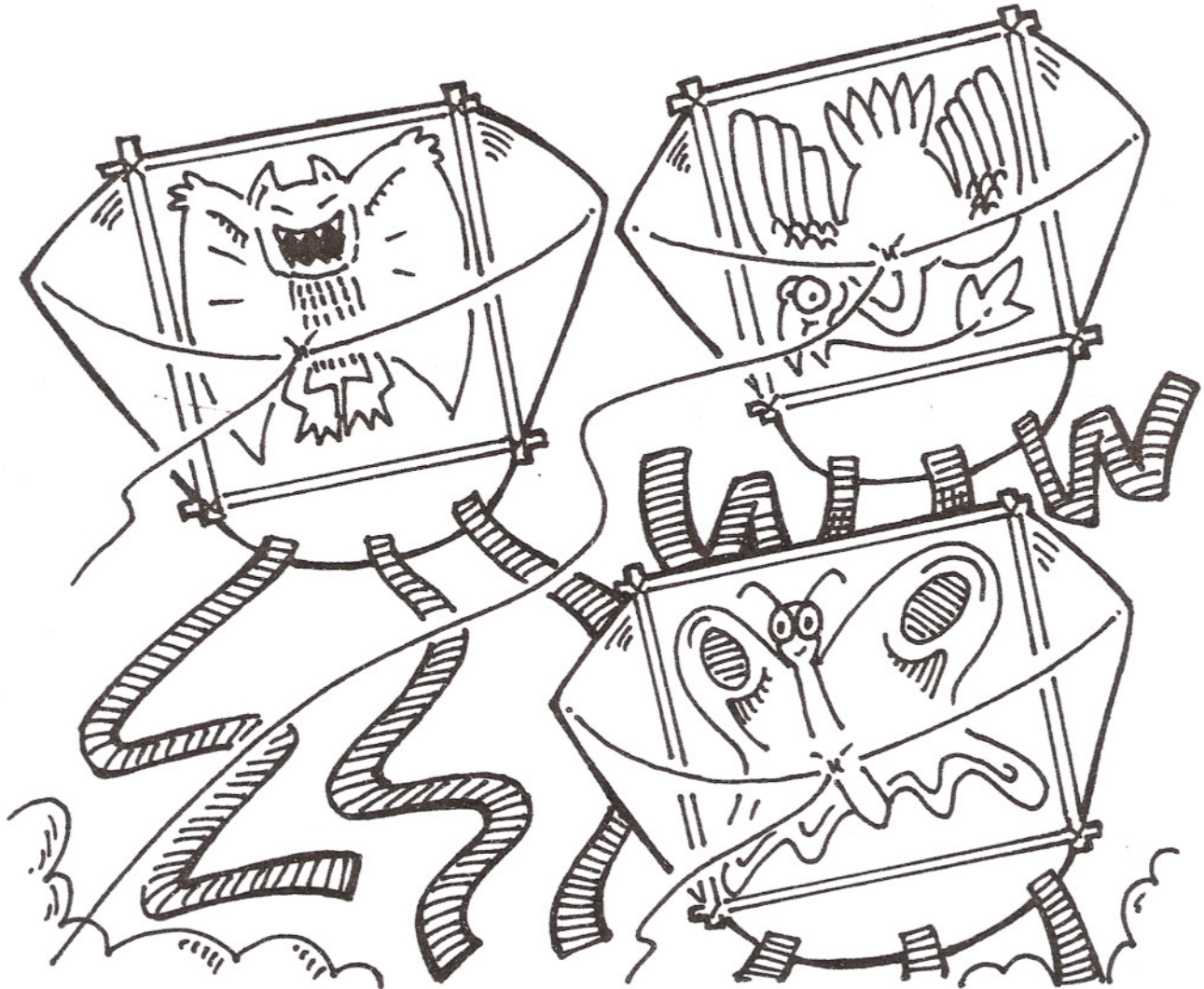


## Ceremonial Kites

The Chinese probably invented kites about 3,000 years ago. The earliest kites were made of wood. When paper was invented, making kites became a pastime in which most people could partake. The kite developed into complex designs elaborately decorated and flown on religious and ceremonial occasions. Chinese emperors used kites to frighten the enemy in battle. They also used them to send signals to their troops in wartime. There were even kites large enough to carry warriors armed with bows and arrows that would fire down on the enemy below.

The designs on most Chinese kites have a symbolic meaning or are illustrations from Chinese folklore or history. Fish, insects, birds, tortoises, cranes, bats, butterflies, and dragons are popular designs. The complex shapes and designs are achieved by bending bamboo over a flame or soaking it in water. Over 100 pieces of shaped bamboo are used in the construction of some dragon head kites.



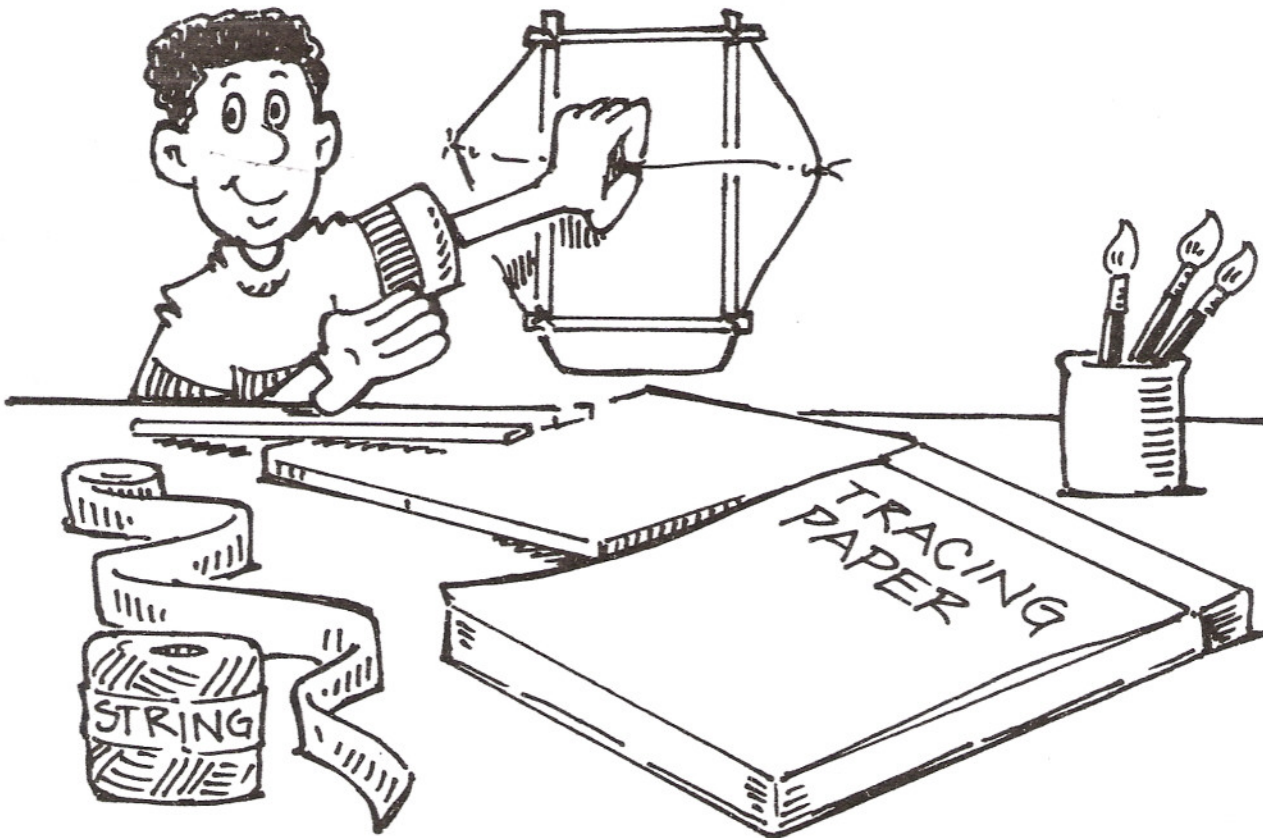
## Ceremonial Kites *(continued)*

### *Project Description*

The reputation of a brilliant kite designer has spread to the capital. Now the emperor requests that the kite maker design one worthy of being flown at an auspicious celebration. It must be beautiful and include traditional Chinese motifs in the design. Imagine what this kite must have looked like, and create a replica of it for your Ancient China Museum.

### *Materials*

lightweight paper such as tracing paper  
cardboard for cutting out reinforcing strips, dimensions  
    should be as long as the kite edges  
crepe paper streamers  
tissue paper bows to be used with streamers  
watercolors, marking pens, crayons  
kite string  
piece of 2 x 2 inch cardboard on which to wrap the string



## Ceremonial Kites *(continued)*

### **Directions**

1. Design and cut out the shape of your kite. Kites with simple shapes are easier to make.
2. Plan the illustrations and then draw them on the kite.
3. Cut out cardboard strips to fit each side of the kite and glue them on the edges. Allow to dry thoroughly.
4. Cut out a cardboard strip to reinforce the middle of the kite. Tie one end of the kite string to the middle of this strip. Glue the reinforcing strip across the middle and allow to dry.
5. Glue or staple crepe paper streamers to the bottom end of the kite for a tail. Add crepe paper bows for a decorative touch.
6. Wrap the kite string onto the small cardboard square.

