

THE PEACH COBBLER



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Tanabata 七夕



Celebrating the Star Crossed Lovers



Occuring every year on the seventh day of the seventh month, **Tanabata** is Japan's nationwide festival for making wishes. On this day, people across Japan, particularly children, write their wishes on small and narrow strips of paper known as **Tanzaku** (短冊 / たんざく), which are usually used for writing short poems. Wishes in hand, people across Japan then affix their wishes to bamboo. Traditionally, the numerous wishes of the people are then floated down a river, or burned. Festivals pertaining to Tanabata appear throughout Japan with slight variations to the celebration style existing in different regions. Yes, all across the country, Japanese people write their wishes, offer them up to the heavens, enjoy summer festivities, and pray for a good day with no rain...but more on that later.

The origins of this festival date back thousands of years, going all the way back to ancient Japan. Introduced by Empress Koken in **755AD**, the festivities and the practices were based on similar occasions in China. Specifically, it is heavily based on the Qixi Festival from ancient China, also known as the Festival to Plead for Skills. The customs were introduced to Japan during the Heian Era and debuted in the city of **Heian Kyo** (平安京), modern day Kyoto, being adopted in the Imperial Palace. Though it has its origins in the Heian Era (8th-12th Centuries), it was much later in the Edo Era (17th-19th Centuries) that the occasion was celebrated by the broader social classes.

[Click here for info on Tanabata Festival in Okayama](#)

Written by: Ryan Calpito

Tanabata is Japan's ancient story, **densetsu** (伝説 / でんせつ), about literal star-crossed lovers.

It's kanji, 七夕, literally meaning **seventh night**, Tanabata tells of a heartsick silk weaver and a lonely cattle herder split by the expanse of the cosmos. It is a story of fateful romance, but one that falls on the lines of the melancholic.



There are slight and minute variations here and there, however they all go like this…

In the stars and cosmos that create the universe

there was a beautiful silk weaver, a maiden, Princess Orihime, the daughter of the Emperor of the Heavens, the galaxy itself, Tentei. The fabrics she wove, used to make clothing, were beautiful, desired, and appreciated by all. The princess wove these fabrics everyday, diligently, by the Heavenly River, or Amano no Gawa (天の川 / あまのがわ), the Milky Way Galaxy. Tentei was proud of Orihime, and loved her very much. However, although she was adept and took pride in her work, Orihime was busy and always working. She was lonely as a result, she did not have any time to meet others and as a result knew she would never be able to meet someone and fall in love. The knowledge of this weighed heavily on her, and she was deeply saddened with loneliness.



Tentei, recognizing his daughter's sadness, reached across the expanse of the cosmos to find his daughter a partner who could fix her heartache and loneliness. His search soon brought him to Hikoboshi, a diligent cattle herder who lived on the other side of the Amanogawa, who he introduced to his daughter. Finally, Tentei could help his daughter overcome her sorrow.

The two met and immediately fell deeply in love; a match made in heaven, so to speak. For the first time in an eternity, the two had found companionship and love. They were soon wed and lived happily as husband and wife. However, in their joy the couple had completely abandoned their duties. Orihime had ceased her weaving, and her looms began gathering dust; Hikoboshi's cattle were now scattered and wandering about the galaxy.



This disorder upset and angered Tentei, and in his rage, he forbade Orihime and Hikoboshi from meeting, splitting the couple and sending Hikoboshi back across the Amanogawa. Both returned to their duties, but their sadness had also returned tenfold. Orihime wept dearly everyday, bereft at the loss of her husband. Tentei felt pity, seeing the intense sorrow from his daughter and eventually made a deal with her. If the two of them could work as diligently as they had before, they would be allowed to meet once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month, to which Orihime acquiesced. But on the long-awaited day, the couple found they could not meet, for there was no bridge across the expanse of the Amanogawa. Coming so close, yet still remaining so far, Orihime wept on the banks of the river, being able to see Hikoboshi on the other side. She wept so hard, she caught the attention and sympathies of a flock of magpies who promised to form a bridge across the river so the two lovers could finally meet.



Thus, every year on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month, Princess Orihime and Hikoboshi's wish is granted and they are allowed to finally meet once more. However, the pair must return to their respective sides of the Amanogawa by the morning of the next day to resume their duties for the next year, once again patiently awaiting for next year's July 7th night.

It is said, however, that if it rains on Tanabata, the river's levels will rise and its currents will become too much for the magpies to handle. Should it rain, the bridge cannot be formed, and Hikoboshi and Orihime will be denied their once-annual time to be with each other. There is no rain check, sadly and they will have no choice but to wait for the coming year once more. This is why, traditionally, Japanese people will also pray for a rainless day; to grant the star-crossed lovers their once a year chance to be in each other's company. As a result, should unfortunate weather come on the day of Tanabata, the rain is referred to as 'The Tears of Orihime and Hikoboshi.'

Just as Orihime and Hikoboshi make a yearly wish on July 7th, the people of Japan also cast their wishes to the heavens with hopes of them one day being granted.

So how do Japanese people make these wishes? What do they say? For those of us that are studying or practicing Japanese, the phrasing is quite simple; unless of course, you want to go the extra mile and write your wishes in the form of a **tanka** (短歌 / たんか) poem.

Typically, and specifically, what I was taught in Japanese class in uni to practice a grammar point, wishes are written with some kind of verb. These verbs are written in potential form since, for example, “you wish to be able to do something, to become something, or to accomplish something.” You will write these potential verbs in their masu-form, and finally connect *youni* (ように) to the end.

As an example, and writing as Hikoboshi:

“I wish to be able to meet Orihime this year.”

“Kotoshi, Orihime ni aemasuyouni”

「今年、織姫に会えますように」

Typically these written phrases do not have a period affixed to them. This is because, this wish, this sentence, technically does not end and is stuck mid-sentence; imagine someone droning off at the end of a hopeful wish. Once written, these wishes can be fixed to bamboo typically at shrines and temples, though I’m sure there will be lots of bamboo in lots of different places that people will be attaching their wishes to. (Note: don’t go randomly attaching your wishy-washy dreams wishes to random innocent bamboo; that’s littering.)



Tanzaku and pens, or brushes, in hand, why not make a wish upon the stars this year? Fellow peaches and allies of Momotaro, from the Okayama AJET Board, we wish you a cool, fun, relaxing, and safe summer.

皆のために涼しくて、楽しくて、リラックスできて、安全な夏季節になれますように



Want to be part of
The Peach Cobbler!!?!



If you want to contribute photos or stories please contact us at
newsletter@okayama-ajet.com
OR
okayama.rose@gmail.com



more info available on www.okayama-ajet.com

The ~ Advice Corner ~



COMING SOON



Let us and your fellow JETs help with
some **UNOFFICIAL** advice.
Results may vary.

Stay tuned for updates on the

UPCOMING AJET EVENTS



Newcomer PARTY 2024

Keep an eye on your email and our website
for more info

Welcome



Events in Okayama

JULY 2024

FESTIVALS

第30回早島・倉敷花ござまつり Hayashima Kurashiki Hanagoza Matsuri



Date: July 6th

More Info: [日本語](#) [English](#)

Location: Hayashima Town Hall, West Special Venue

Time: AM:9:00 - 17:00

Admission: Free

観蓮節 - Lotus Viewing Festival

Date: July 7th

More Info: [日本語](#) [English](#)

Location: Korakuen Garden (pond)

Time: 4:00am - 8:00am (park closes at 18:00)

Admission: Free with admission to park

*Tea ceremony tickets can only be bought in advance

Lotus seeds will be sold for 100yen while supplies last



倉敷天領夏祭り - Kurashiki Tenryo Summer Festival



Date: July 20th

More Info: [日本語](#) [English](#)

Location: Kurashiki City

Time: 16:30 - 21:30

Admission: Free

第78回落合納涼花火大会 - Ochiai Fireworks Festival



Date: July 27th

Location: Ashikawa River, Ochiai Tarumi, Maniwa City

Time: 19:50 - 21:00

Admission: Free

[More info: 日本語](#)

三石夏まつり - Mitsuishi Summer Festival

Date: July 20th

Location: Mitsuishi Shopping Street

Time: 17:30

Admission: Free

[More info: 日本語](#)



OTHER

International Meet Up Party 「せかつく」



Date: July 6th

Location: Matador (Bar in Okayama City)

Time: 20:00 - 22:00

Admission:

Men ~ ¥4000

All you can drink and buffet style food included

Women ~ ¥3500

[More info: Instagram](#)

Note from the Editor~



Happy July, everyone, and to all my fellow Canadians, Happy Canada Day!

First, for those of you taking the JLPTs in a few days, remember to breathe deeply, eat well, and get plenty of sleep before the test. Best of luck—you've got this!

頑張ってください！

Secondly, as Okayama AJET continues to regain momentum, we appreciate your patience. If you haven't received information about the leavers' party, please check your email or contact us as soon as possible.

Our next AJET event will be to welcome the newcomers, so stay tuned for details!

As mentioned in our newsletter, we're always looking for contributors. Whether it's photos of interesting places you've visited, events you've attended in the prefecture, sharing your JET Programme experiences, or offering book and movie recommendations, we'd love to hear from you. If you're interested in contributing, please email us at newsletter@okayama-ajet.com or okayama.rose@gmail.com

JUNE Word Search

ANSWER KEY

な い お ろ く め び ま お と か き
 つ ま ん ま が び あ て ひ せ ち と
 り ろ の し き そ い め わ め ち ひ
 か お ち ち ち お と お ざ ご つ の れ
 ち き ろ を ま ば そ か れ て ひ な
 の ち せ く つ ゆ う わ ふ つ り と
 う ろ ま づ り ね ら つ ほ じ ろ と
 め は く ん て り す ん あ て ん み
 こ あ し が の を び い じ く つ を
 そ さ と ま つ お と う さ ん わ ゆ
 い つ な お ゆ め な せ い い か あ
 び を ら う は に あ わ だ に む つ
 わ ん り ち ら た つ け め ん ろ な

June marks the end of spring and the beginning of summer, let's find some Japanese words related to June together!

Write the English translation (and/or kanji) of the words below and find them in the wordsearch above.

①おまつり → festival お祭り	⑥おとうさん → father お父さん
②つゆ → rainy season 梅雨	⑦なつ → summer 夏
③ちちのひ → father's day 父の日	⑧あじさい → hydrangea
④ろくがつ → June 六月	⑨あめ → rain 雨
⑤びわ → loquat	⑩つけめん → tsukemen

JULY Word Search

らおたろくめとじおとかゆ
まむなけよつやちなよもせ
くはりぬあせんぶうきらむ
しちがつりみほゆをたがし
たせへいいぶねはなにびあ
のちなまろぬもわらよりつ
うほつずじゆうじかんろい
めはやんてりたもやてむみ
こあすふのをひやけどめう
そさみまはうにうさせわら
いもへおたなばたきりかあ
ねをむじいせびわにほゆて
わよほちらあつへをしいせ

July, the season of Summer festivals has begun! Here are some words you may use in July/the summer.

Write the English translation (and/or kanji) of the words below and find them in the wordsearch above.

①せんぶうき →

②はなび →

③ほし →

④なつやすみ →

⑤ひやけどめ →

⑥たなばた →

⑦しちがつ →

⑧むしゃつい →

⑨たけ →

⑩じゆうじかん →

Difficulty: Medium

Monthly Sudoku

JULY 2024

	7		5		6	1		9
	2							
		5			2			
	6	4			8		5	
1			5		3		2	
		7	2	6	9			
8	3		6		5	7		
5	9	2			1	8	3	
	4		9		3		1	

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.