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TEACHING TUESDAY

KITE BATTLES

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Kite battles are 400-year-old competitions that still occur regularly throughout Japan, especially in the towns of Hamamatsu and Shirone.

There are two types of kite battles. The first involves cutting the strings of your opponents' kites using friction. Large kites measuring 3.5 meters by 3.5 meters are made with a special 5-mm thick hemp strings, sometimes with a special sharp metal implement attached. When the strings entwine, it becomes a battle of friction until one finally snaps. The other type of kite battle involves teams of people controlling the kite. The teams work together to force their opponents' kites to the ground, by either tipping or weighing down the opposing kite.

The Rokkaku dako (六角凧) battle kites are made from bamboo and washi paper, and often hand painted with the face of a famous samurai. Rokkaku battles aren't limited to Japan though; you can see one every year at the National Cherry Blossom Festival here in DC!