

MIKF NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
MIDLANDS KITE FLIERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN

JULY 2021



Bob Christopher - Catch the Wind



INFORMATION

CLUB FLY-INS

We hold club fly-ins each month (winter included) at various sites. These are informal events and are a great way of meeting other MKF members.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Your membership cards can obtain you discounts for purchases from most kite retailers in the UK, and gain you entry to events and festivals free or at a reduced cost. Please keep them safe.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

All fully paid up members are covered by Public Liability Insurance to fly kites safely for pleasure anywhere in the world. If you injure anyone whilst flying your kite the injured party may be able to claim on the club insurance for up to **£5,000,000**. The club has Member-to-Member Liability Insurance. A claim may be refused if the flier was found to be flying a kite dangerously - e.g. using unsuitable line, in unsuitable weather; flying over people, animals, buildings or vehicles. This insurance does not cover you for damage to, or loss or theft of members' kite/s.

BUGGIES, BOARDS & KITESURFING

Unfortunately we are not able to cover these activities within the clubs insurance policy.

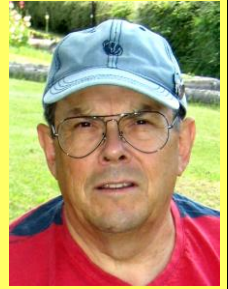
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*I am sorry but I don't do 'Facebook',
If you want me either email or phone I'll always get back to you.*

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'MKFNEWS' DEADLINES FOR 2021 +

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Kites Rise on the Wind: The Origin of Kites

March 16, 2017 by Stephanie Hall



"Haru no akebono" (Spring Sunrise), by Utagawa, Kuniteru, (1830?-1874), woodcut print on three sheets (Japan). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

When I was a kid, March signalled kite-flying time. A girl between two boys, I did what my brothers did, and the three of us would go to a large field near our home where kites had less chance of winding up in a tree. We flew diamond shaped kites that my mother favoured, or box kites that my father bought us. These also came with an aeronautics talk from my father. The box kite was always a favourite because it flew easily and could go very high. But usually there was only one box kite and that meant taking turns with it and negotiating for a turn. Back then I was not aware of the astonishing array of kite varieties since we had only two choices. I also did not know how very old that toy was, or its many uses other than as a toy, or that traditionally many people thought that kites were for boys.

In trying to learn about the story of kites I find it is often told back to front. Kites emerged in prehistory, so often people look at kites as they are today and try to work backwards. Some go to the earliest written sources as is traditional in history, but this does not get us to prehistoric kites. Oral histories, human migration in prehistory, and archaeology also have a part to play. But to begin close to the beginning I think we should start with a story that is very old. It appears in myths and legends in Asia and Polynesia. One way folklorists trace old tales is by looking at *motifs* that provide the basic plot, or parts of the plot. The kite tale motif goes something like this:

A long time ago a man wanted to fly up to the sky and the stars. He was so determined that he built himself a kite big enough to carry him into the sky. He flew so high that he became an immortal deity.

There is a kite god among the native peoples of New Zealand, Hawai'i and other islands in Polynesia.[1] In the Maori version of the story the man-deity becomes a kite.[2]. In Hawaiian mythology the god Maui flies a kite.[3] In addition to these myths, kite-flying carries with it aspects of sacredness in Asian and Polynesian cultures. They provide a link between deities and humans. They are flown to honour the gods in Polynesia. They were used in divination in New Zealand. In China and Japan they may scare off bad spirits and attract good ones. Some Chinese kites have whistles and spinning discs attached to them that help scare away bad *chi* (a wonderful online exhibit from the University of Maine, [99 Chinese Kites](#), includes images of some with spinners and whistles). There are auspicious and inauspicious days to fly kites in Asia. Kites that get loose and fly

away must not be touched when they land on the ground, as this may be bad luck. This important aspect of sacredness did not travel with Chinese kites to Europe as they gained popularity there in the 16th century, and so it was not passed on with the colonization of the Americas, although some peoples seem to have re-discovered sacred uses of kites.

Kites also have an important ancient use that only recently has travelled to the west. Kites have been used for fishing since prehistoric times and this seems to have begun in Malaysia with kites made from leaves and other vegetation.[4] Simple pieced and woven leaf kites are still made in Indonesia today. Fishing kites are designed to hold a lure and a device to hold the fish from a second string attached to fly just above the water like an insect. In at least one interesting version using a puff of spider's web, the lure itself held the fish. The use of kites as a practical fishing tool may have helped them to travel and to be shared from culture to culture. [In this exhibit, *Rediscovering Cultural Treasures from the Pacific Islands*, from the University of Rochester, two photographs of leaf fishing kites from Papua New Guinea can be seen.]



Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

This annual celebration of kites that coincides with the National Cherry Blossom Festival shows some of the diverse kite forms of today. The 2017 festival runs from March 15 to April 16. *Kite festival on the National Mall at the Washington Monument*, Washington, D.C. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith (between 1980 and 2006).

Kites have changed from their earliest designs and each culture where they are found has adapted them in their own customs. There are kites for fishing, sport, connection to the world of spirits and deities, warfare, and scientific inquiry. Some kite-using cultures became somewhat

isolated from others and so preserve kites and their traditions from earlier eras. This seems to be true for New Zealand and Hawai'i — two distant islands that share both ancestors and similar myths about kites and uses of kites. Fighting kites, used in sport where kite-flyers try to take down their opponent's kites, may have first emerged in China. The tradition has spread widely throughout Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East with variations in different cultures. Japanese history says that kites were brought there by Chinese monks between the 6th and 8th century CE. In the Edo period, beginning in 1603, Japan isolated itself and did not trade with other cultures. During this period of isolation, Japan developed its own unique forms and uses of kites. Japanese festivals which provide opportunities to fly kites include New Year's Day, Children's Day (May 5, formerly Boy's Day), and the Harvest Festival. [Woodcut prints featuring kites from the Edo period are available in the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Catalog.]

How old are kites? No one knows. Fragile kites do not survive to be found in archaeological excavations. But from an ethnographic point of view, migration helps provide some clues. It was long thought that Hawai'i was settled in about 800 CE. But this has recently been changed to the first or second century by archaeological finds. A recent discovery of a burial on the island of Vanuatu in Micronesia supports the idea that the migrations of peoples from Southeast Asia and Malaysia to Polynesia began in about 1600–1200 BCE.[5] The idea of kites, their uses, and shared ideas about sacredness must have been carried by these voyagers in order for peoples in the remote parts of Polynesia to have similar kites and stories about them. So learning when the great Pacific migrations from Southeast Asia and Malaya occurred can help us to guess at the minimum age of kites (they could have been in use long before the migrations).

When we come to the early written history of kites, we find that they have already been in use and traded among various cultures for many centuries. It is often said that the Chinese invented the kite, because they wrote of various flying contraptions in ancient times. It is an old tradition in historical scholarship to look to the written record for origins. But modern historians know that an inter-disciplinary approach is best when it comes to prehistoric inventions. It is difficult to say which of the early Chinese stories of kites are legends and which are historical. But folklorists and anthropologists see value in legends and myths even if they do not provide precise historical facts, as they often tell us how people thought and felt about things in the past.

In a story written down in the third century BCE by the philosopher Han Fei Zi about events said to have occurred over a hundred years earlier, he tells of Lu Ban and his teacher Mozi who conceived and built a wooden kite that could carry him up in the air. The philosopher-inventor Lu Ban flew for three days before crashing down. In Shandong he was even said to be treated as a god by local people. Smaller silk and paper kites are said to have followed this invention. Many historians, including those in China, regard this as a legend, rather than an historical event, since physical evidence of wooden kites or wings from that period have not been found, and there are many previous accounts of flying machines in early China that are not thought to have ever been built.[6] Large kites or multiple kites linked together can be made to hold a person aloft, but there is no solid evidence for this so early. What is clear in the works of Han Fei Zi is that kites had become culturally important in China by the time he began to write about them.

A problem with the story of Lu Ban as the inventor of kites is that the Polynesian evidence shows that kites almost certainly existed and were being widely traded before he was born. Also, inventions nearly always progress from simple to more complex forms, not the other way around. But another feature of this legend that I find interesting, is that it contains the basic motif of the man who flew into the sky using a kite and became a deity. It seems possible that that legend might have originated far away from Shandong.

The place where we currently find a story that starts from kites made of simple, natural materials and then progressing to more complex forms with sails of silk and other materials is Malaysia. It is remarkable that some of the oldest traditions of making kites have been preserved in these islands and passed on through the generations. There is also good evidence that this invention spread through trade and migration. Some think that the kite was invented twice, in China and Malaysia. But there is no great difference between kite forms in China and the early silk kites of Malaysia. For

example, kites in the form of birds, stingrays, sails, and geometric forms exist in Malaysia, Polynesia, and Asia. Historic uses of kites in China are also found in Malaysia and Polynesia. Fishing kites are an example I mentioned. The use of kites carrying a torch or lantern for nighttime reconnaissance in war is another interesting and practical use of kites that history records in both Polynesia and China.[7]

In a book created from an exhibit of Japanese kites Masaaki Modegi describes some early square kite forms that he identified as an Indonesian style.[8] He speculates that Japan may have traded with Indonesia before the Edo period, and so acquired styles of kites from both China and Indonesia, and this is certainly possible. But it is also possible that the Indonesian style came from China, and then were preserved in Japan when it cut off outside trade. As Chinese kite flyers developed their own more popular designs, these square ones may have disappeared there. This often happens. As a cultural practice spreads and changes, some of the older forms may be found in the more remote places but not in the place of origin. I don't know how to prove which explanation accounts for the square kites in Japan. But I think we should not assume that there were no square Indonesian-style kites in China in the past. After all, the bird-shaped kites still beloved in China and the bird-shaped kites of Indonesia, based on their appearance, might stem from a common ancestor. If we start asking questions like this, it might lead to some interesting answers.

Currently I am persuaded by the theory of one origin of kites in Malaysia. But more research is being done, and there may be more information that comes to light as scholars pursue the story of ancient kites. Evidence of kites in prehistory is extremely scarce, but what is truly remarkable is how much can still be found of early kite design in living tradition and museum specimens.



Lithograph by Louis Kurz, (1833-1921). No date, 19th century.

Notice that the kite frame this American boy is making is hexagonal. This seems to be one of the older kite forms, found in many parts of the world.

Kites continue to develop in their in their cultural meanings. The spiritual meaning of kites did not completely make the leap from Asia to Europe and the Americas. But there is a proverb that may have. Churchill is sometimes incorrectly quoted as saying “Kites rise highest against the wind, not with it,” but that is another legend — he did not say that. Jean Antoine Petit-Senn included a

similar proverb in a book of epigrams, “La vrai courage rassemble un cerf-volent: un vent contraire l’élève, loin de abattre” (True courage is like a kite: a contrary wind raises it, far from knocking it down), and this seems to be his version of a French proverb.[9] There are a number of other people quoted as saying something similar — some are verifiable quotations and some are not — but the core proverb might have been imported with the kite long ago. Today the Chinese proverb is sometimes given as “Kites rise on an opposing wind” and used in motivational seminars in North America to mean that you can use forces that oppose you to rise.

I asked a colleague, Dr. Nora Yeh, to help me find the real Chinese proverb, as translations are often different from the original. She was able to find it in a Chinese poem, “Zhi Yuan” (Kite), by Zhun Kou (961-1023 CE): “a kite rises on the wind.” In the poem it means that, like a kite, the “wind” of your supporters will help you to rise. That is different meaning than the version found in European and American usage, yet very close to the same phrase. Proverbs often have multiple meanings and it will take more research to find if the meaning simply changed in European translations, or if the idea of raising up in response to opposition is also found in China. It would also be interesting to find out if this proverb exists in other languages. If you have further information about this, please leave a comment below!

Among the Maya in Guatemala an amazing spiritual tradition of kites has arisen, independent of Asian ideas. On Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead, known to Anglophones as All Souls’ Day), people picnic at the graveyard, kids fly small kites, and adults fly giant colorful round kites that honor deceased family members and often carry political messages concerning human rights as well. These must be launched and flown by teams of people. These are thought to repel malevolent spirits and allow the celebrants to commune with their deceased loved ones in peace. So this belief is similar to beliefs about kites and chi found in China, but seems to be founded in the beliefs surrounding Día de Muertos. In some families the kites are burned after the festival, while in others the kite or the frame is stored to be used again. The tradition of giant kites is thought to be only about one hundred years old, yet has developed into a beautiful and unique kite celebration in that time.[10]

The ancient activity of flying kites continues to be an important cultural activity in many parts of the world, a tradition which changes and grows. Kites also develop technologically as new materials are tried. I have only been able to describe a few briefly here, and there is much more to say about customs, games, and beliefs involving kites, as well as their practical uses. If you would like to share your kite tradition, please do so in the comments. (But please do not include links advertising events or products as Library of Congress policy does not allow these.)

Notes

1. See: Chadwick, Nora K. “The Kite: A Study in Polynesian Tradition,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 61 (Jul. – Dec., 1931), pp. 455-491. A thesis by Damion Sailors also includes a discussion of the origins and diffusion of kites in the Pacific with references: *Ho’olele Lupe—An Analysis of the Ancient Practice of Hawaiian Kite-flying*, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, 2011.
2. Chadwick discusses Maori traditions and sagas concerning kites: pp. 462-491.
3. Westervelt, W. D. “Maui’s Kite Flying,” *Legends of Maui, A Demi-God of Polynesia*, 1910 (full text online at Sacred Texts).
4. Edge-Partington, T. W. “Kite Fishing by the Salt-Water Natives of Mala or Malaita Island, British Solomon Islands,” *Man*, Vol. 12, 1912, pp. 9-11. Published by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
5. Allison Gramolini provides a good introduction to this topic with citations in “Polynesian Migration” 2011, available via Sea Semester, Environmental Studies at Woods Hole and at Sea.
6. Needham, Joseph with the collaboration of Wan Ling, “Thaumaturgical Artisans” in *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, part 2, pp. 573-576. Cambridge University Press, 1965.
7. Chadwick (see note 1) discusses the widespread use of kites for reconnaissance in Polynesia and Asia, concluding that kites of China spread to Polynesia, a position many question today due to the apparent age of the Malaysian and Polynesian kite traditions. Also, Needham, Joseph with the collaboration of Wan Ling, “The Kite and its Origins” in *Science*

- and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, part 2, pp. 576-578. Cambridge University Press, 1965, includes a discussion of the use of kites in reconnaissance in China. Chadwick (see note 1) discusses the widespread use of kites for reconnaissance in Polynesia and Asia.
8. Modegi, Masaaki. *The Making of Japanese Kites: Tradition, Beauty and Creation*, p. 17.
 9. Petit-Senn, Jean. *Bluettes et Boutades*, 1846 (a book of epigrams).
 10. Ornelas, Christopher, et al. *Wings of Resistance: The Giant Kites of Guatemala*, Drachen Foundation, 2013.

Resources

99 Chinese Kites, exhibit, the University of Maine. 2013.

Culin, Stewart, "Hawaiian Games," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Apr., 1899), pp. 201-247. This article includes discussion of kites, as well as drawings of kite types found at the time.

Edge-Partington, T. W. "Kite Fishing by the Salt-Water Natives of Mala or Malaita Island, British Solomon Islands," *Man*, Vol. 12, 1912, pp. 9-11. Published by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

Fishing Kite, Tench Island, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea, National Gallery of Victoria, Australia. A photograph of a fishing kite.

Newell, Jenny. *The Maori 'Birdman' Kite at the British Museum*, Pacific Arts, New Series, Vol. 1 (2006), pp. 36-43.

Rediscovering Cultural Treasures from the Pacific Islands, from the University of Rochester. Includes two photographs of fishing kites from Papua New Guinea.

Sailors, Damion. *Ho'olele Lupe—An Analysis of the Ancient Practice of Hawaiian Kite-flying*, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2011 (thesis).

Westervelt, W. D. "Maui's Kite Flying," *Legends of Maui, A Demi-God of Polynesia*, 1910 (full text online at Sacred Texts).

Flying High in Nihonbashi: Tokyo's Kite Museum

Alan Gleason

Tucked away on the fifth floor of a nondescript downtown Tokyo office building, the room is of modest dimensions. Yet to enter it is to step back in time, into one of the impossibly crowded little neighborhood toyshops, stuffed with gaudily dyed kites, paper balloons, dolls, model boats and planes, that I remember from my Tokyo childhood.

The room is what is surely one of the most compact and jam-packed exhibit spaces in all of Japan: the Kite Museum in Nihonbashi. Every inch of aisle, wall and ceiling is covered with a dizzying array of kites of every description.



The interior of the Kite Museum, viewed from the entrance.



corner of the museum. Note the *mukade-dako* (centipede kite) hanging from the ceiling

They hail not only from Japan but also China, Indonesia, Colombia, New Zealand, France -- a truly global display of ingeniously constructed flying machines. Kites are indeed an art form unto themselves.



A kite portrait of Kite Museum founder Shingo Modegi, next to an octopus kite

The Kite Museum's founder, the late Shingo Modegi, started out as a restaurateur (his son Masaaki still runs the Taimeiken Restaurant on the first floor of the building). Modegi's love of kites prompted him to found the Japan Kite Association in 1969 and, as his own collection burgeoned, the Kite Museum in 1977. Now operated by the association, which Masaaki chairs, the museum currently owns some 3,000 kites, of which it displays about 300 at a time. At the heart of the collection are the lavishly illustrated *Edo nishiki-e dako* -- kites dating back to Tokyo's golden days as Edo, the seat of the Shogunate. These masterpieces of kitemaking, with their bold ukiyo-e images of Kabuki actors, mythical creatures and legendary warriors, seem almost too pretty to toss into the air. But they are definitely built to fly, constructed of bamboo and a sturdy variety of handmade washi paper made from *kozo*, a type of mulberry fiber.

Japanese kitemakers have always displayed a playful sense of humor. It helps that the word for kite -- *tako* -- is a homonym for octopus, with predictable results. Then there are the jointed *mukade-dako* -- "centipede kites," made of numerous sections connected by strings, that wriggle snakily in the wind.



A *Nihon-maru* sailing ship kite, built by Kikuzo Watanabe



Another *Nihon-maru* kite built by Morio Yajima, captured in flight (photo published by Seibundo Shinkosha, 1978).

More recently, Japanese kitemakers have built elaborate kite models, with full paper rigging, of sailing ships like the *Nihon-maru*. As the museum's photos attest, these miniature galleons make a ghostly spectacle as they float across the sky. Other treasures tucked in the corners of the museum include a Maori bamboo bird kite and a huge Chinese dragon head that once belonged to a massive "centipede" kite



Papier-mache head of a Chinese dragon kite, formerly part of a *mukade-dako*



A life-size likeness of legendary *Edo dako* artist Teizo Hashimoto (1904-1991) at work in his studio, with one of his beloved cats

Kite enthusiasts will not be disappointed in the museum's shop, which at first glance is virtually indistinguishable from the glorious jumble of the exhibit section. Besides an attractive selection of Japanese kites and kitemaking materials (polyester tends to trump washi these days), there are kite calendars, kite t-shirts, and reproductions of ukiyo-e depicting kite fliers on the riverbanks of old Edo. Some forms of amusement are timeless, and some transcend amusement to become art.

THE KITE MUSEUM

5th floor, Taimeiken Restaurant, 1-12-10

Nihonbashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo

Phone: 03-3271-2465

Hours: 11:00 - 17:00 Monday through Saturday, except national holidays

Transportation: One-minute walk from exit C5 of Metro Nihonbashi Station, or a ten-minute walk from the Yaesu central exit of JR Tokyo Station.

Photos by Alan Gleason except where otherwise noted. All images by permission of the Kite Museum

Alan Gleason

Alan Gleason is a translator, editor and writer based in Tokyo, where he has lived for 25 years. In addition to writing about the Japanese art scene he has edited and translated works on Japanese theater (from kabuki to the avant-garde) and music (both traditional and contemporary).



Kite-flying culture, c. 1910-1930.

"We think of kite flying as a pastime for children. Account must be taken, however, of the size of the Japanese kite, and the greater strength required to hold the string, before we judge their sport on the basis of what we know about kite flying.

"One good feature is that it brings the adults and children together in a common enjoyment. The kites are painted, and sometimes when one looks up to the end of the string he sees a goggled face staring down at him from the sky, with two tails hanging from it."

– Beauty in Japan, Samuel Wainwright, 2003



*"Flaging [sic] kite on Kasagashira", Nagasaki, c. 1910. A Japanese dictionary dated 981 AD was the first to record the Japanese word for kite and used the characters for *kami tobi*, meaning paper hawk – which suggests that the first kites were bird shaped.*

"About the time of the old New-year's, when the winds of February and March are favorable to the sport, kites are flown; and there are few sports in which Japanese boys, from the infant on the back to the full-grown and the over-grown boy, take more delight.



Kite-making.

雛 造 鳳 (俗風本日)

Kite maker, c. 1930. There are about 130 different styles and types of kites in Japan, each region having its own unique shape. All are painted with bright-colored natural dyes, sumi (black ink) and constructed from washi paper (handmade rice paper) and bamboo – or where bamboo is difficult to grow, cypress wood is used instead. The framing is called the 'bones' and the paper covering is known as the 'skin'.

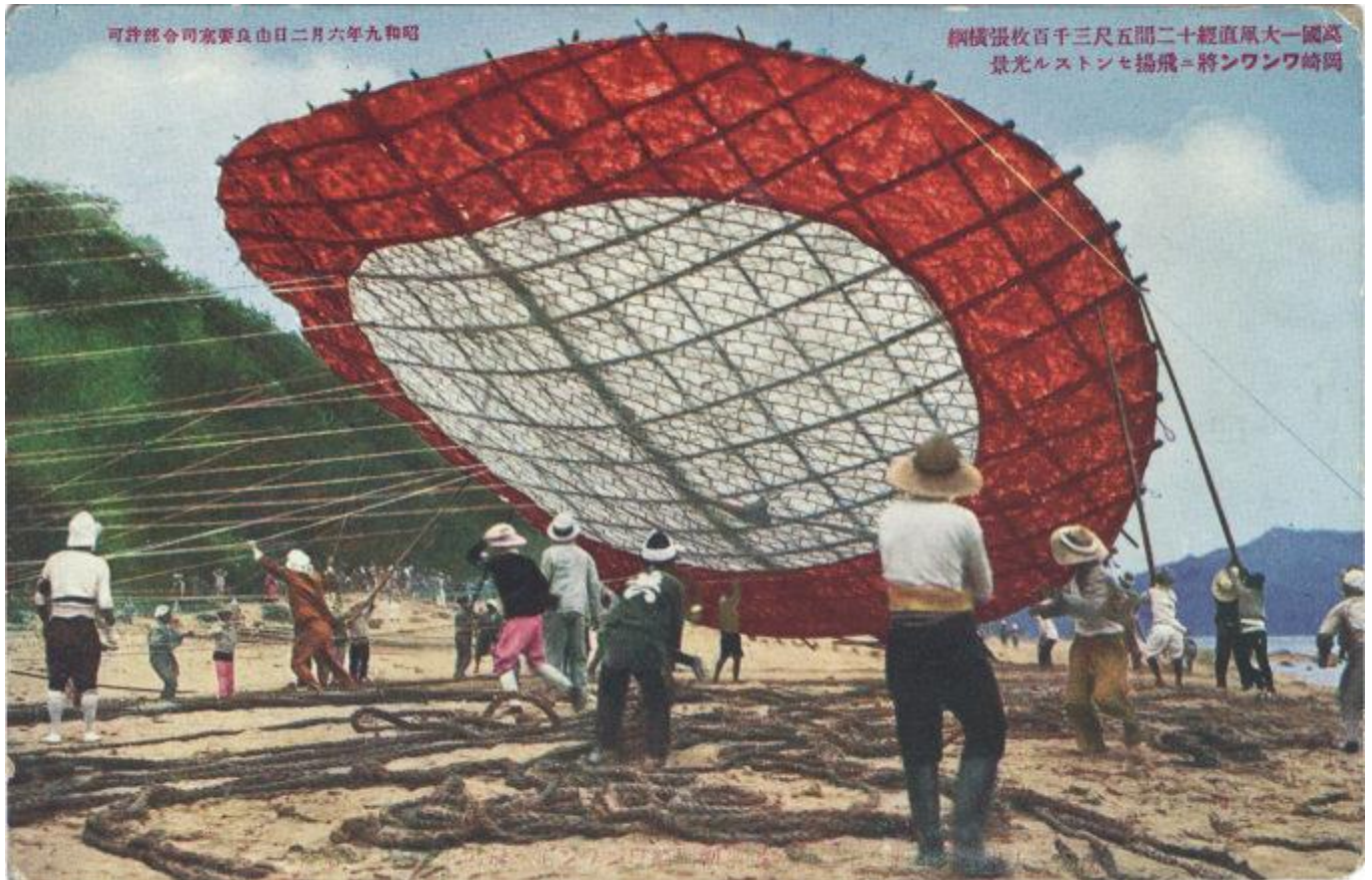
"... The Japanese kites are made of tough paper pasted on a frame of bamboo sticks, and are usually of a rectangular shape. Some of them, however, are made to represent children or men, several kinds of birds and animals, fans, etc. On the rectangular kites are pictures of ancient heroes or beautiful women, dragons, horses, monsters of various kinds, or huge Chinese characters.

"Among the faces most frequently seen on these kites are those of Yoshitsune, Kintaro, Yoritomo, Benke, Daruma, Tomoye, and Hangaku. Some of the kites are six-feet square. Many of them have a thin tense ribbon of whalebone at the top of the kite, which vibrates in the wind, making a loud, humming noise.

"The boys frequently name their kites Genji or Heike, and each contestant endeavors to destroy that of his rival. For this purpose, the string, for ten or twenty feet near the kite end, is first covered with glue, and then dipped into pounded glass, by which the string becomes covered with tiny blades, each able to cut quickly and deeply. By getting the kite in proper position, and suddenly sawing the string of his antagonist, the severed kite falls, to be reclaimed by the victor."

– The Mikado's Empire, Vol. II, William Elliot Griffis, 1906

Round kite (wanwan-dako) flying at Naruto, Shikoku, 1935.



Round kite (wanwan-dako) flying at Naruto, Shikoku, 1935. The giant, round *wanwan-dako* of Shikoku's Tokushima Prefecture are well-known as some of the largest kites made in the world. These commemorative postcards depicting the flights of these giant kites are dated June 2, 1935. *"Naruto, Tokushima Prefecture: Since the 17th century the local people of Tokushima, one of the four prefectures on the island of Shikoku, have been flying large round kites called wanwan-dako.*

"One such flown in 1935 [June 2] with a howling sound caused by the wind is said to have had a diameter of 23 meters. This breathtaking spectacle took place between May and June, when strong southerly winds blew from the Naruto shore. Giant kite meets ceased during World War II and were revived only in 1980."



Round kite (wanwan-dako) flying at Naruto, Shikoku, 1935.



Round kite (wanwan-dako) flying at Naruto, Shikoku, 1935.

Japanese kite makers, c. 1960.



Japanese kite makers, c. 1960. For many centuries, kites were flown in Japan as rites that would ensure benevolent weather and plentiful crops. Nowadays, kits (~*dako* or ~*tako*) are flown to celebrate different events: the Emperor's birthday, the birth of a firstborn son, or Children's Day. From the wiki: "It is thought that kites were first introduced into Japan by Buddhist missionaries who arrived from China in the Nara period (649-794 CE) and were first used in religious and thanksgiving ceremonies. A Japanese dictionary dated 981 CE records the use of the Japanese word for kite (*kami tobi*, paper hawk) – which suggests that the first kites were bird shaped. Kites were also used for practical purposes from earliest times, such as the construction of shrines and temples where large kites were used to lift tiles and other materials up to workers on the scaffolding and roof tops.

"It was in the Edo period (1603-1867), when Japan was closed to all foreigners, that most of the beautiful Japanese kites we know today were developed. There are about 130 different styles and types of kites, each region having its own unique shape. Kites are usually decorated with characters from Japanese folklore, mythology or have some religious or symbolic meaning.

"The popular name for kites now are *tako* or *dako*. The Japanese even have a word in their vocabulary 'tako-kichi' which means 'kite crazy'. Traditionally kites are flown on Children's Day (May 5th), at religious festivals, on public holidays, and at New Year festivities. Kites are also flown at harvest festivals, with stalks of rice attached as a symbolic offering of thanks for a good crop. One of the most famous kite festivals is at Hamamatsu where kite teams battle against each other with over 2,000,000 spectators in attendance.

"Hashimoto Tiezo was one of the most famous and last professional kite-makers in Tokyo. He was made a living National Treasure for his work in the traditional arts. Hashimoto died in 1993 but is honored in the Tokyo Kite Museum, located in Ginza's Taimeiken Restaurant building."

SELECTION OF JAPANESE KITES

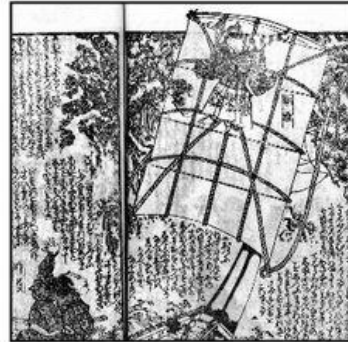


KITE BOOKS BY PAUL CHAPMAN

Paul Chapman is known in the kite community as a kite historian and researcher into the kites and kite flying traditions of Asia. His photography aims not only to capture the moment, but also to provide details that might otherwise remain unknown.

Book Description

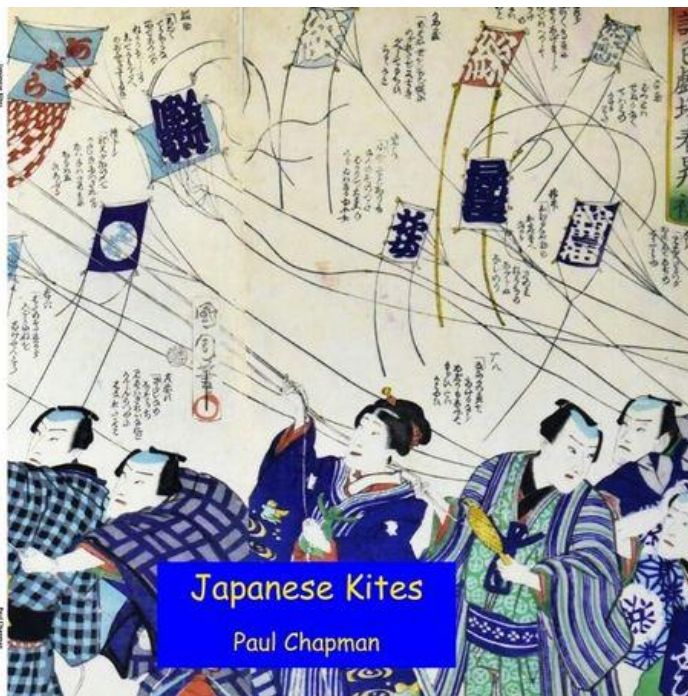
A background book for an upcoming symposium in Paris on traditional Japanese Kites. The focus is on the making process, especially the use of woodblocks for the kite skin imagery. I have drawn from my own collection with original books dating back to the mid 1600s and run through ukiyo-e woodblock prints and traditional Japanese theatre images. Several images show the preliminary drawings from the mid 1800s used by the wood cutters in making the blocks. I also attended numerous traditional kite festivals in 2014 and 2016 ... which feature in more detail in other BobBooks in my kite series.



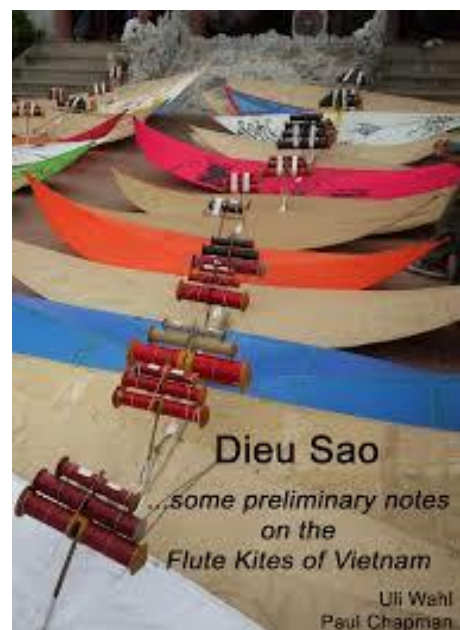
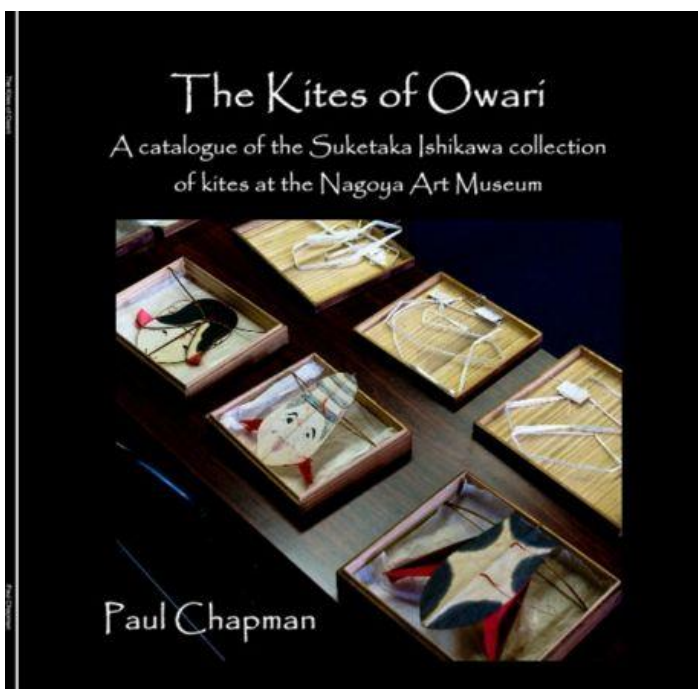
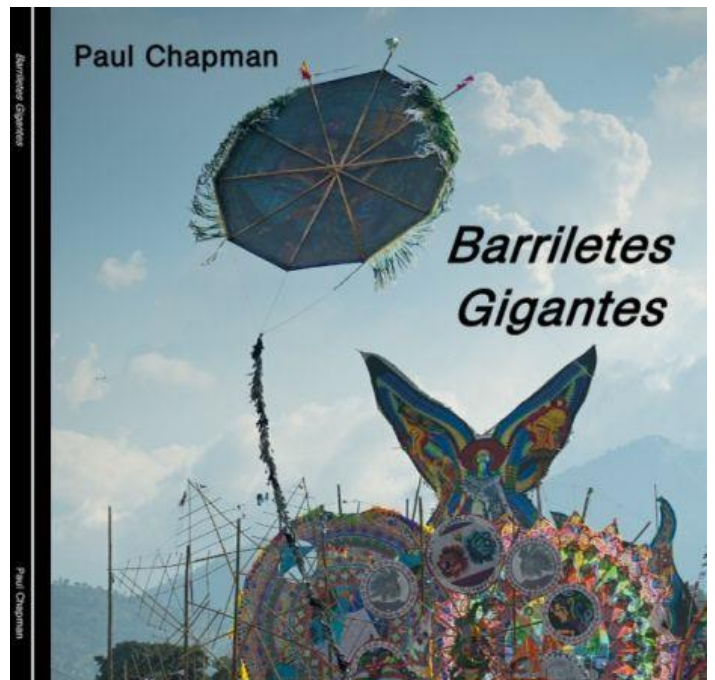
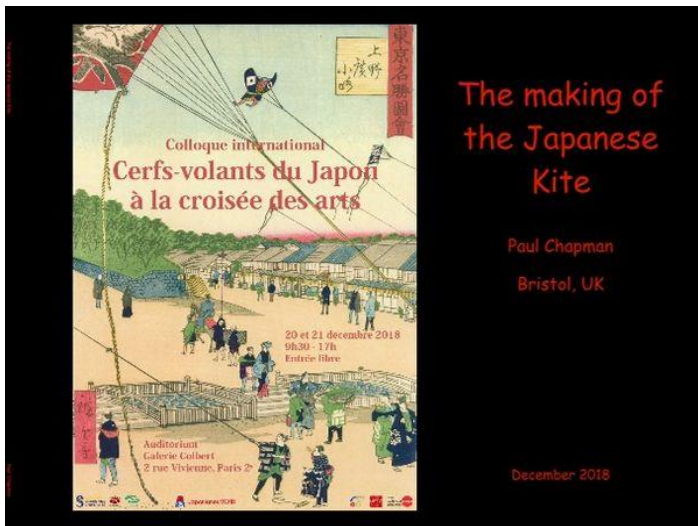
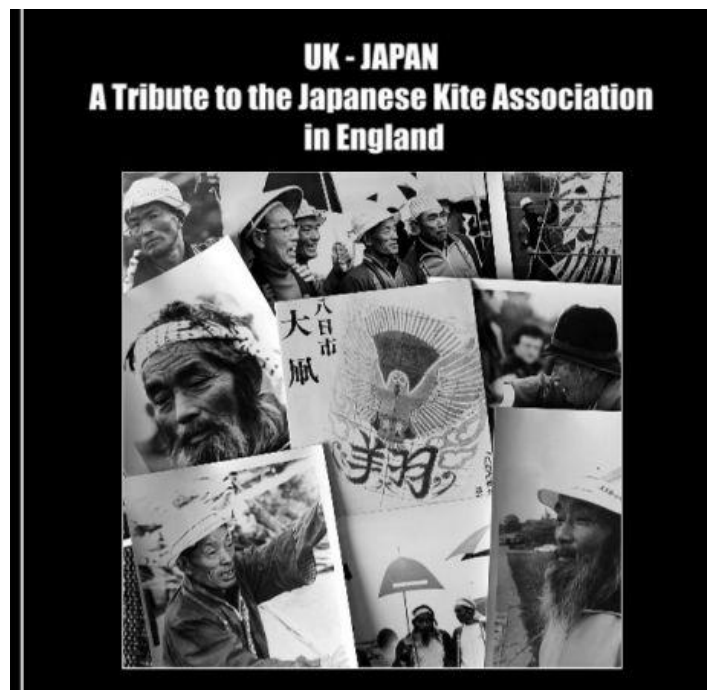
Japanese Kites

A selection from years of collecting old Japanese woodblock prints and books, together with some recent adventures in Japan and my own attempts at kitemaking.

I first went to Japan in 2014 where I visited the Mr Modegi's Kite Museum in Tokyo before embarking on a whirlwind tour of kitemakers and kite festivals. I returned in 2016 for more, this time to include, amongst many intrigues, the festivals in Shirone and Sanjo.



Other books by Paul Chapman....





Semi-dako; Cicada. (35x30.1 cm)
The wing sleeves resemble Willow leaves (Yangisode).



Details.

Above: One of the Abu kites had degraded. Here is the skin.

On the right are details of Okame's fine bamboo work.



Abu-dako; the Horsefly (Gadfly). (33.6x29.1 cm)
The wing sleeves resemble Willow leaves (Yangisode).



Abu Beka; the Horsefly (Gadfly). (26.1x21.1 cm)
Very small wings. The kite shakes from side to side and this changes the tone.



Okame. She brings luck and kindness.
"Okame, at this table where we eat, let good fortune take a seat."

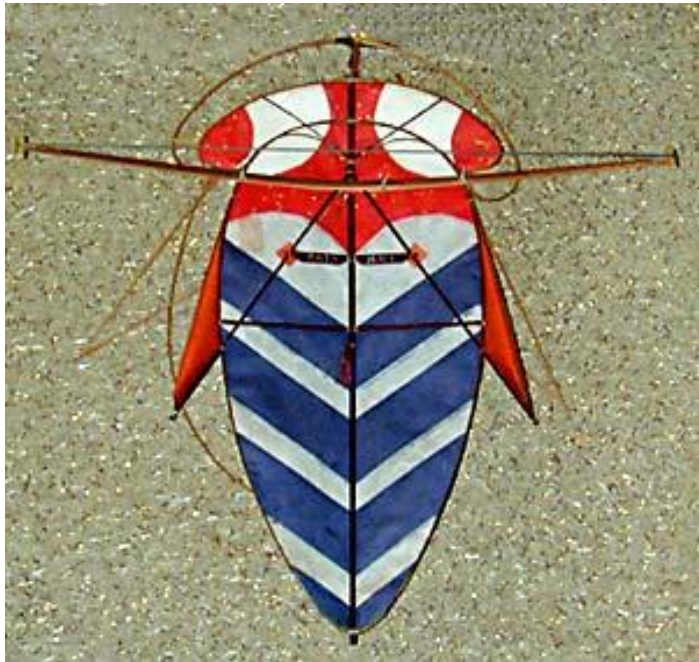


JAPANESE 'BEE KITES'



Mr. Satoh's famous Bee kites

In 1996 while attending the AKA convention in Santa Monica, we met several kite masters from Japan. One of these was Masaaki Satoh, from Nagoya the famous master of the traditional Bee kite. The bee kite also comes in other forms such as a horsefly and a cicada depending on the markings made on the painting. These kites are known as hachidako (bee), semi-dako (cicada) and abudako (horsefly) in Japanese. Collectively the style of kite are known as traditional Nagoya Koryu kites. These insect kites all have hummers attached to sound like the insect. Mr. Satoh graciously invited us to visit him at his home in Nagoya where we viewed his kites and his studio. We are very grateful to him for his kind and generous hospitality



Semi-dako (cicada kite) Mr. Satoh's Miniature kites-so small that he does not make them anymore because he cannot see the fine details needed to make them. I am showing the back of the kite in many photos as these are the most interesting parts of the kites. He makes these kites in many sizes from less than 2 inches to over 1 meter





Notice the grey-green crimped paper at the edge. This is very old paper and Mr. Satoh cannot find this paper any more. For the wings he uses hand made red paper with gold flecks on it.



Mr. Satoh's studio. It is very small because all of his kites are very small and he doesn't need a large area. His master studio is full of delicate tools and soft light in his traditional house in Nagoya. Here he makes the finest bee kites in all of Japan.



The kites are made from very old bamboo that has turned a deep rich brown. This bamboo is favored because it is very flexible, splits very well and can be bent into any shape. The insect kites all have hummers attached to sound like the insect.





The black paint used is sumi-e ink. Mr. Sato demonstrated how he is able to make the fuzzy line markings used on some of the insects. He first wets the paper and then applies the ink, letting it flow out to an irregular line. Then he dries the paper with a hair dryer. When he needs to make a straight line he uses very dry paper. The larger kites use a conifer frame instead of bamboo for strength and less weight.



Mr. Sato also makes a unique round shaped koryu-dako called a fukusuke. Mr. Sato explained that because this kite is round it wobbles back and forth which makes it buzz more than a regular koryu-dako.



Man-lifting Kites:

Ancient China to Modern Adventure Sports

BY DIPANJANA MUKHERJEE • JUNE 4, 2019



A lieutenant being lifted up in the sky by giant Perkins man-carrying kite. (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

Man-lifting kites are, as the name suggests, specially designed kites that can lift humans. Back in the day, when aeroplanes and helicopters were merely the stuff of high-fantasy, these man-lifting kites were the closest that humans could get to their dream of flying. The kites were either used for pleasure and entertainment or more functionally for fast aerial reconnaissance in a battlefield. The man-lifting kites had undergone various stages of development in the past, at the hands of various eminent figures. The 20th-century advent of powered flight, however, put a halt on innovations to these kites.

Man-lifting Kites: An ancient technology

Charting the history of the man-lifting kite takes us back to 6th century China. The records in the *Book of Sui* tell us of the tyrannical Emperor Wenxuan of Northern Qi. According to the book, he had his prisoners executed by making them attempt to 'fly' using bamboo mats while throwing them off a tower. These instances of the man-lifting kite's use were almost always fatal, except in the case of a prince Yuan Huangtou, as recorded in the *Zizhi Tongjian*. The prince managed to fly almost 2.5 kilometres from the 33m Golden Phoenix Tower to the Purple Way, where he finally fell.

Another record from the far-east tells us about Ishikawa Goemon, a Japanese thief in the 16th century. He had successfully used the man-lifting kite to steal the golden scales from an ornamental image atop the Nagoya Castle. He had mounted a trapeze attached to the tail of a

giant kite, which his accomplices manoeuvred from the ground. In the 17th century, Kawamura Zuiken, a Japanese architect, made use of man-lifting kites to lift his workers during construction.

The most seminal innovation for the man-lifting kite was by George Pocock in 1822. He had initially developed a method of using these kites to lift men to distant hill-tops. In 1822 he revolutionized the arena with his big invention: the kite-drawn buggy. This innovation kindled the interest in further developments to the man-lifting kites and its various utilitarian applications that came about in the 19th century.

Modern development Baden-Powell's levitor

Captain B.F.S Baden-Powell, in the early 1890s, designed a hexagonal man-lifting kite, which he named the 'Levitor'. This was meant for military use for aerial observation, or to lift wireless antenna and other such heavy loads. After George Pocock, the first record of successful use of the man-lifting kite was in 1894, using the Levitor. Baden-Powell had lifted a man 50 feet off the ground using these kites. Since this instance, the Levitor was regularly used to lift men, even up to 100 feet off the ground. It was so successful, that the Levitors were to be used in the Boer War. However, due to the delay in its delivery to South Africa, Baden-Powell's kites could not be put to use.

Lawrence Hargrave's box kite

Even before Baden-Powell invented his hexagonal kites, Lawrence Hargrave designed a box-kite in 1885. However, he used this contraption for the first time on 12th November 1894, after Baden-Powell's revolutionary success. He lifted himself using this kite around 16 feet off the ground from a beach in New South Wales' Stanwell Park. The entire rig consisted of four box kites that were attached to the ground using piano wires.



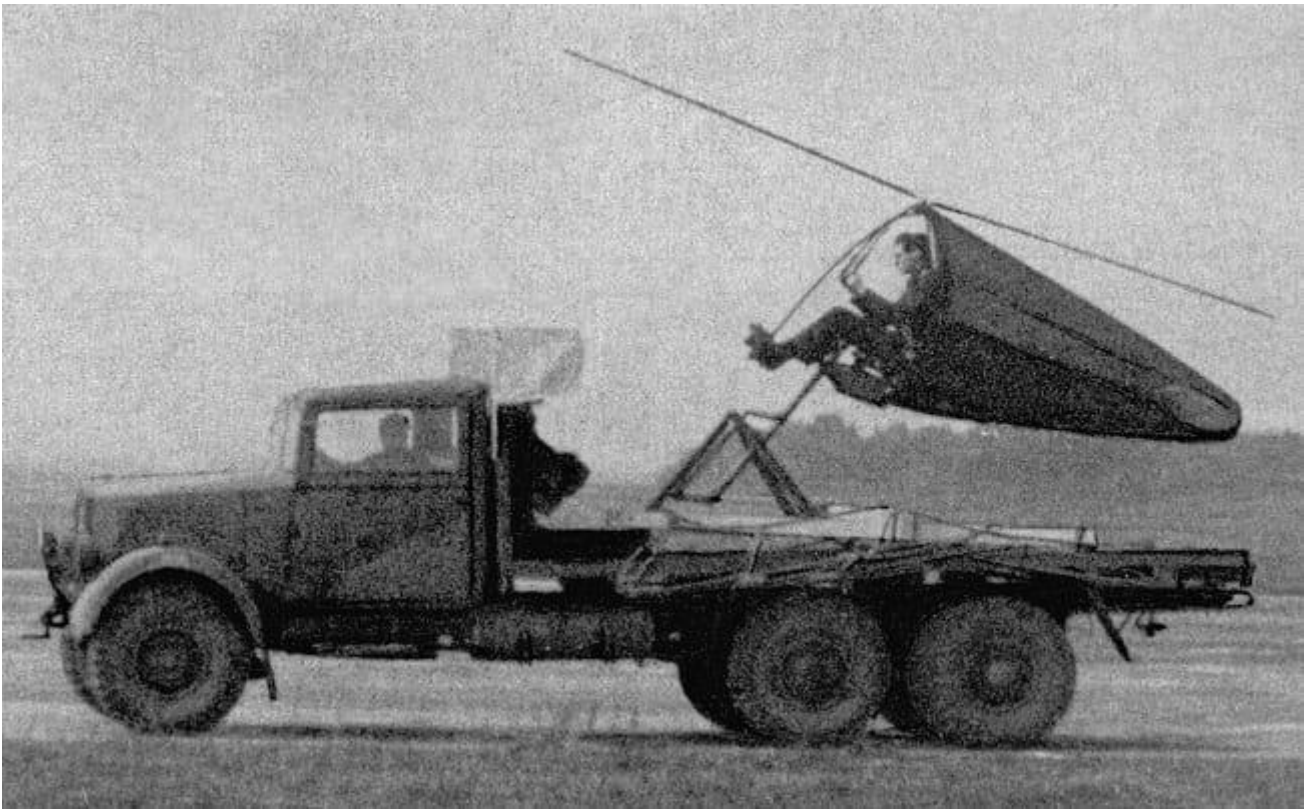
Lawrence Hargrave (left) and his associate demonstrating their box kite, 1894. (Wikimedia Commons)
The Bat

In the vein of Baden-Powell's Levitor, Samuel Cody invented a man-lifting kite for military use. He intended his contraption to be used to observe the enemy forces during the war and named it The Bat. Cody had mounted himself on an early model of the Bat and crossed the English Channel. This garnered much interest from the War Office and he was commissioned to conduct trials through 1904-05. Subsequently, he could lift a test-subject to a record 1.219 metres. The Bat was deployed officially in 1906 and acted as a precursor to the entry of aircraft into the domain. These war-kites would ascend as any other kite would. The descent, however, was in the form of a glider, making it more suitable to violent war-zones. Samuel Cody later modified the Bat into an 8.9kW engine-powered untethered kite.



***A passenger flying Man-lifter War Kite designed by Samuel Franklin Cody. (Royal Engineers official photographer)
The Hafner Rotachute***

The Hafner H.8 Rotachute was designed by Australian engineer Raoul Hafner in the 1940s as an experimental single-place strap-on rotor kite. The Rotachute was intended to be an alternative to conventional parachutes and theoretically, could deploy a soldier accurately in warzones. When hand-launched, these kites tested successful, but there were several issues when dispatched from aircraft, as it ideally would be.



Hafner Rotachute. (Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment)

The Hafner Rotachute underwent up to ten evolutions (till the M.10) in March 1941. The initial Mark 1 had a tubular steel structure, rubber-mounted motor hub, and had a single seat. The Mark 3 version incorporated metal rotor blades. The successfully air-launched M. 10 was a sophisticated design incorporating mass-balanced rotors made of wood, with a rotor-span of 10ft. Despite being a practical design on paper, an occasion to put the Hafner Rotachute to use never came to pass. Around eight of these man-lifting rotor kites were constructed, and they were mostly used to test for future projects, namely the Hafner Rotabuggy.

Hafner Rotabuggy

The Hafner Rotabuggy was developed out of the pre-existing single-seater rotor kite called the Hafner Rotachute, both designed by Raoul Hafner. The Hafner Rotabuggy is also known as the M.L. 10/42 Flying Jeep, or Malcolm Rotaplane. It was originally manufactured as an experimental aeroplane that combines the key features of a Willy MB and a rotor kite. The Rotabuggy was intended to air-drop off-road vehicles.

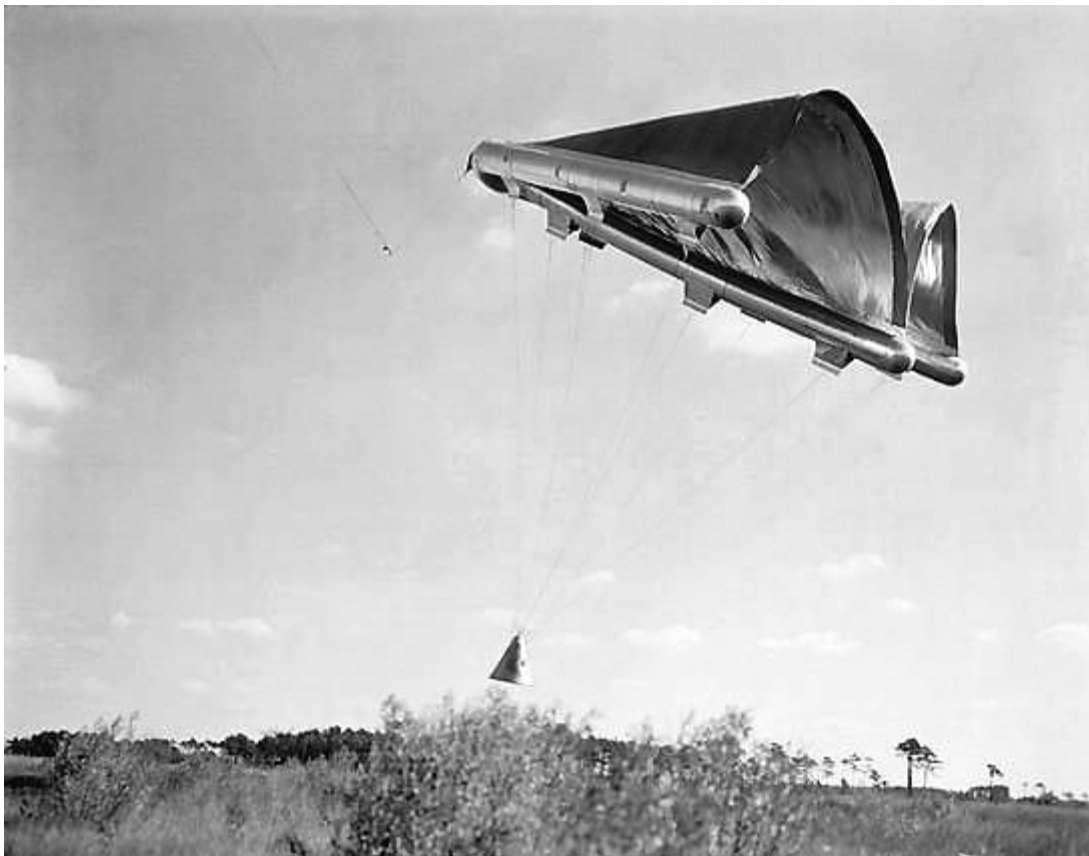


Hafner Rotabuggy. (Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment)

On November 16, 1942, the Rotabuggy was tested for the first time. However, the Diamond T lorry that was towing the unit was unable to pick up enough speed to launch the Rotabuggy into the air. The lorry was later switched for a supercharged Bentley vehicle, and on November 27, the Rotabuggy finally had a successful takeoff. The Rotabuggy also went through many stages of evolution, just like its predecessor. Stabilizing any vibrations, increasing the highest attainable speed, changing up the towing vehicles, and so on, resulting in a fully functional model. The machine was at its peak when launched by Whitley Haydrian and Airspeed Horsa, and flew at 400 ft-65 mph for over 10 minutes. It all went downhill when the Rotabuggy could not maintain its popularity with the onslaught of gliders in the 21st century. The gliders could transport entire vehicles with ease, and the need for the Rotabuggy had passed. No further models of this hybrid man-lifting kite were created. A duplicate model of the Rotabuggy can still be seen in the Museum of Army Flying in Middle Wallop.

The Rogallo Kite and its significance

Francis Rogallo, an aerospace engineer invented the Rogallo Wing which was developed with the help of wind tunnel testing. These Rogallo Wings were later integrated into man-lifting kites by NASA. These kites were generally propelled by ground or (later) aero vehicles. Similar to Cody's design, the Rogallo kite also released the passenger into a controlled gliding descent.



Rogallo's flexible wing. (NASA)

The hang-gliders, developed subsequently, were actually versions of man-lifting kites. They were evolved from the gliding descent employed by the Rogallo Kite and the Bat. While Barry Hill Palmer's hang gliders (using Rogallo Wings) were thriving, so were other versions made by John Worth, Mike Burns, and James Hobson. Almost all of these versions were in use parallelly in the '60s till it was standardized later.

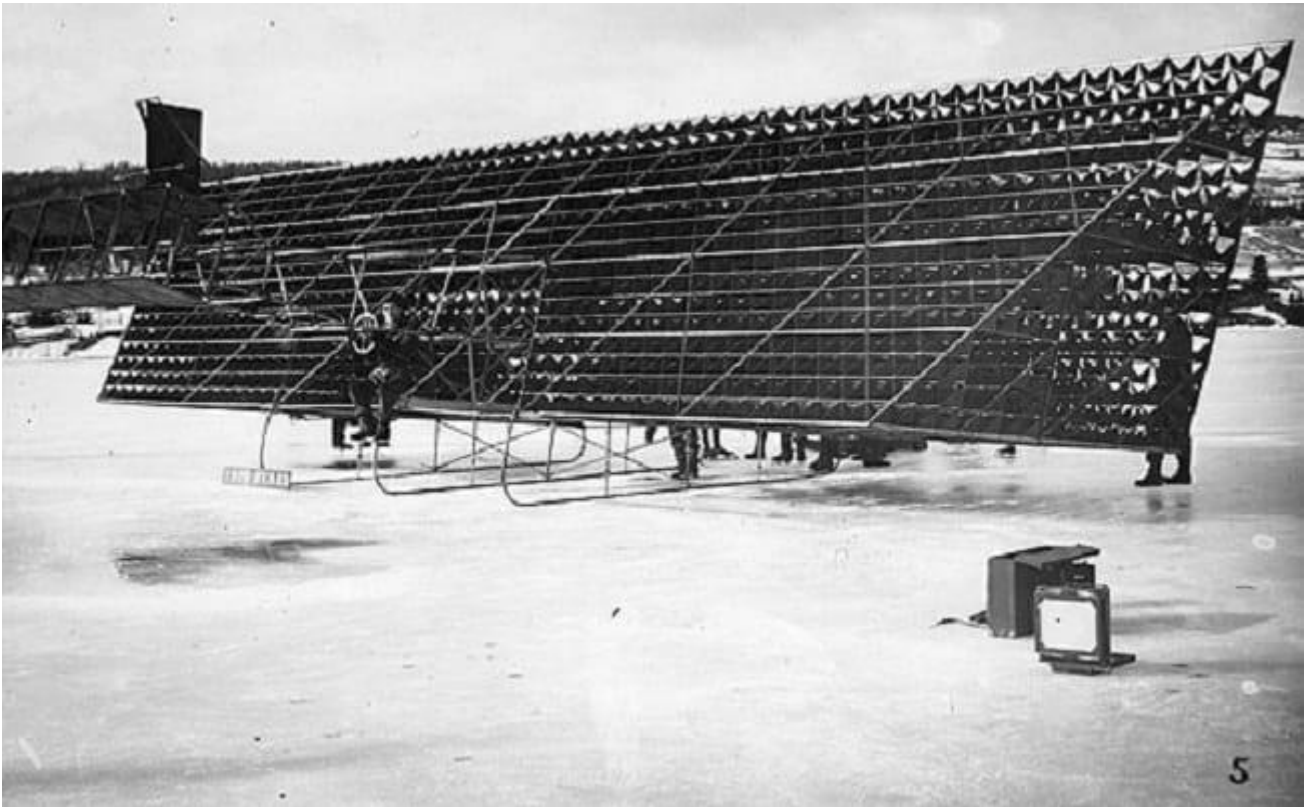
John Dickenson used a version of the Rogallo Kite, to tow himself while on a boat in September 1963. These Ski Wing water ski kites also had elements of the Ryan Aeronautical flex-wing aircraft.

The stability of this design actually helped popularise the watersport in the '60s and '70s.

Alexander Graham Bell's contribution

Alexander Graham Bell, amongst the plethora of ground-breaking work that he did, also created a tetrahedral man-lifting kite. His design employed sticks arranged into triangular 'cells', the overall appearance akin to a honeycomb. Bell's model soon evolved from a one-cell design to

the “Cygnet” model of the early 1900s comprising 3,393 cells. This gigantic kite was used to successfully lift a man 186 ft above sea-level. The success of the Cygnet led to speculation about using it for observation in the Arctic. However, the relevant trials were yielded unsatisfactory results and the plan was shelved.



The Cygnet II, designed by Alexander Graham Bell. (SDASM Archives / Flickr)

The decline of the man-lifting kite

The decline of the man-lifting kite started with the advent of powered flight. The contraption still remained in the mainstream for a while, with the design modified to lift heavy weights. However, the Wright Brothers' first flight in 1903, was a step ahead in the development of cutting-edge aerial transportation. The need for man-lifting kites soon took a backseat. The man-lifting kites that allow un-tethered flight still survive today in the form of hang-gliders and paragliders used for adventure sports.



Craig Green and Moncler are breathing new life into outerwear

By Zak Maoui13 April 2021

British designer Craig Green has unveiled his Spring/Summer 2021 Moncler Genius collection, which takes inspiration from our new-found relationships with the outside world. Green spoke exclusively to GQ about what inspired the collection, why Moncler pushes him as a designer and how he's promoting positivity through a new monogram. Since they first collaborated on 2017's two-season long "Capsule C", which consisted of puffer shirts and clashing graphics, the relationship between British designer [Craig Green](#) and Italian luxury label Moncler has been one of the most exciting to come out of the fashion industry.

Today the pair partner through Moncler's Genius project, which sees the Italian brand work with established designers such as [Valentino's Pierpaolo Piccioli](#), as well as Green, to breathe new life into its outerwear. Central Saint Martins alum Green has used his standing to redefine what it means to put on a coat. In the past we have seen him present jaw-dropping creations in the form of deflatable puffer jackets, rip-stop nylon duvet coats, jacket-trouser combos resembling the padded armour of cricket players and parka-cum-kite hybrids.



For their 5 Moncler Craig Green [Spring/Summer 2021](#) outing, Green and Moncler have looked back at the past 12 months, during which the majority of us unexpectedly built relationships with the great outdoors, whether through walking, running or simply sitting in the back garden. Green has reflected this through the idealisation of an ambiguous monogram, wherein seamless, coiled lines impart the impression of a platypus, frog or person. Designed for outdoor wear, the multi-hued summer collection is made up of zip-up windbreakers in punchy cobalt and orange, scarlet jackets crafted in lightweight ripstop nylons, uniform jackets that have been cut in sturdy cottons and paired with chinos, quilted blousons and long-line parkas. GQ met with Green ahead of the launch of the collection, to find out why working with Moncler brings out the best in his design talent and the thinking behind the Spring/Summer 2021 collection.

GQ: How does the partnership with Moncler allow you to push your creativity further?

Craig Green: My own label is about the possibilities within different materials, while the

work I do with Moncler is very much rooted in the brand's sports heritage and its signature materials and techniques. I have always enjoyed the focus that comes from designing within such a specific framework; I think this is where true innovation can exist.



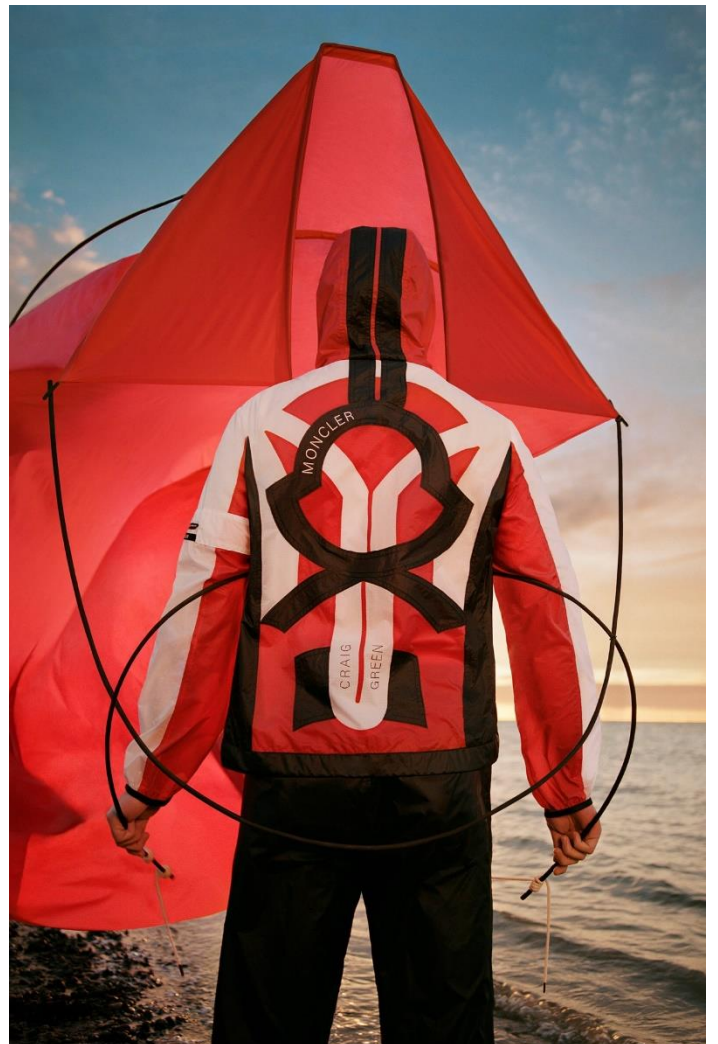
How much freedom do you have when it comes to implementing your own ideas in the collections with Moncler?

I really enjoy working with Moncler. We both share an interest in the practicalities of a garment and how we can push things forward. Moncler have an incredible history and heritage, which they encourage you to embrace and interpret in new ways. They are also keen on experimentation and exploring new approaches and ideas. It is this mix of tradition and experimentation that makes it exciting to create and develop new ideas together each season.

What was the starting point regarding this collection and what did you want to achieve?

The starting point for this collection came from looking at garments for adventure. It's about clothing that is made for being in nature, encouraging us to be outdoors. In our previous

Moncler collections, the focus was often looking at the future and ideas of transformation, evolving and adapting to our changing environment. But this collection is about what is already here and how we can exist right now in the natural environment we have around us. It's about embracing the possibilities within the natural world to propel us forward. The pieces focus on the feeling of freedom and lightness, as there is a different energy to designing a summer collection for Moncler. In summer, the elements we encounter are different – it tends to be protection needed from exposure to elements, such as the wind and the sun. The collection still comes from a place of functionality and protection, clothing as a tool for us to work in unison with the environment around us.



How did you settle on the new monogram for the collection?

Moncler's logo is a continuous shape, almost like the link from a chain. We wanted to build from this existing logo and extend the graphic lines to create something new, while celebrating and maintaining the graphic's iconic shape. I have always loved

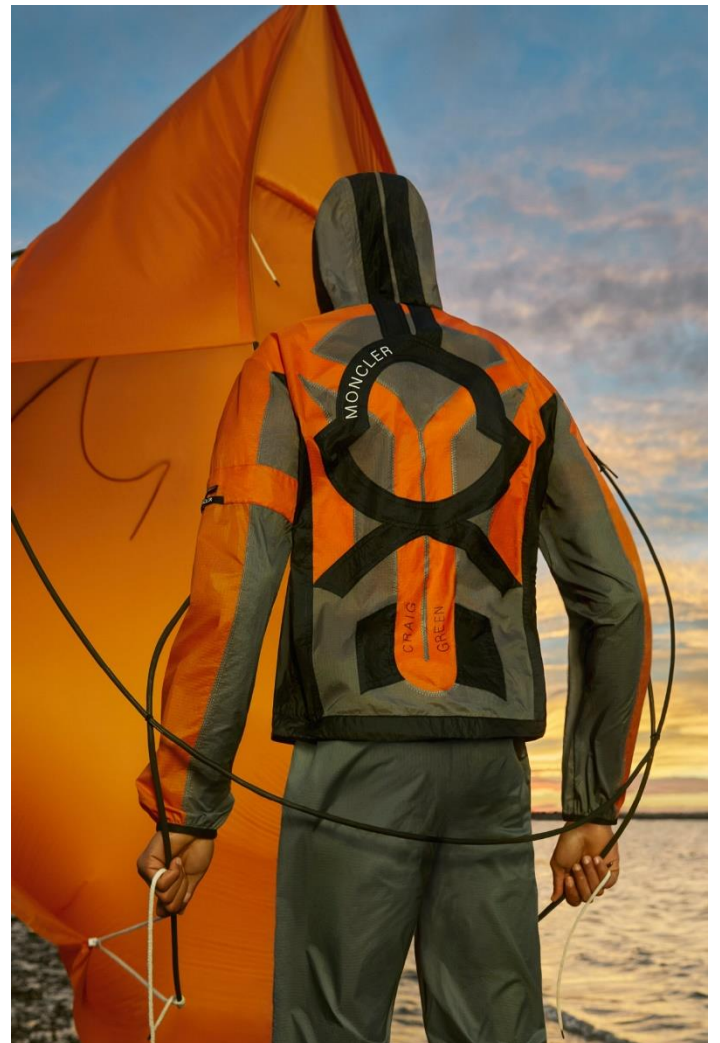
graphics that explain or demonstrate natural systems, where everything is linked together or knotted into a perfect structure. We looked a lot at the format and patterns created from safety ropes and knots used in mountaineering. I love the idea of traditional systems that work so perfectly – they have never needed to be changed or replaced. There is a positivity in the monogram's continuous flow, which gives a feeling of new possibilities and the potential that can be found in nature. Some people see it resembling a human figure or an animal, such as a frog or a platypus, which links well to the ideas in the collection, as all are species that have the ability to exist across different habitats.



You're interested in contrasts and finding a balance between them. How has that been translated into the collection?

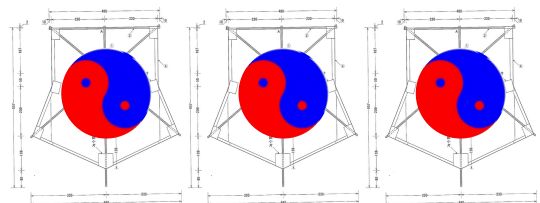
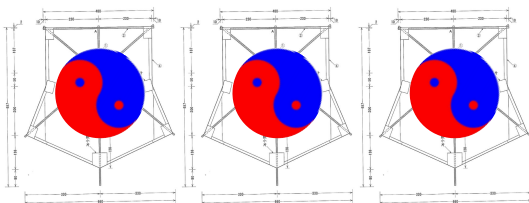
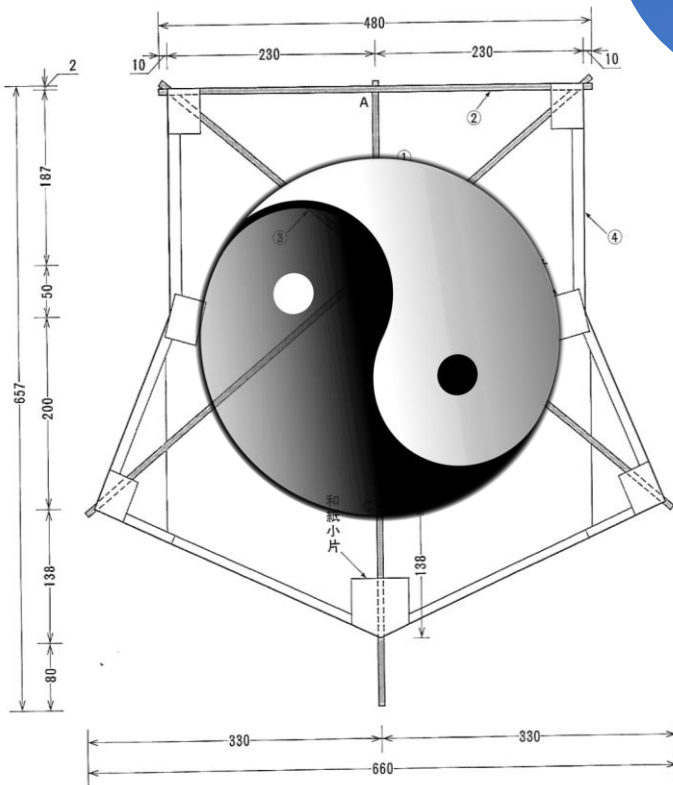
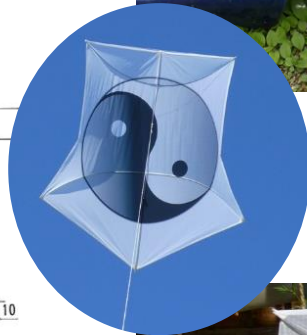
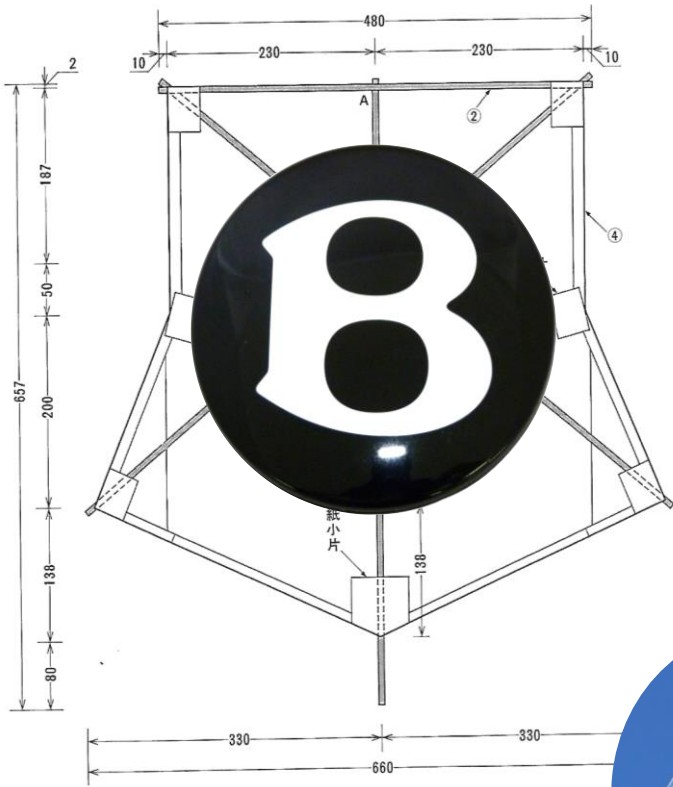
The collection features a series of zip-up jackets that explore new approaches to padding and lightness. Technical nylon jackets feature integrated panels of horizontal quilting with the lightest possible down fill. The panels are engineered to the body in key protection

areas, with the rest of the jacket purposefully left unpadded for ergonomic movement and lightness. Some jackets have padding just over the chest and yoke, while others also have padding along curved sleeves. We created an interlocking monogram graphic for Moncler that came from symmetrical structures in nature, formations that work continuously in harmony. The monogram pattern is translated within the collection in different ways, either as an intarsia-patchwork made from technical ripstop, and applied to the back of lightweight zip-fronted jackets, or as an all-over quilt pattern engineered onto Moncler Longue Saison down-filled outerwear pieces. Construction detailing in the collection links back to the idea of adventure and nature. The curved branding patches, and colour-block panelling featured in the outerwear, take inspiration from the curve on the horizon and the graphic circular shapes of a sunrise. The zig-zag stitching used in the intarsia patchwork pieces takes its inspiration from the stitching traditionally used in the construction of kites.



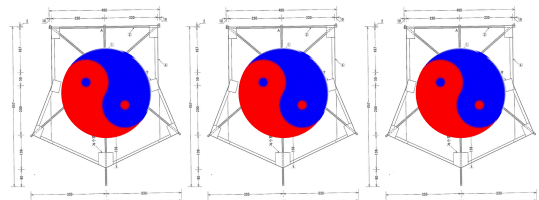
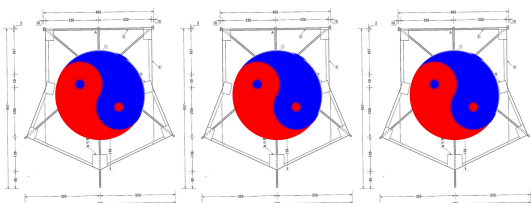
BILL'S NEW PRINTED SURUGA KITES

COURTESY OF SKYBUMS – Thanks Helene & Paul...



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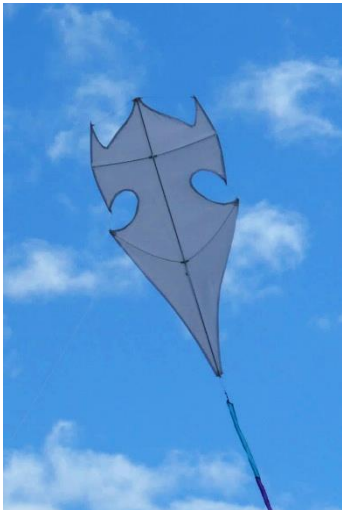
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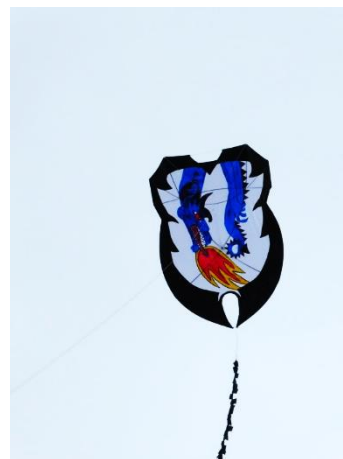
HELENE MORGANS FEMALE WARRIORS



Muirisc the medium sized shield (the one with the blonde on in the pictures). Muirisc was a Sea Captain, warrior and a Queen in the West of Ireland famed for being daring and bold as well as for her beauty.



Gwenllian the thinner shield (the one with mainly in black). Gwenllian was a Medieval Welsh Princess "beautiful, intelligent and educated" who learnt Martial Arts to boot. Gwenllian was also a brave warrior, leader and Patriot whom in 1136 lead an army of Welshmen against the Norman invaders.



Sc'athach the larger shield (the one with the dragon on in the pictures). Sc'athach was a legendary Scottish warrior woman and Martial Arts Teacher associated with the Isle of Skye. "The Shadowy one ". Her role was to train great soldiers at her school.

I was looking for a new canvass/shape idea and came up with the thought of shields (also the idea of shields being very topical) which can be any shape and size to put artwork onto..

These I designed in 2020 and finally painted designs on them last month. The shields will have different applied designs on but the shield shapes will be named after historical Women warriors

March 2021



This is a new box I designed in 2017 but haven't had the time to finalize it before now. The picture of it without jibs was the original and I decided that I would prefer it with jibs. Tested it yesterday in a dull sky. There wasn't quite enough wind for it though. The original was in a brighter sky and I loved how the colours showed through. The fabric is ripstop with the surface design in both applique and acrylics.





National Air and Space Museum Collection
1897

Ref A19900427000

Screen print: Yellow, black and white
illustrated print advertising the periodical,
"The May Century." A surprised-looking young
man in a uniform, sits on two crossed poles
suspended from a box kite, looking down on
a man below in a field with a barn in the
background.

Century Magazine
Charles Herbert Woodbury, 1864 - 1940
United States of America
Poster, Advertising
2-D - Unframed (H x W): 52.4 x 30.3cm

Human Kite

This looks way to fun..?

Clark Derbes floats briefly in the air in Baton Rouge, La., as a strong wind kicked up from Hurricane Katrina fills a sheet tucked into his shoes.



Thanks Bob Cruikshanks for this comic.





Fly, Kite, Fly!

Fly, kite, fly!

Fly, fly, fly!

Fly above the world so high,

Like a bird up in the sky!