



Mexico
 The word for kite is "papalote" - the Mexican word for butterfly.

Europe
 Marco Polo, the great explorer introduced the kite to Europe in the 13th century. The kite was mostly used as a children's toy, but it was later used for scientific purposes; Benjamin Franklin used it to show that electricity was present during a storm in 1752 AD.

England
 In English, the word "kite" is also the name of a graceful bird. The Kite Society of Britain has adopted a "kite" bird that resides in the London Zoo.

Germany
 In Germany, the first windsocks were in the shape of animals and often had small fires lit inside the head to frighten enemies. Kites - which grew from windsocks - are now called "drachen" which means dragon.

China
 China is credited with the invention because they were the first country to record their use in legends. In 960 to 1126 AD flying kites became a popular activity of recreation in China. People celebrated the 9th day of the ninth month, a day signifying the banishment of evil, by flying kites.

Japan
 930 AD was the earliest mention of "Shiroshi" in Japanese literature where 'Shi' means paper and 'Koshi' stands for the Chinese bird. In Japan, windsocks-in the shape of a carp, a symbol of strength of will and fortitude-are flown on May 5th, Children's Day, as an inspiration to the children. Kites are also flown with long bridle lines and tails. It is not surprising that the Japanese word for kite-"tako"-also means octopus.

Korea
 In Korea, it is a tradition to write the names and birth dates of male children on the kites and then to fly them. The line is then cut to ensure a good year by taking all the bad spirits with it.

Thailand
 Kites were flown during the monsoon season by the people of Thailand to send prayers to their gods.

India
 Kite Flying competitions have remained a strong part of the culture of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The aim of the competition is to cut another's kite down. There is further competition to retrieve the kites that have been cut.

France
 In France, The word for kite is "cerf volant" as kites are made with many spars and sticks. It is also the name used for the antlers of a deer.

South Africa
 In the South African language of Afrikaans, kites are called "vlieers". This is very similar to the Dutch word "vlieger". The first European settlers in South Africa were from Holland.

New Zealand
 The Maori word for bird is 'manu' and it is in the shape of a bird that they made their kites. It was believed that birds could carry messages between humans and gods. Sometimes, the kites represented the gods themselves. The Maori also used kites for divination and for funerary purposes.

South Sea Islands
 In earlier times the people of the South Sea Islands used kites to fish, attaching bait to the tail of the kite and a web to catch the fish. Even today, some natives of the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Ocean use kites as a fishing aid.

- In each country or culture where kites have been used, the people developed special names for them. These names reflected the ideas that people had about their kites, the way they looked, or the reasons they flew them.
- English - Kite
 - Belgian - Plakwaaier
 - Chinese - Fung jung
 - Estonian - Lohe
 - Finnish - Leija
 - Indonesia - Layang-layang
 - Italian - Aquilone
 - Korean - Youn
 - Norwegian & Danish - Drage
 - Portuguese - Pipas
 - Philippines - Saranggola
 - Russian - Letuchij zmeij
 - Serbo-Croat - Zmaj
 - Spanish - Cometas
 - Swedish - Drake
 - Thai - Wau

"There are no boundaries of caste, creed, colour, religion, nationality or language [flying kites]"
Ajay Prakash, Kite Festival organiser

Kites have been used by many cultures to celebrate special events and occasions. Kite flying has a fascinating history and it is estimated that they have been in existence for more than a thousand years-man has always had a desire to fly!

Kites - the wings of man

100 BC to 500 AD: Kites were used by the army generals to send signals and to measure the distance of enemy camps. Both the Chinese and the Japanese learned to use kites for raising soldiers into the air as spies of snipers. Some old Japanese and Chinese prints show warriors flying over their enemies' territory.

And of course kite flying led to the invention of the airplane.

1870 AD: Australian inventor Lawrence Hargrave designed box-kites whose stability inspired others to create power driven aeroplanes.

1896 AD: Alexander Graham Bell had a great passion for both aeronautics and kites. He used kites to further his knowledge of man assisted flight. Bell designed, made and tested many of his own man-carrying kites himself. At this time, Samuel Cody carried out experiments with man carrying deplane gliders.

1902 AD: The Wright brothers were successful in becoming airborne and the age of aviation began.



This poster is a part of the "Fly a Kite to Stop Child Labour" Campaign.

