April to early May, in honor of children for a good future and in the hope that they will grow up healthy and strong.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOG_kF325_E
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEqsHt1lIZ0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypf3dnmHqHU> (funny song)







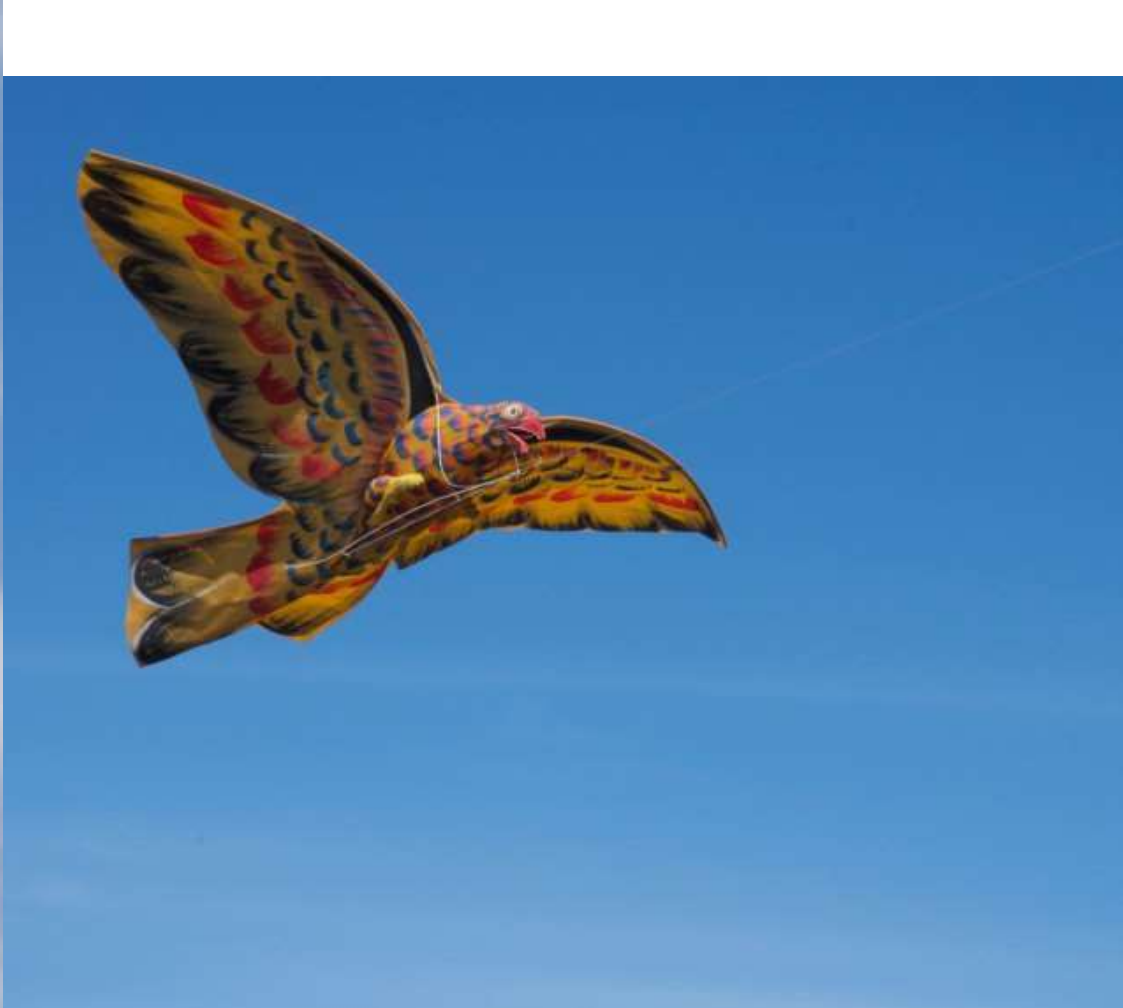


Indonesia

The three main categories of traditional kites are the **bird-shaped kites called Janggan, the leaf-shaped kites called Pecukan, and the Bebean which are fish shaped kite**. The dimensions of these kites can be anywhere between 10 metres in length and 4 metres wide.

- <https://www.sutori.com/en/story/kites-throughout-history--ygZs1D5Csk93fWN4TjTrsrkx> (leaf kite making start at 4:23)











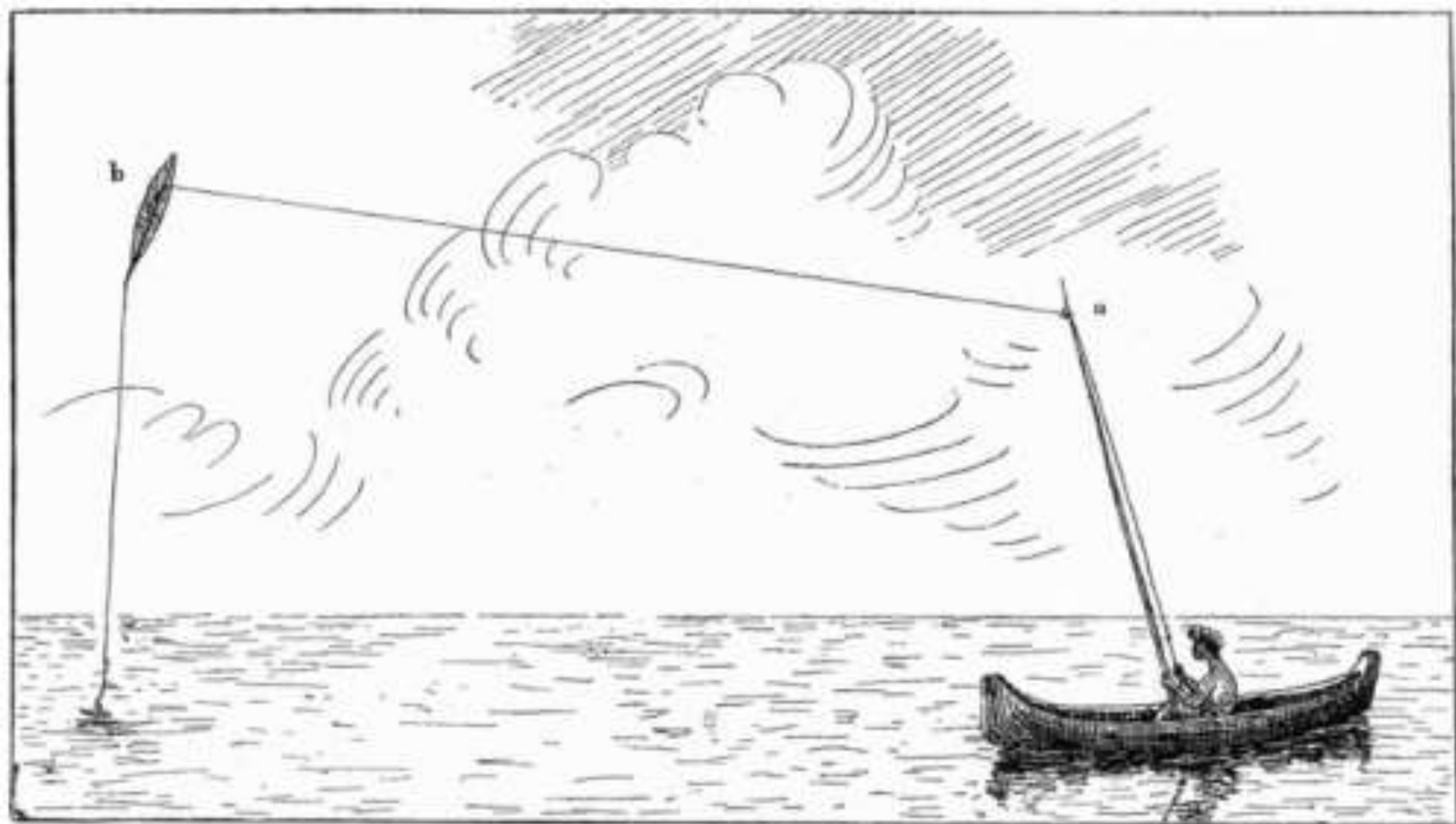




Traditional Kite Fishing

- It involves a kite from which a drop line hangs, attached to a lure or bait. The kite is flown over the surface of a body of water, and the bait floats near the waterline until taken by a fish. The kite then drops immediately, signaling to the fisherman that the bait has been taken, and the fish can then be hauled in.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I5GUDrSZh0> (Indonesia)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FY4f6Uc9zK8> (use this)





Malaysia

Wau bulan ([Kelantanese](#): *Wa bule*; [Jawi](#): واو بولنlit. '[moon](#) kite') is an intricately designed Malaysian [kite](#) (normally with floral motifs) that is traditionally flown in the [Malaysian](#) state of [Kelantan](#). It is one of Malaysia's national symbols, some others being the [hibiscus](#). The reverse side of the fifty-cent coin of Malaysia (1989 series) features an intricately decorated *wau bulan* with a hummer on top.^[1] The logo of [Malaysia Airlines](#) (MAS) is based on the *wau kucing* (lit. '[cat](#) kite').

There are many types of wau in Malaysia, each with its own specialty. *Wau kucing* and *wau merak* ([peacock](#) kite) are some of the variants.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFHLeGYdYiE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKLHLIzdofk>

The 73-year-old Samat Man, better known as Pak Non, is probably one of the few living experts of traditional kite or wau-making in the country – especially the ones made of palas leaves.

While working on making a "wau helang" (eagle kite) from palas leaves in his home workshop in Kampung Tok Kaya, Perlis, Pak Non takes breaks to play on his violin while singing *Itik Pulang Petang*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFHLeGYdYiE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HIXwFY4wKc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RHU3NiI6jQ> (long)







Wau Bulan



Wau Kucing



Wau JalaBudi



Wau Merak



Wau Puyuh



Wau Kapal



Wau Barat



Wau Kebayak



Wau Dodo Helang



Wau Seri Negeri



Wau Helang



Wau Kikik



Wau Kangkan



Wau Seri Bulan



Wau Kenyalang





Maori Kites

The Māori kite is known as manu [tukutuku](#) or manu aute. Manu means both kite and bird, and the word tukutuku refers to the winding out of the line as the kite ascends. Kites were also known as pākau, a name for the wing of a bird.

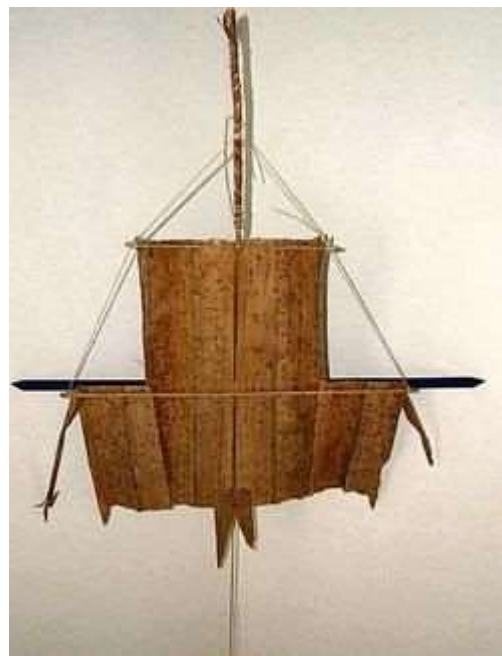
Kites were flown for recreation, but they also had other purposes. They were used for divination – to gauge whether an attack on an enemy stronghold would be successful, or to locate wrongdoers. They were also a means of communication. It is said that when the founding ancestor of Ngāti Porou, Porourangi, died in Whāngārā, on the East Coast, a kite was flown and his brother Tahu, the founding ancestor of Ngāi Tahu, was able to see it from the South Island. Sometimes people would release a kite and follow it, claiming and occupying the place where it landed. They are also flown in the New Year.

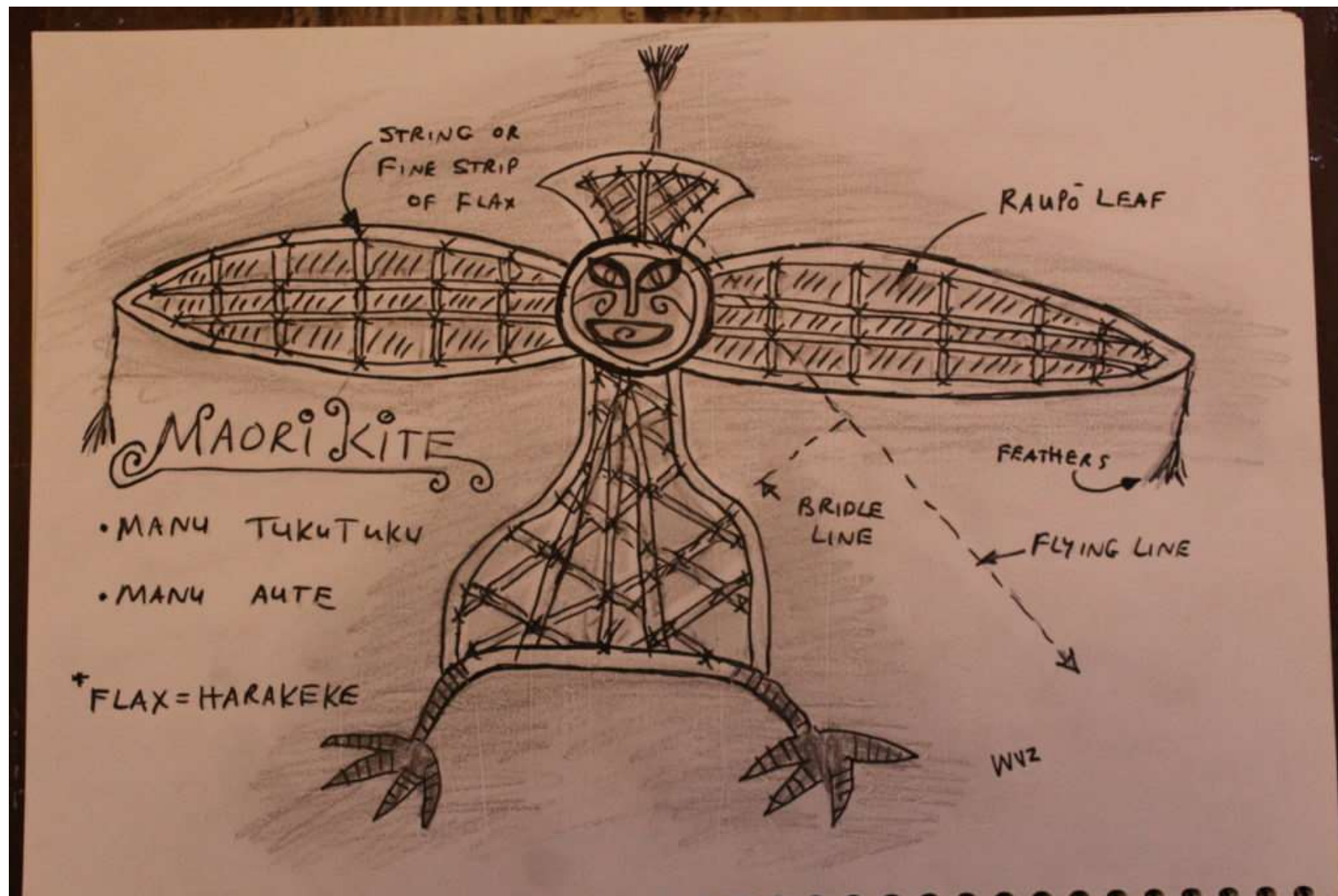
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VsWzwpXLfg>
- https://www.google.com/search?q=Maori+kites&source=lmns&tbm=vid&bih=775&biw=1600&client=firefox-b-1-d&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi83-qnuLb8AhX1O0QIHQt2CYgQ_AUoA3oECAEQAw#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:a7bc8aea,vid:qWnUmpcT2n0
- https://www.google.com/search?q=Maori+kites&source=lmns&tbm=vid&bih=775&biw=1600&client=firefox-b-1-d&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi83-qnuLb8AhX1O0QIHQt2CYgQ_AUoA3oECAEQAw#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:eed21c2,vid:g2MZdsJ2qdl

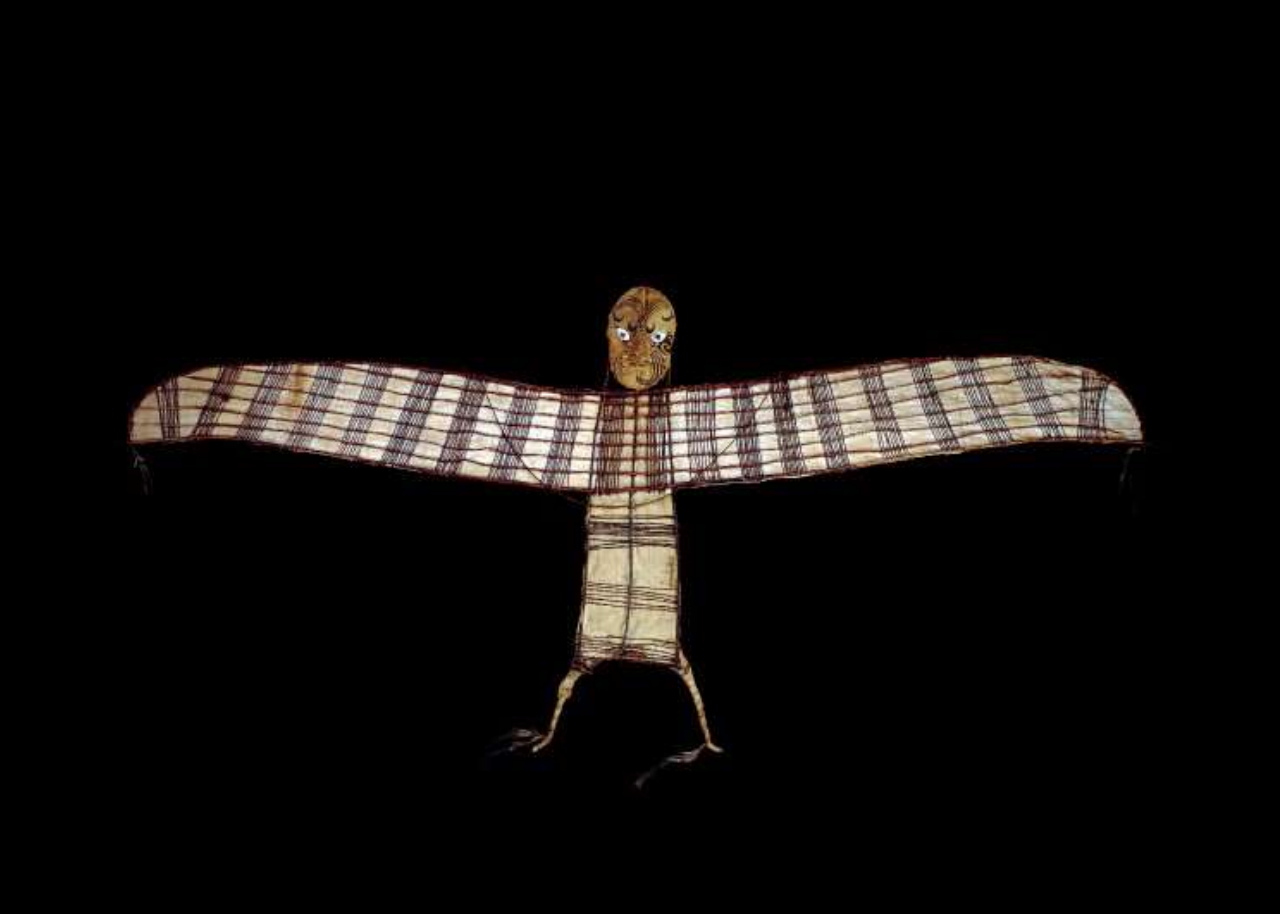




shutterstock.com • 2219967495







This is a Maori "manu aute" birdman kite from the Bay of Plenty, in New Zealand, collected in 1843 and probably dating from not much earlier.



Rare Maori kite flies again after 26 years

Flown by the maker, Colin McGeorge







