

K I T E THE DRACHEN FOUNDATION J O U R N A L



Kite Museum With a View

If you collect something seriously and extensively, what to do when your trove becomes really large? Answer: Open your own museum. That's just what Taiwanese businessman Weng Hsiang Lai did in the mountains near Taipei. He bought an old building in his hometown of Chiou Fen, almost deserted after the gold mines that gave it prosperity gave out, and installed his treasures. The kite museum occupies the lower floors, hotel accommodations and dining the upper levels. With Chiou Fen undergoing a rebirth as a resort for now increasingly prosperous Taiwanese, Mr. Weng expects his dream project to break even soon. Already, he and guests and kite pilgrims can enjoy a gorgeous view out over small fishing ports and the Pacific Ocean, with the flying kite on rooftop keeping them apprised of the wind. Page 3.

The Journal Staff



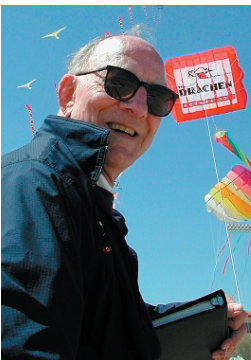
Ben Ruhe

Scott Skinner, president of the Drachen Foundation, is a former pilot instructor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has been a kite enthusiast for two decades—designing, making, flying, collecting, and teaching about kites.

Ali Fujino is the administrator of Drachen. A museum specialist since age 19 when she began work at the Smithsonian Institution, she has long been fascinated with anything that could become airborne. Fujino has recently been elected a member of the prestigious Explorers Club of New York City in recognition of her 25 years of cultural work in Third World countries.



Ben Ruhe



Malcolm Goodman

Editor of the Drachen Journal, well traveled **Ben Ruhe** regularly contributes articles to special interest publications on subjects as diverse as boomerangs, tribal art and flint-knapping.

Note to readers: Articles in this issue of the Drachen Foundation Journal not bylined were written by editor Ben Ruhe.

Fly Kites

Fly kites, fly kites in the sky
With the nice wind high above
Fly up, fly up to the clouds!
Or fly up to heaven.

Kazuko Narui

Definition

Kite---a light frame covered with paper or cloth and flown in a breeze at the end of a long string in the hands of a highly enlightened person. (Anon.)

How to Find This Journal

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The Drachen Foundation:

Kite Archives, Science and Culture

The Drachen Foundation is devoted to the increase and diffusion of knowledge about kites worldwide. A 501(c)(3) private nonprofit corporation, Drachen views kites from the standpoint of art, culture, science and history. It uses an integrated program of exhibitions, education, research, collections management, and publications to promote learning about kites. The archive it maintains is freely open to the public for research.

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Lovely Museum Nestled in Taiwan Hills Reflects One Man's Passion for Kites

By Ben Ruhe

It's an authentic labor of love, one man's tribute to the kites he has admired since childhood.

In an unlikely part of Taiwan, steep mountains 25 miles from the capital Taipei, Weng Hsiang Lai has created his own small, intensely personal kite museum, open to the public year around.

The Chiou Fen museum consists of the first two floors of a square, five-story hotel commanding a gorgeous view of several small fishing ports on the Pacific Ocean. The town of Chiou Fen was a mining camp until the gold ore ran out in the 1960s and most of the population decamped to find jobs elsewhere.

Owner of a prosperous printing business elsewhere, the stocky, intense Lai, who was born and raised in the village, seven years ago took over the large building with its sweeping views and in addition to establishing the kite museum made the upper floors into a hotel with excellent sleeping and dining facilities. As Taiwan prospers and the mountain town with its precipitous streets and walkways now makes a strong comeback as a tourist resort, with many dozens of small craft shops and other attractions, his hotel and museum has slowly made its way. It's not in the black yet, he says, but he has hopes.



Weng Hsiang Lai

Lai started collecting kites a quarter of a century ago and has always had a strong interest in examples from around the world, although the focus of his trove is traditional Chinese kites. While the Nationalist Chinese failed to bring much of the mainland kite tradition with them when they fled to the island of Taiwan after World War II, huge Communist China with its great traditions lies only 100 miles across the South China Sea and it is natural Lai should focus on Chinese kites. It remains his heritage.

A member of the Taipei Kite Association since its founding in the 1970s, Lai has made contact with kite fliers, designers, and collectors from around the world and has himself traveled widely, seeking representative examples of regional kites wherever he could find them. In addition to China and Southeast Asia, he has visited New Zealand, the U.S. and Europe in his quest. In addition, he obtains examples from friends who know of his passion.

The kite museum fulfills Lai's dream of showing the beauty of kites to the children of Taiwan. "I see kites as art," he says simply. Although his museum draws a steady stream of tourists, both Taiwanese and foreign, it is the busloads of children from schools in the region that keep the museum humming. As needed, friends of Lai and his family----a wife, son and two daughters----provide translation service to foreign visitors.

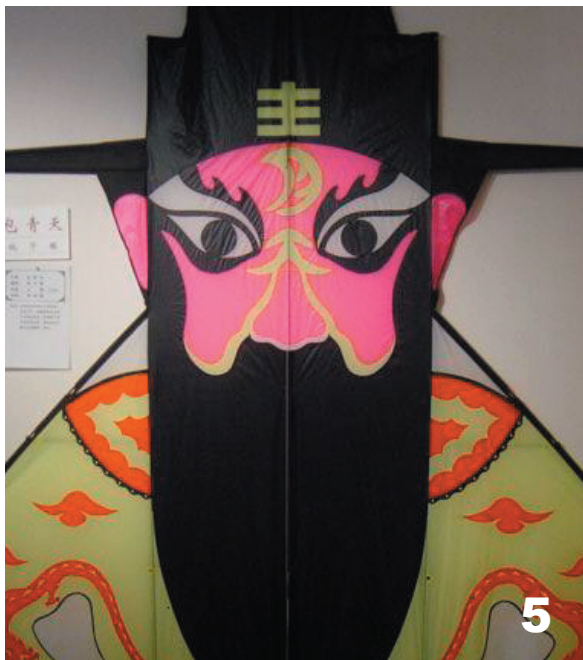
A recent foreign delegation from the Taiwan Kite Festival held the preceding weekend was proudly led to the museum by Jonathan Wu, one of the key organizers of the festival, and was met by English-speaking Yu Hsuan Kuo, or Kiki, an articulate, charming 25-year-old who lives nearby. Miss Kuo not only talked about the kites, she acted out the manners young women----as portrayed in a series of striking kites on exhibition----were expected to display for emperors centuries ago. "During the Han Dynasty, a woman was expected to move like a swallow, flying gracefully," she explained, then illustrated the flowing, mincing steps and sinuous arm movements required.



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1. A view of the museum. Cabinet at right contains miniatures. 2. Leaf kites from Oceania, perhaps the oldest kites ever made. 3. An octagonal decorated with Taiwan's lion and sword symbols. 4. A small gallery devoted to Chinese kites. 5. Strong Chinese imagery. 6. Guide-translator Yu Hsuan Kuo, who shows off the Chicago Bulls sweatshirt she wore in honor of her American visitors. Miss Yu not only explained the kites with words, she danced the themes of some of them.



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All photos by Ben Ruhe

Her audience was entranced by her grace and expertise. “My father is a martial arts instructor,” she explained, “and he trained me.”

“Yesterday, I had to translate for a foreign group that came to the museum, and I wore a blouse and skirt, ” she says. “But when I learned today’s group included Americans I decided to pay honor by wearing my Michael Jordan Chicago Bulls sweatshirt.” Then she asks shyly, “Do you think my costume is too informal?” Assured it is not, she smiles.

Mr. Lai’s museum isn’t large, but it is coherently hung, and very pleasant and relaxing to walk around in. Most of the kites are of reasonable size and the quality of the specimens is uniformly high. Lai obviously has a discerning eye and enough money to acquire the best. “Fabulous stuff,” says one Yankee. The Chinese kites on one floor run the gamut---- dozens and dozens of shapes and designs, many exquisitely painted. Some have wind-activated movement built in: a crab moves its claws when flying, for instance. On the other floor are choice examples of just about every major traditional kite known around the world, starting with leaf kites from Oceania. From Thai Pakpaos and Chulas to Malaysian Waus, from Indian Patangs to Korean Fighters, from Japanese Edos to Taiwanese Octagonals decorated with the country’s lion and sword symbol, the range is broad and revealing---kites as carriers of tradition. There are many modern-day Western kites as well, including up to the minute two- and four-line stunters as well as a Swedish kite constructed from goose feathers. A cabinet houses exquisite miniatures, one no larger than a fly.

The kites are hung in a straightforward, logical way and their long-term preservation enhanced by an excellent air conditioning and humidifying system. To prevent fading, only a small amount of natural light is permitted to enter the galleries. Complimented on his genuine and honest approach, Lai solicits advice from the visitors as to how he can organize his museum even better. It’s clear he has a great attitude.

The future? Lai, now fiftyish, vows to keep collecting with vigor, and in fact had acquired three beauties from Rob Brasington of Tasmania at the just concluded national kite festival. He hopes more foreign visitors to Taiwan will make the pilgrimage to his hotel to view his kite collection and sample the pleasures of the town of Chiou Fen. An elaborate, tasty afternoon banquet for the visitors with seafood so fresh it threatens to wiggle helps convince the visitors this is a very good idea indeed.



Mining was a big business in the region until the ores ran out. Here an abandoned smelter.



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Thijs van Beek



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Thijs van Beek



2

Ben Ruch

1. Another view in the museum. 2. A section of a wind-activated rig from China that when mounted on a kite produces drumming on the small gong. 3. A Chinese kite with elegant motif painted on the silk sail.

An Array of Entertainment and Outreach

Taiwan Festival Both Fun and Classy

“Near perfection,” was the verdict of one foreign participant in last fall’s Taipei County International Kite Festival, held on a beach at the northern tip of Taiwan Island.

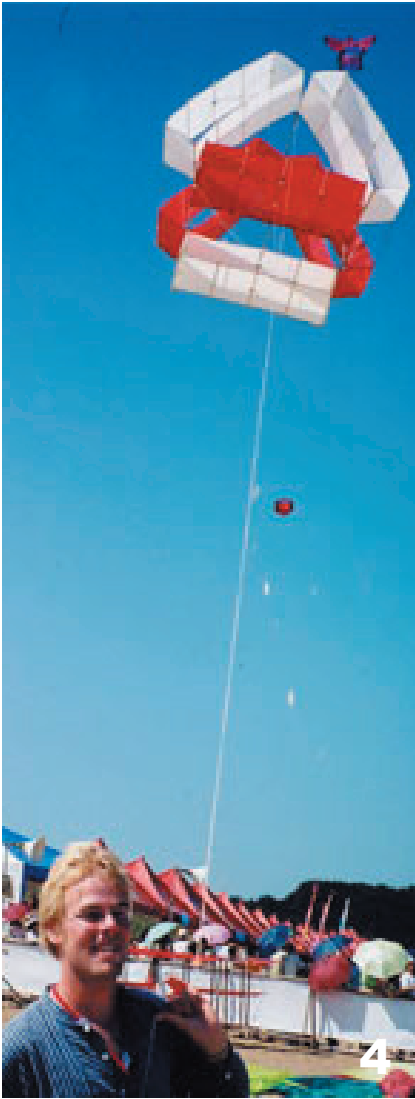
As promised by the organizer, a warm northeast monsoon off Formosa Strait blew steadily day and night. The sun was hot. On hand in addition to dozens of expert national fliers was an international contingent representing 11 countries. Crowds both days of the international fly ranged from large to dense and they were rewarded for their pilgrimage to a relatively isolated site by not only the big fly on the beach, but an unmatched array of associated entertainment-----exhibitions, kitemaking workshops, half-hour seminars by the guest internationals, music, acrobatics, dancing, puppetry, magic, and an on-scene painting competition for students. An array of stands sold everything from Indonesian ship kites to fossils, including clusters of alleged dinosaur hair. A wide range of snacks, some of unknown genesis to Westerners, was available, grilled squid on a skewer being popular.

There were ceremonies of course and it seemed to many no one at the festival had more fun than Su Tseng-Chang, governor of Taipei County, which helped sponsor the event. He was everywhere, barking speeches, shaking hands, flying kites. His staccato words sounded threatening but an ever-smiling face gave the lie to the voice.

This was the fourth international Taiwan international and was held at Sheman Village, located on half-moon Baisha Bay. Radar domes nearby kept watch on Communist China a hundred miles across the water and reminded foreigners that the political gulf between Taiwan and mainland China remains unresolved after more than half a century. The visiting delegations told the same story-----Japanese, Koreans, Malaysians, Singaporeans, Indonesians, but not a single mainland Chinese flier.



Australian Rob Brasington flies a fan kite of his own design. Note the enormous American flag kite on the sand being readied for launch. In the background are Taiwanese spectators and picnickers enjoying a day at the beach. Far in the distance are radar domes and military installations keeping watch on China just 100 miles across Formosa Strait.



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Ben Rube



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Ben Rube



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Ben Rube



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Ben Rube



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Alison Fujino

1. The American TKO stunt kite demonstration team was one of the festival hits. From left are Shane Snowden, Troy Gunn, and Jerry Hershey. Mugging for the camera behind them is energetic, efficient festival organizer Angela Wu. 2. Immensely long centipede trains manned by teams of enthusiastic Asian fliers were a festival feature. 3. Leland Sutton, age 10, of Seattle joined the press corps at a press conference. He later gave a slide show for schoolmates at home. 4. Volker Hoberg of Germany flies his ingenious Boxkite which can be assembled in any of 21 configurations. 5. Amid universal smiles of pleasure at the day's kite fun and games, there was one unhappy spectator----a feral beach dog.



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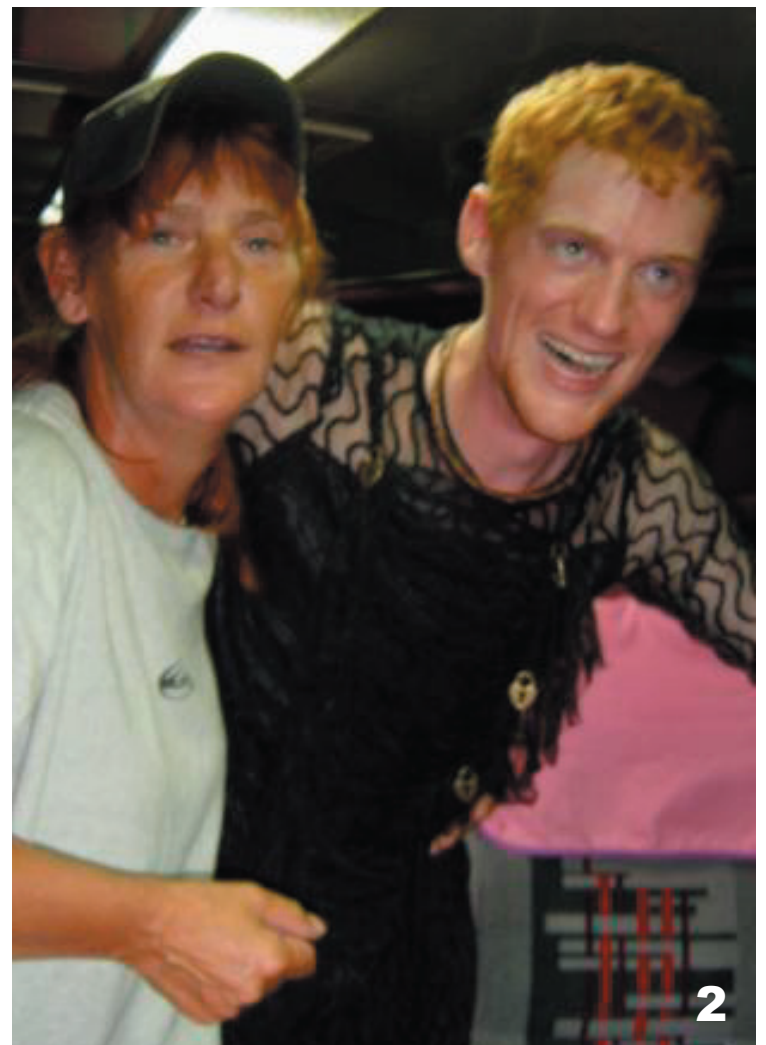


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All photos by Ben Rubin



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1. Ramlal Tien of France flew 21 large, white, ovoid Sentinel kites as a backdrop to the other show kites. "I want to animate the sky," he says. 2. After hours fun and games: Ada Schonhage of Holland lent a dress she had just purchased to American Shane Snowden to model, while she donned his skateboarder's outfit. 3. Among the many activities at the festival was a painting competition for schoolchildren. This inspired semi-abstract watercolor was turned out by a 14-year-old Taiwanese boy. 4. Nobody had more fun at the festival than the Taipei County mayor, Su Tseng-Chang, who presided, gave speeches, even flew kites. With schoolchildren, he watches an indoor flying demonstration.

The point of holding the festival in the far north of the island was to promote tourism in an economically depressed but beautiful region of white sand beaches, steep mountains, waterfalls, temples, tea plantations, and caves formed by the erosion of volcanic lava. Some visitors came from as far as three hours away. The 30-foot high Sheman cave was touted by the local tourism body as having “hot activities---picking shells, catching shrimps, playing water.”

Because it was unusually narrow for an international event, the flying beach was quite crammed with kites, and more than a few were accidentally cut out of the sky. Retrieving them from the tangled scrub was sometimes difficult on both kite and flier.

Big name fliers showed off their creations-----Istvan Bodoczky of Hungary his Asymmetricals, Rob Brasington of Australia his Cathedrals, Martin Lester of England his Legs, Thijo van Beek of Holland his tri-wing Red Baron, Ramlal Tien of France his Sentinels, Volker Hoberg of Germany his three-unit Boxkite with its 21 different configurations. The indefatigable Tokuko Sato of Japan flew her cypress-framed Tsugarus, Gadis Widiyati of Singapore her Edo with its purist single bridle point, Buteo Huang of Taiwan his train of 120 flag kites, and Sari Majid of Indonesia a primitive woven leaf kite from Sulawesi.

Phillip McConnichie of Australia not only put giant soft kites into the sky but showed off daring kite-boarding form in offshore breakers. Three stunt kite teams from France and the U.S. gave the crowd continuous action and were in some ways the hit of the festival. Flying too were 100-yard or more centipede trains from several Asian countries. There were a variety of gorgeous Japanese creations, including a gigantic American flag kite that finally flew---for five minutes. Amid all the successes, it was no more than a minor disappointment, except for the team which had labored long and hard to ready the launch.

Meanwhile, on an adjacent section of beach Taiwanese families watched the action, flew their own kites, ate picnics, and waded and swam in the warm tropic water. Bliss for thousands.

In addition to the glorious weekend, the festival was heavy on outreach in the preceding week, focusing on schools. There were workshops and cultural seminars on kites all over the Taipei area, Taipei being the capital. An indoor demonstration by stunt teams in Taipei County Hall was a highlight of the governor’s reception for the international fliers. A press conference drew no less than eight television crews plus a swarm of print journalists. To mark the event, international guests were given, courtesy of the governor, elegant, large painted ceramic bowls that hummed in eerie fashion if rubbed around the edge with a wetted finger.

All of these activities---flying, entertainment, ceremonies, outreach, and some quite delicious meals--- ran like clockwork as principal organizer Angela Wu, small, beautiful, efficient, wielded her cell phone with the aplomb of a army general. It helped that one of the sponsoring corporations, an insurance company, volunteered dozens of its young employees to help out and that Mrs. Wu had hired a dozen smart, friendly college students fluent in English to handle difficulties as they inevitably arose and to escort and interpret for the foreign visitors as needed. The interaction was so intense friendships were made and plans laid for future projects and visits.

“Uniquely classy,” is how Ali Fujino, administrator of the Drachen Foundation, of Seattle, assessed the festival. “Because Angela Wu is not a kiter herself, but rather a promoter with her own public relations firm, she doesn’t have a kite world agenda. She directs. She moves the pieces around the board.”

In a valedictory email, Angela gave her own retrospective take on this fourth festival: “Being an organizer, I have trained myself not to be so sentimental. But I have to tell you the truth. I have a really good memory of the festival and I do miss you all. I know we will meet somewhere. And get ready for the next Taiwan flying!”

The event has now in fact outgrown Sheman. Next September, Mrs. Wu plans to run most of the outreach programs



1. A French stunt kite expert instructs a Taiwanese spectator in two-line flying. 2. Beach fun: Girlfriend gives buried boyfriend gender identification. 3. Ceremonial masks on sale at a market. 4. Theft is clearly no issue here. 5. Dueling digitals: Andrew (at left, a Taiwanese guide) squares off with Thijo van Beek of Red Baron kite fame. "I won," announced Thijo after the shootoff. "I captured your soul."



in Taipei County, as before, but the fifth international fly will be moved to the south of the island where a much larger beach at Kaohsiung is available. She guarantees good northeast monsoon winds there too.

"I'm coming next time," 10-year-old Leland Sutton, son of Ali Fujino, announced to his mother. He had had a memorable time at Sheman, as had all the other 100-odd foreign and domestic participants.

Troy Gunn of Texas summed up for the internationals: "They treat us like royalty here."

Hats off to Angela Wu, smart economist husband Jonathan, and all the other organizers, translators, and sponsors of the Taipei County International Kite Festival! Onward and upward! (Ben Ruhe)



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All photos by Ben Ruite



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1. It's a small world these days. Taiwanese tot sports an Australian symbol, the koala. 2. Extensive festival promotional materials such as posters sported charming graphics. 3. The indomitable Tokuku Sato of Japan poses with one of her masterpieces. Devoted to the traditional culture of her country, Mrs. Sato is an expert in the martial arts, cooking, dance, tea ceremony, and above all kites. 4. A star kite by Ada Schnhage of Holland glitters in the sky. 5. Watching the internationals fly their kites. 6. Taiwanese flier advertises his travels.



3

Musings by a Kite Theoretician

By Gary Hinze

Yes, don't get me started on kites. I can go on all night.

For me thinking is like breathing. I don't even, well, think about it.

When a kite flies normally, the bridle point comes first with the string pulling down, next comes the pressure point with the aerodynamic force pushing upward, then comes the center of gravity with the weight pulling down. The three forces balance. To fly a kite upside down from a bridge, the aerodynamic force and the weight both pull down, so the string must be tied between the two. Did you ever wonder how a kite can tell up from down?

I like irregular shape kites. I have experimented with such forms and they are very difficult to fly. They require a deep knowledge of kite aeromechanics. I start by figuring out how to glide them.

I have several methods for finding the bridle point. Trial and error is good. If it pulls hard, but doesn't go up, move the bridle point forward. If it flutters and doesn't go up, move the bridle point aft. Another method for rigid kites is to put your finger behind the spine and see if the wind will hold the kite up against your fingertip. That at least is as good as a first guess. I put a boom sticking out from the front of the kite and put weights on it to glide the kite. The bridle point to get the highest angle will be close to the center of gravity that gives the flattest glide. The bridle also affects stability. The most efficient bridle location often leads to instability and is usually corrected by moving the bridle aft, but I prefer to keep the efficient bridle location and solve the stability problems otherwise. There are ways to estimate the bridle location aerodynamically, but they require judgment and are not easy to explain. The basic idea is that the pressure center on a flat wing is approximately at one-quarter chord.

I once made a kite in response to a challenge from the late Ed Graul. Ed said it would be impossible to make a perfectly flat circle fly as a kite. He was talking about a single circle, as we both know about the Chinese dragon kite. I made two versions of the flat circle kite. The first was made of stiff construction paper a foot (30.48cm) in diameter. It had a central spine of spruce, of 1/8" x 1/16" (3mm x 6mm) section and a bit more than 16 inches (41cm) long, set on edge. It had two lateral wing spars, about a third in from each end, of the same material. It had a simple loop bridle, tied around the spine in the two locations where the spars crossed. The bridle point was set based on gliding tests. It was stabilized by construction paper fins, 2" (5cm) wide and of various lengths, attached with rubber bands vertically to the spine projections fore and aft. Both fins are necessary.

The tail fin provides some directional stability, which is actually little needed on this kite. The nose fin is necessary in combination with the tail fin to prevent spinning and oscillation in yaw. It takes considerable experimentation to find the correct combination of fin lengths that will work throughout the entire range of wind speeds and line lengths. Often the nose fin will be bigger than the tail fin on fin-stabilized kites. The kite flew successfully. I still have that kite somewhere. I write my notes right on the kite, so it is double documentation of the experiment. I have also flown it without fins, stabilized by a crepe paper streamer. The next kite was also a foot in diameter, with a circular wood frame, a five-leg, silk thread bridle, and slots for the fins. The details of construction are too complex to describe in detail here. The framework was very light and wing and fins were covered with tissue paper. The fins were color coded, so it was a pretty kite. This kite flew extremely well, high angle and very steady.



Gary Hinze

Alison Fujino

Briefly Noted

Ultra Tiny Kite?

In a technology of the miniature, carbon super-thread made from nanotubes, cylindrical molecules of carbon, is now being spun at Rice University. This thread can be wound into cables many times as strong as steel. Down the road it might make unbeatable **kite line**. In a related development, scientists at Cornell University's NanoScale Science and Technology Facility using the technology that etches tiny wires and components onto computer chips have constructed an invisibly tiny silicon guitar which they can play by using a laser beam to pluck the strings. The guitar twangs at 40 million cycles per second, putting it 17 octaves above what human ears take for music. If so desired, the researchers could apparently make an **ultra tiny kite** too, in the range of 10 millionths of a meter long. The question is: could kite be made to fly, as the guitar has been made to twang? The answer is not apparent at this time, but success in such an odd venture should not be ruled out.

Deaths Mar Pakistan Festival

Last February's annual kiteflying festival in Lahore drew thousands of fliers and spectators and provoked the usual frenzy. Calls for caution were ignored by many. Three people were electrocuted when their wire cutting lines-----banned, but used anyway-----touched power lines, two fell to their deaths from rooftops in pursuit of cut kites, two died after being hit by cars while chasing falling trophies, and a girl had her throat fatally slit by a line coated with pulverized glass. Despite a ban on firing guns, a number of people were injured by stray bullets. The festival has become such big business choice rooftops for flying are hired out for corporate entertainment.

All About Aerial Photography

The Drachen Foundation has come out with a compact disk on the world of **kite aerial photography**. It's a multimedia tour of the history, people, gear, techniques and of course photographs in this fast-growing field. Featured are experts Nico Chorier, Dave Van Zandt, Craig Wilson, Jim Day, Scott Haefner, with music by Jeff Greinke. Drachen's resident science boffin Eric Muhs put it together. Among other features, the disk explains how to get started in kite aerial photography by making your own lifting kite and photo rig. Viewing the CD requires Apple's multimedia player Quick Time, which can be downloaded gratis from www.apple.com/quicktime/download. Open your favorite browser, then open the file Open_Me_First.html. Easier done than described. The CD sells for \$10. Contact Drachen at info@drachen.org.

Copying Ethics

All too many kites see a marvelous design flying in the sky, go home, make a copy as best they can, and then happily take it out to fly. Martin Lester's "Legs" kites around the world come to mind, some of them made without his permission or even knowledge. In his usual rational way, designer Peter Lynn of Ashburton, New Zealand, offers kites who admire *his* designs and want to copy them an easy way to replicate them while maintaining a clear conscience. He offers numbered **license stickers** for sale at nominal prices, but only one per user per time. He then makes dimensions and bridling information available so the flier will have his copy perform up to snuff.

Book on Kiteboarding

For those interested in the extreme sport of kiteboarding, Maui-based **John Holzhall** has published a book on how, where, and when to ride. *Kiteboarding's Simple Plan*, 306 pages with 65 illustrations, sells for \$27. Train@kiteboardcenter.com.

Southeast Asians Form Kite Alliance

Reflecting a resurgence of interest in traditional culture, eight of the countries that make up the ASEAN confederation have taken the first step in establishing a kite council. ASEAN stands for Association of South East Asian Nations and is a trade group with sports and cultural components. Formation of a pro tem working committee to organize the council occurred at the recent Pasir Gudang festival in Johor, Malaysia.

Brainchild of Orlando Ongkingco, of Manila, president of the Kite Association of the Philippines, the committee selected Hussin Haron of Malaysia as its president. Haron is a top official in the city of Pasir Gudang, president of the Johor Kite Association, and one of the founding fathers of the imaginative Pasir Gudang kite museum. Ongkingco was chosen vice president, Gadis Widiyati of Singapore secretary, and Maidin bin Ahmad of Brunei Darussalam treasurer.



Hussin



Ongkingco



Widiyati



Maidin

All photos by Ben Fathe

Committee members are Sim Sarak of Cambodia, Handayani Ningsih of Indonesia, Yusni Yusof of Singapore, and Sakda Pandee and Zainal Abidin, both of Thailand. Vietnam fliers were on hand at the festival but did not attend the meeting, apparently because of a language problem. When informed of developments, they gave their blessing to the proceedings.

The missing ASEAN nations are Laos and Myanmar (Burma). The committee will contact kite fanciers in those countries in due course.

For rules, the ASEAN group is having the Malaysian Kite Council's constitution translated from Bahasa Malaysian by Maidin bin Ahmad and will use it as a starting point in drafting its own aims and regulations.

In a statement, President Hussin Haron said: "Traditional kites among ASEAN countries have some similarities which are close to their cultures. The spirit to form the ASEAN Kite Council is to make the ASEAN community and the world know of the 10 nations' unity, tenderness, and harmony. Through kite activities, the body will promote the strength of ASEAN arts and cultures, while it colors and lights up the skies. Among other objectives, the council hopes to make kites a popular sport for competition among member countries, as well as the world kite community."

What They Had to Say

“Kite watching is good for exercising the cervical vertebra, improving eyesight, and relieving eye strain.” (Liu Chungun, *Chinese Kites*)

“My best kite experience? The first one. I started flying in the middle of the city of Medellin, on a hill surrounded by the most deprived neighborhood. I could see children coming up to meet me. My first reaction was fear because I thought them ‘bad.’ They asked me to let them try flying too, and I did. After a few days of kites, I realized they were not what I was hearing, rather they were good but just very poor. So I started working with them, I’m a teacher by profession, and I soon decided they were wonderful people.” (Ines Elvira Uribe)

“My favorite kite festival? For perfect wind and weather, Cervia, Italy. For a gorgeous setting, Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A. For an abundance of kites, Fano Denmark.” (Scott Skinner)

“There are kites that should never be flown near trees in any wind conditions, and others that can survive so long as they are kept well above the treetops. Unfortunately, most people don’t find out which they’ve got until it’s too late. Most people understand that turbulence is created downwind of trees and buildings, but few seem to know about the downdraft that appears to be created directly above the trees. This can suck an otherwise happy single-liner down into the clutches of a dreaded kite-eating tree. The moral being----don’t put any kite in a position where it can be grabbed by a tree, which may have very long arms!” (Jim Cronin, Midlands Kite Fliers, U.K.)

When the Taliban took over Kabul in September of 1996, 16 decrees were broadcast on Radio Sharia. A new era had begun. Decree No. 7 titled *Prohibition Against Kite Flying*, read as follows: “Kite flying has wicked consequence, such as gambling, death among children, and truancy. Shops selling kites will be removed.”

“I first visited Japanese kitemaker Matsutaro Yanase in 1970 in Yokosuka. A generous shock of hair, in spite of it greyness, gave him a pronounced boyish look. It was some time later that I learned he was 58. My first impression, one that still remains, is of a person without age, a kind of mythical young-old toymaker.” (Tal Streeter, U.S.A.)

Err...It Was the Last One Left

Okay hands up. How many of us have made excuses or had to think up an explanation for that latest acquisition to the kite bag? Here are some common ones, according to a recent English Midland Kite Fliers newsletter:

*You’re the one who said I needed a hobby.
But I didn’t have one in that color.
This kite will never be this price again!
No, this one is for you to hold.
You know yellow is my favorite color.
You treated yourself to some new shoes, so...
This one will teach me to fly the other ones better.
I bought this one cheap for the spare parts.
You should see everybody else’s kite bag.*

Historic Gathering

Valerie Govig, publisher of the now defunct Kite Lines magazine, recalls the first meeting of the American Kitefliers Association, in Ocean City, Maryland, in 1978 as a wonderful success. “I think of it as one of the grandest gatherings of kiting greats ever held,” she says. Attendees included Bob Ingraham, founder of the association and of Kite Lines magazine (under the name Kite Tales); English designer and kite popularizer Peter Powell, writer and historian Tal Streeter. Also, kite designer Steve Edeiken (later killed in a fall from a rogue kite); NASA’s Francis Rogallo, co-inventor of the soft kite and inventor of the hang glider; inventor Peter Waldron. Plus, kiting pioneer Wayne Brummitt; New Zealand designer and flier Peter Lynn; and Smithsonian aeronautics curator Paul Garber, inventor of the World War II target kite. A bit of brainpower there.

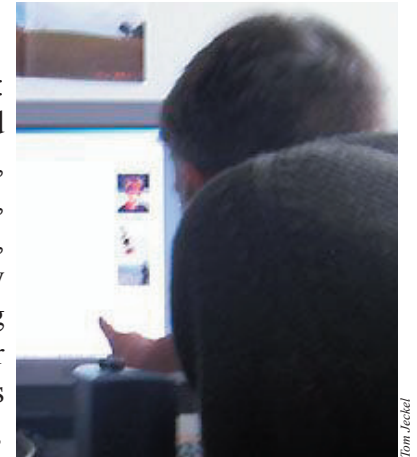
Letters to Editor

About the Anke Sauer Kite

The Jack-in-the-Box kite (Issue No. 13) is interesting on several levels. Trying to fit it into the traditional kite classifications is a waste of time. None of these classification systems makes sense. All of them overlook important, but perhaps obscure, kite types. They also miss important distinctions.

I wrote an essay criticizing kite classification systems for Kite Lines magazine, but it was not published. It denied the validity of all such classification schemes. I think it was too esoteric.

My system of classification is based on classifying the three kite functionalities: lift production, stabilization, and structural. The Jack-in-the-Box is a fixed monoplane wing. In that respect, it is a Flat kite, like an Edo, and not a Boxkite, like a Tetrahedral. It is stabilized by projected vertical surface area. In that sense, it is a Boxkite very like a Tetrahedral. It is structurally a Soft kite like a Parafoil, but it is also structurally like the large, multi-bridled Edo kites. It is structurally supported perpendicular to its face by the multiple bridle lines. A point or two-leg bridle would not work on this kite. However, it is distinguished from all other kites by the fact that it is structurally stabilized within the plane of its face by its hinged pyramidal elements. In that respect it is not at all like the Tetrahedral kite, which is rigidly connected beyond the conventional, rigid Boxkite and therefore falls outside the conventional definition. It crosses over between conventional categories and illustrates the absurdity of such classification schemes.



Anke Sauer checks her computer for the latest comments on her controversial Jack-in-the-Box kite.

However, it does not need to be composed of three dimensional elements. For example, I can imagine a kite made of rigid equilateral triangles hinged together along the edges and bridled to the centers of each triangle in such a way as to allow bowing for stability. This imagined kite could not be considered a Boxkite, and goes beyond the conventional concept of Cellular, since conventional usage requires three dimensionality. This imagined kite would be a fixed wing flat kite in the production of lift, a bowed kite in providing stability, and a multi-bridled Cellular kite structurally.

The Jack-in the-Box not only has novelty and esthetic values, it provides an intellectual challenge to kite classification theorists.

My summary is, Anke's kite is not an Edo. It is an entirely new kind of kite. It is a monoplane fixed wing, supported by a multi-leg bridle, like an Edo. But structurally it is completely different. The Edo can't fold up, as hers does. Her kite should be called an Anke Kite. (Gary Hinze, DGBJ@aol.com)

The Wonders of Kiteflying

Kiteflying plays very important roles in our tensionful and strainful life and keep us fit-o-fit.

It is one of the best recreations, clean and safe entertainment, and thus removes all physical and mental tiredness in a short time. Flying of kites also generates happiness and freshness, which helps us to handle and complete our duties with more interest, vigor, spirit, and dedication.

Kiteflying under the sun during winters provides sufficient amount of vitamin D, which is very much essential for

the growth of our body. Flying of kite is also a complete physical exercise for arms, legs, and neck. Most of the time kite is being flown in the garden so intake of oxygen into our body is much more than a person confined to the four walls of a house. In this way, stronger heart is being built up and also keeps blood pressure of a person to normal and thus reduces the chances of heart attack. Flying of kites under the blue sky gives smoothness to eyes as well. Moreover, it also helps in improving eyesight of a person as eyelids have to move constantly with the every changing movement of the kite in the sky.

One must take advantage of kiteflying as more than a hobby since it can lead to a happy, healthy and stress and strain-free long, long life. (Dr. Devinder Pal Singh Sehgal, Chandigarh, India)

A Pupil Speaks

Dear Mr. Yoshizumi, Drachen Foundation,

You have been nice, thoughtful, wonderful, patient, caring, and generous. You showed examples and you helped me with the bamboo. I really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really like flying the kite that you helped me make.” (Austin, UCLA’s University Education School, Los Angeles)

Compliments on Journal

I continue to be impressed with the quality of the Drachen Journal, and the delightful kite characters you introduce. Our diverse kiting world contains many gems. And, often, the best kites and kitemakers are those who only fly within a few kilometers of their own homes. To ferret them out and present them well is a challenge. I particularly enjoy the humanity that your profiles capture. It isn’t just kites, it isn’t just technique and history-----it is people too. Drachen has done us all a great service balancing all four. (David Gomberg <http://www.gombergkites.com>)

Thank you for all the time and energy you put into producing the Journal. Interesting articles and great photographs----I am very grateful. (nigelbence@tiscali.co.uk)

Thanks for the years of education and enjoyment you’ve provided. (Greg Thompson, Arts, University of Missouri)

The article on Tom Jeckel (Issue No. 13) was nice, funny, and sensible, oh really. (Kisa and Anke Sauer at Kisa@kisa.de)

The Fall 2003 issue looks great. It will take me a long time to go through it, but I will. The pictures are just beautiful. (Charlie Sotich, Chicago)

Highway Confusion

A recent survey of motorists in Britain shows, according to the Midland Kite Fliers newsletter, that many road signs still baffle drivers. The sign indicating a crossing for migratory toads was interpreted by some to indicate a French restaurant was in the vicinity. A “be aware of cattle” sign meant to many there was a foot-and-mouth disease problem locally. Some even read the warning for strong side winds---a windsock flying at a right angle to the ground---incorrectly, interpreting it to mean there was a nearby area for kite flying.

Foundation Adds Directors, Votes Grants

The Drachen Foundation recently expanded its Board of Directors from six to eight. Added were Dave Lang, of Seattle, a veteran aerospace engineer, and Jose Sainz, of San Diego, renowned for his beautiful, elaborate kites with Indian motifs which reflect his personal Aztec heritage.

“For us to grow,” says Ali Fujino, Administrator of Drachen, “we needed some new viewpoints. Lang with his strong scientific background and Sainz with his refined esthetic sense bolster the Foundation in these two important areas.”

The Board of Directors voted five grants, all of them for interesting, innovative projects involving kites. Awarded were:

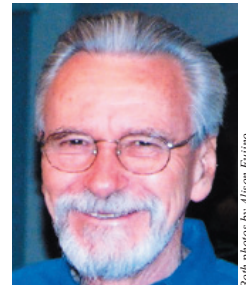
* Oscar Frey, a marine biologist, who is studying humpback whale behavior in the Bay of Bandaras, Mexico. Frey is using cameras attached to kites to document human interaction with whales. Because the kites are can be flown well away from boats and thus are non-intrusive, no stress is caused the mammals.

* Brolly Arts of Utah, directed by Amy McDonald Sanger. Sanger plans a multi-disciplinary collaboration of artists to focus on the birds of the Great Salt Lake. Schools will be involved in studies leading up to an art and nature performance on the Nature Conservancy’s shoreline preserve at the lake. Among the artists and ensembles will be Robert Brasington, of Tasmania, a kitemaker; composer Michael Nyman and the Ahn Trio; poet Leslie Norris; photographer Stephen Trimble; Charlotte Boye-Christensen doing an “event”; and performances by the groups Plein Air and Bad Dog Rediscovered America.

* Wilderness Research Foundation. Sheldon Bart is president of the organization. The grant will aid experiments in exchanging signals using lofted kites during the course of a six-week expedition to pristine Axel Heiberg Island in the High Arctic of Canada.

* Sarah St. Vincent of Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. Miss St. Vincent is studying kites in Asia, with an initial focus on Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

* The Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs of King County, Wallingford, Seattle. Jamie Flaxman is branch executive director. Grant money from the Foundation will be used to fund educational workshops in kitemaking, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils. In addition to pupils, workshops will include high school science classes and university engineering departments, as well as training for educators and adult volunteers, so they in turn can train others.



Dave Lang



Jose Sainz

Both photos by Alison Fujino

Collecting on the Grand Scale

Iqbal Husain from the Tecino of Switzerland is a regular at major European kite festivals with his dramatic kite trains. He not only collects kites from around the world but also prints and paintings, as well as old Chinese porcelains and Oriental rugs. His small family, he comments, is quite a collection too: three religious (Catholic, Muslim, Hindu), five passports (his two adopted children from the Mother Theresa agency have Indian ones, his wife Italian and Swiss, himself Pakistani and British), seven languages between them (English, Italian, French, German, Punjabi, Urdu, and Hindi), and different food preferences (Pakistani, Indian, Italian, Swiss: “I’m a vegetarian but the kids prefer salami sandwiches.”)