

LESSON NOTES

Japanese Culture Class #21

The Star Festival

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KANJI

1. 笹の葉さらさら
2. 軒端に揺れる
3. お星様きらきら
4. 金銀砂子
5. Learning Center Exclusive! Yoshi-san and Chigusa-san sing the song for you (as much as you like)!

KANA

1. ささのはさらさら
2. のきばにゆれる
3. おほしさまきらきら
4. きんぎんすなご

ROMANIZATION

1. Sasa no ha sarasara
2. Nokiba ni yureru
3. Ohoshi-sama kirakira

CONT'D OVER

- Kingin sunago

ENGLISH

- The bamboo leaves, rustle, rustle
- Shaking away in the eaves
- The stars go twinkle, twinkle
- Gold and silver grains of sand

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
お中元	おちゅうげん	ochūgen	mid-year gift
吹き流し	ふきながし	fukinagashi	Orihime's strings, streamers
短冊	たんざく	tanzaku	strips of paper used for writing wishes
七夕	たなばた	Tanabata	The Star Festival
残暑見舞い	ざんしょみまい	zansho mimai	lingering summer postcard
暑中見舞い	しょちゅうみまい	shochū mimai	summer postcard
お返し	おかえし	okaeshi	return gift
お歳暮	おせいぼ	o-seibo	year-end gift
山芋	やまいも	yamaimo	mountain potato
お素麺	おそうめん	osōmen	thin noodles
巾着	きんちゃく	kinchaku	purse

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>短冊に願い事をひとつ書いてください。 <i>Tanzaku ni negaigoto o hitotsu kaite kudasai.</i></p> <p>Please write your wish on a strip of paper used for writing wishes.</p>	<p>七夕に、願い事を書く習慣があります。 <i>Tanabata ni negaigoto o kaku shūkan ga arimasu.</i></p> <p>We write our wishes in Star Festival.</p>
<p>バレンタインデーのお返しをもらった。 <i>Barentaindee no o-kaeshi o morattal</i></p> <p>I got a return gift on Valentine's Day.</p>	<p>お歳暮でビールが届いたので、とてもうれしいです。 <i>O-seibo de bīru ga todoita node, totemo ureshii desu.</i></p> <p>I'm really happy because I received beer as an o-seibo gift.</p>

GRAMMAR

Tanabata: The Star Festival



七夕・たなばた・*Tanabata* - The Star Festival

Tanabata is based on the so-called Chinese Valentine's Day referred to as 七巧节・Qi Qiao Jie, which falls on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. The literal meaning of the

Japanese is "The Night of Sevens." The original story has been recorded as far back as the Jin Dynasty (256 - 420 A.D.). In the Chinese legend, the seventh daughter of the Emperor of Heaven and an orphaned cowherd are separated to the star Vega, east of the Milky Way, and the star Altair, west of the Milky Way, and told they can only meet once a year on the seventh night of the seventh lunar month.

On this night, the two meet upon a bridge of magpies over the Milky Way. It is said that it will be hard to find a magpie on this day in China. The Japanese legend is quite similar, and features 織り姫・おりひめ・*Orihime*, the weaver princess, and 彦星・ひこぼし・*Hikoboshi*, a cowherd. The two are married by the god of the heavens, and then later separated to either side of the Milky Way, or 天の川・あまのがわ・*Ama no gawa*. As in the Chinese legend, they can only meet on one night of the year, which is *Tanabata*.

This day has been celebrated in Japan since the Edo Period (1603 - 1867). On the night before *Tanabata*, people write wishes on strips of paper called 短冊・たんざく・*tanzaku*, and then hang them on bamboo poles, which are placed in the garden on the night of *Tanabata*. These are referred to as summer Christmas trees, and are often elaborately decorated. In addition, you can find these strips of paper and "trees" in many train stations around Japan during this time of the year.



Because of differences between the Lunar and Gregorian calendars, Tanabata festivals are held on both July 7th and August 7th.

The most famous festival is held in Sendai From the fifth to the eighth of August. Near Tokyo, in Hiratsuka, Kanagawa, the largest festival in the Kanto area is held for a few days around the seventh of July.

There is also a well-known song that is sung during Tanabata, 笹の葉・ささのは・*sasa no ha*, which means bamboo leaves. The lyrics can be found in the transcripts section above, and the song itself can be heard in the podcast.

