The Maiden Flight for "Yue Zhuo"

Over the last decade, the development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) has become an integral trend in the aviation industry. This trend had been driven by the relatively low cost involved in the production and maintenance of UAV; the fact that high risk missions can be carried out with minimal expenditure.

In Taiwan, Tamkang University's UAV Research Team, part of the Department of Aerospace Engineering, has contributed greatly to research in this area. Recently, it made an important breakthrough. The team created Taiwan's first ever solar-powered unmanned aerial vehicle. On August 18, the vehicle was taken for a test flight at an aviation facility in New Taipei City. The successful production and test flight of the UAV will result in advances in a number of related areas, such as UAV data reconnaissance, the monitoring of combat situations, and the collection of information regarding natural disasters, such as typhoons, forest fires, and others.

The plane is two meters in length, with a wing span of 3.7m. It's maximum speed is 34 km/h, and it weighs a mere 8.9 kgs. It is called the "Yue Zhuo", which in Chinese refers to a mystical creature somewhat akin to a phoenix. The UAV research team explained that "the recent test flight proved that both the design of the plane and the solar-powered operation system are suitable for average flying conditions. In the future, we'll continue to improve on and advance the current design".

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Students and teachers from the Department of Aerospace Engineering

The plane known as “Yue Zhuo”