

# A brief history

The exact date and origin of the kite is not known but it is believed that they were flown in the Pacific more than three thousand years ago.

There are many stories about how the people of Micronesia used a leaf kite to carry bait out over the water for kite fishing. The Polynesians have myths about gods introducing kites to man for a kite duel.

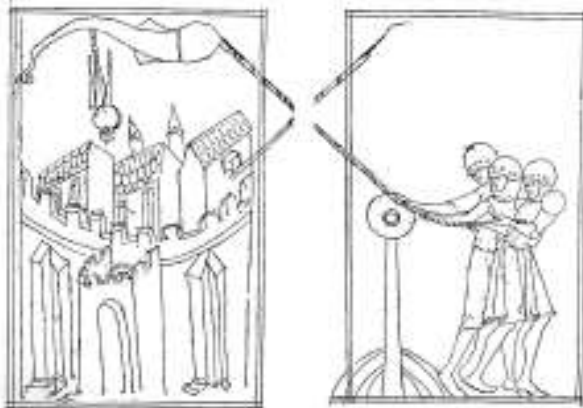
The earliest written account of kite flying was about 200 B.C. in China. Kite flying spread via trade from China throughout Asia. Kites were brought to Japan about the 7th century by Buddhist monks, where they were used to avert evil spirits and to ensure rich harvests.



Marco Polo carried stories of kites to Europe around the end of the 13th century. Illustrations of the period show non-flying dragon kites based on military banners.

Kites were regarded as curiosities at first and had little impact on European culture.

In the 18th and 19th centuries kites were used as vehicles for discovery. Ben Franklin, Sir George Caley, Samuel Langley, George Pocock, Alexander Graham Bell, the Wright Brothers and Richard Pearce experimented with kites and contributed to development of the airplane. Kites designed by Lawrence Hargrave were used to raise meteorological instruments.



As the airplane was developed the kite became something used for recreational flying. The last 50 years has seen renewed interest in kiting. Rogallo's flexi-wing and Jalbert's parafoil kites helped develop modern hang-gliders and sports parachutes.

In 1972 Peter Powell made the dual line stunter popular. This has led the public to believe that kite flying could be a sport and not just child's play. Now many adults and children are enjoying this healthy pastime.

Peter Lynn leads the world in the development of power and traction kiting, and kitesurfing is now regularly seen around New Zealand's waterways.

*References:*  
*Gomberg Kites* – [www.gombergkites.com/nkm/hist1.html](http://www.gombergkites.com/nkm/hist1.html)  
*Kites* by David Pelham