



LET'S MAKE A KITE

—Learning about Japanese Society through Kites—



Dawn Wilson

Oak Bay Secondary School
British Columbia, Canada

PURPOSE

The students learn the history of kites, from their origins in China and Egypt to their present use for pleasure, particularly in modern Japan. The class discusses the contents of the video entitled *Fervor! Giant Kite Battle of Enshu*, and learns about various aspects of Japanese society, such as the importance of the first-born male child, rivalry between towns/cities, and the high degree of craftsmanship involved in the construction of the giant kites. Using the TPR (Total Physical Response) method, the teacher demonstrates how to build a kite. The teacher goes over the target structures to be used during the construction process. The students then begin constructing kites and finally fly them.

POINTS TO BE STUDIED

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

TARGET FUNCTIONS

- ❖ Asking to borrow things
- ❖ Understanding commands

TARGET EXPRESSIONS

❖ はさみをかしてください、のりをかりてもいいですか、はって、つけて、きって、はかって、とんで、まいて、むすんで

TARGET VOCABULARY

❖ 結び、糸、紙、のり、棒、竹、巻尺、凧、しっぽ

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To learn about kites, from their origins in China and Egypt to their present use for pleasure, particularly in modern Japan
- To learn about the popularity of kite-flying in Japan, specifically such giant kite battles as those seen at Enshu festivals
- To understand how kites are representative of other aspects of Japanese culture, such as meticulous craftsmanship, festivals and local society
- To fold origami

OTHER OBJECTIVES

- To make a kite and fly it

SOURCE MATERIALS

Instruction for making a kite (Handout #1*)

Kanji and vocabulary sheet (Handout #2*)

Video: *Fervor! Giant Kite Battle of Enshu*, NHK and NHK International

Bamboo or balsa sticks, string, white glue, scissors, "Exacto" knives, small saw, scrap material (cotton) for tail, model airplane paper, water-based paint, paint brushes, measuring tape

PROCEDURE

LESSON 1: Viewing Video

1. Introduction (15 mins.)

The teacher talks about kites and their history.

2. Viewing video (30 mins.)

The video introduces a kite battle festival in Shizuoka, Japan, and highlights two teams that participated in the festival from different locations: Hongocho and Tenjinmachi. The Hongocho team is young and inexperienced and the Tenjinmachi team is larger and counts a highly skilled kitemaker among its members. The kite of the Hongocho team is dedicated to a team member's one-year-old son. During the festival, the boy is paraded around the streets on his father's shoulders. The festival lasts three days. On the first day, both of the featured teams do well. The second day is cancelled due to rain. Finally, the sky clears, so the kite battle goes ahead. There is much pushing, jostling, swearing, and excitement as the teams try to make up for lost time. In the end, Tenjinmachi wins, but the individual team's victory is secondary to the thrill of having participated in this exciting event.

3. Discussion (10 mins.)

The students discuss the video. The teacher brings out key points like the importance of the first-born male child, the rivalry displayed between the towns represented, and the craftsmanship involved in the construction of the giant kites.

4. Assignment of homework (5 mins.)

The teacher asks the students to design their own kites for homework.

LESSON 2: Making Kites

1. TPR demonstration (20 mins.)

The teacher goes over the target vocabulary (Handout #2) and gives a TPR demonstration of the kite construction method, using pre-fabricated kites at various stages of completion.

2. Making kites (40 mins.)

The students begin to make their kites. The teacher instructs them to use Japanese as much as possible during this step.

LESSON 3: Finishing

1. Review (10 mins.)

The teacher inspects the progress of kites and reviews target structures and vocabulary.

2. Making kites (50 mins.)

Students complete their kites (50 mins.)

3. Evaluation

The students are evaluated on their finished product. They are given this information before they begin working on their kites. They are given a mark out of 10, based on the following criteria:

- ❖ Kite completed on time, i.e. during time allotted in class: 5 marks. One mark is deducted per day if the kite is late.
- ❖ Design: 2 marks. The design should be clear and should contain some type of Japanese motif, such as kanji or a Japanese persona.
- ❖ Use of Japanese language during construction: 3 marks. The teacher monitors the students to ensure that they use Japanese whenever possible while making the kites, and deducts points (to a maximum of three) each time a student uses the wrong language.

Remarks

- The first lesson could be a stand-alone lesson, but it is best if followed up by the construction of kites by the students themselves.

Resources and useful website

Pictures for the Sky: Art Kites. Goethe Institute

The Art of the Japanese Kite. Weatherhill

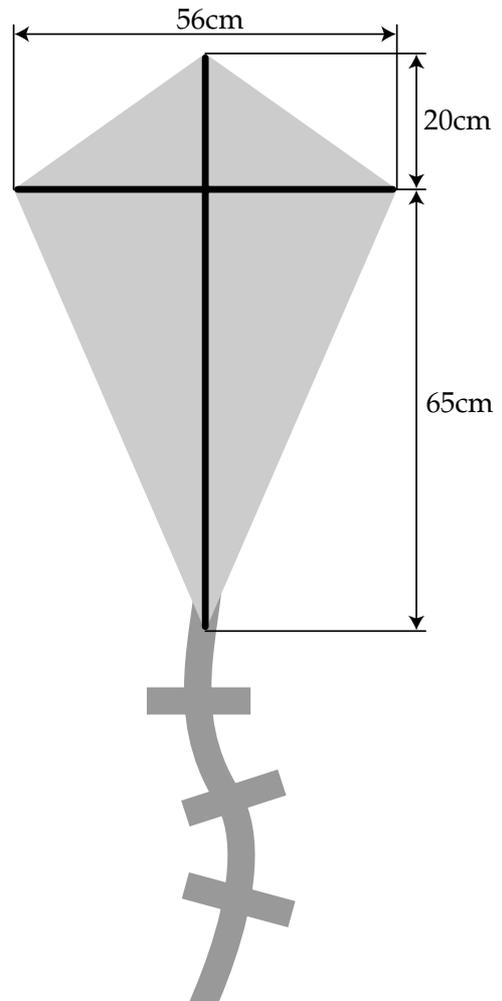
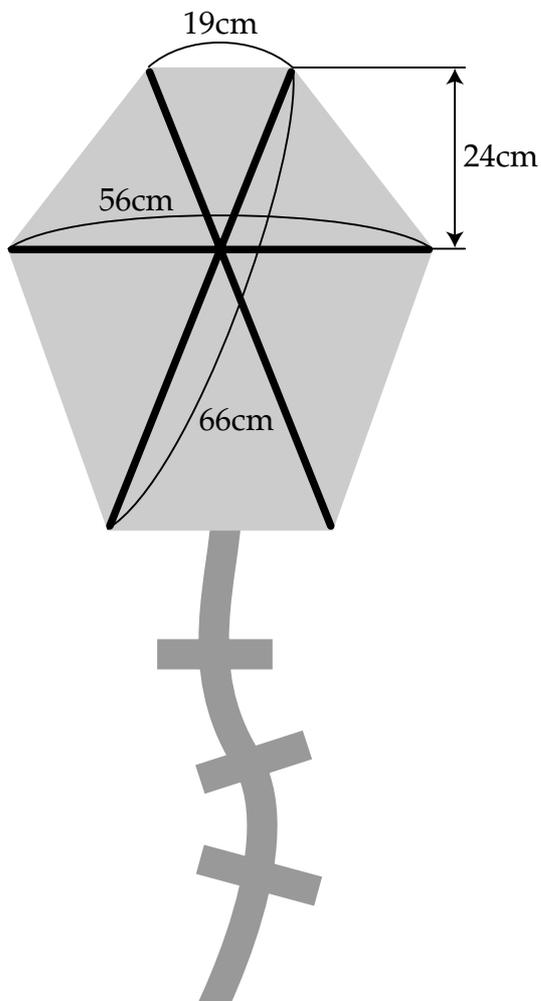
<http://www.tako.gr.jp>

From the committee

The culmination of this lesson in the actual flying of the kites would give the students a keen sense of achievement. In the evaluation method, however, seven marks out of ten are accounted for by non-language-related performance. This distribution of marks should be reconsidered. Information about Japanese kites can be obtained from the website of the Japan Kite Association (日本凧の会).

HOW TO MAKE A KITE

1. Choose a model and sketch a design.
2. Measure bamboo lengths.
3. Cut bamboo.
4. Make frame; measure exactly, secure with string and glue.
5. Cut notches in the ends of the sticks.
6. Wrap string around outside of frame.
7. Cut out paper pattern with $3/4''$ seam allowance.
8. Attach paper to kite frame, folding excess paper over and attaching with glue.
9. Paint kite.
10. Attach tail.
11. Fly the kite.



KANJI AND VOCABULARY SHEET

漢字表

切る	きる	きって	to cut
揚げる	あげる	あげて	to fly
計る	はかる	はかって	to measure
付ける	つける	つけて	to attach
巻く	まく	まいて	to wind, wrap
張る	はる	はって	to glue, adhere

語彙表

結び	むすび	knot
糸	いと	string
紙	かみ	paper
糊	のり	glue
棒	ぼう	stick, pole
竹	たけ	bamboo
巻尺	まきじゃく	measuring tape
凧	たこ	kite
尻尾	しっぽ	tail

KITES MADE BY STUDENTS

