STAR FESTIVAL

Malang, Indonesia, Asia

Akihiko Tomita

International Astronomical Union
Wakayama University, Japan

The weaver princess, daughter of the sky king, (the Vega star) married a tough and great weaver (the Altair star). But, once married, the young couple became lazy. Angry, the king of heaven separated the two lovers with a granary, the Milky Way, and allowed the two to meet only once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh month.

This day, a flock of magpies made a bridge with their wings over the Milky Way so they could meet. This story is described in China during the 6th and 7th centuries. This story is believed to have reached Japan in the 8th century.
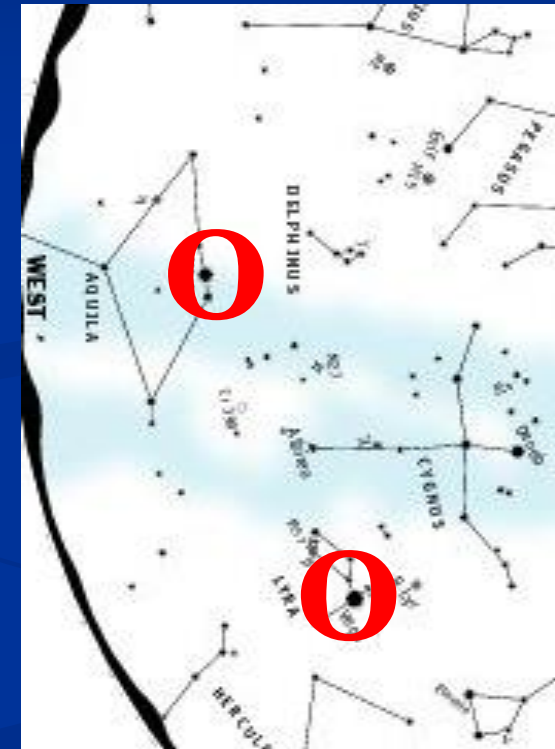
Princess Weaver became Orihime and the tough weaver became Hikoboshin in Japanese.

Bridge

Milky Way

At the Buddhist temple, Eng-An-Kiong, in Malang, Indonesia, statues of Orihime (right) and Hikoboshi (left) looked at each other over the Milky Way river.

People search for the two stars at night speculating that if the two love each other, Vega and Altair, they would undoubtedly meet on the Milky Way river.

The star festival is celebrated in Japan and in many countries in East Asia, including China and in each country in different ways.

In Japan, wishes are written on small pieces of paper and hung. In nurseries and schools, during the day, children prepare decorations and write their wishes. At night, children search for the two stars with their friends and parents.

In the past, Japan used the lunisolar calendar that marked the dates almost a month before the current Gregorian solar calendar (although it is different from one year to another) the traditional July 7 corresponds today around August 7, when in Japan the night sky is clear to observe the two bright and beautiful stars. Therefore, in some areas in Japan, people celebrate the festival on August 7 of today's calendar or on July 7 of the traditional lunisolar calendar, but which corresponds to a period of rain.

Many Thanks
for your attention !