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SPOTLIGHT

The Star-Crossed Lovers

- Two Stars on the Night of July 7 -

Once upon a time, a Weaver Princess Star, Orihime (the star Vega) lived in the heavens. She had been weaving because her father, a heavenly King, loved the beautiful clothes that she made.

One day, sitting at the riverside of Amano-gawa (the Milky Way), she was very sad as she realized that she had been so busy weaving that she did not have time to fall in love.

The King felt sorry for her and introduced her to a herdsman, Hikoboshi (the star Altair) who lived across the Milky Way. They fell in love immediately, and spent all their time together, forgetting to do their work. Soon, all the cows became sick and the King's clothes became worn out.

The King became so angry that he made them live separately at opposite ends of the Milky Way. And they were only allowed to meet once a year on the night of July 7.

When it rains on that day, they are not able to see each other because the river is flooded, forcing them to look painfully forward to next year....

This legend, which originally comes from China, is called *Tanabata* in Japanese. We celebrate this day, known as the Star Festival, by putting up freshly cut bamboo with *origami*, or colorful decorations. We also make a wish and hang up *tanzaku*, pieces of paper with our wishes written on them. Traditionally, the wishes are believed to come true.

If it is not raining, both Orihime(Vega) and Hikoboshi(Altair) are quite conspicuous on the night sky of July 7.

Shall we make a wish that it will be clear on that night so the two lovers can have a romantic night once a year in the sparkling Milky Way, Amano-gawa?

JS



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