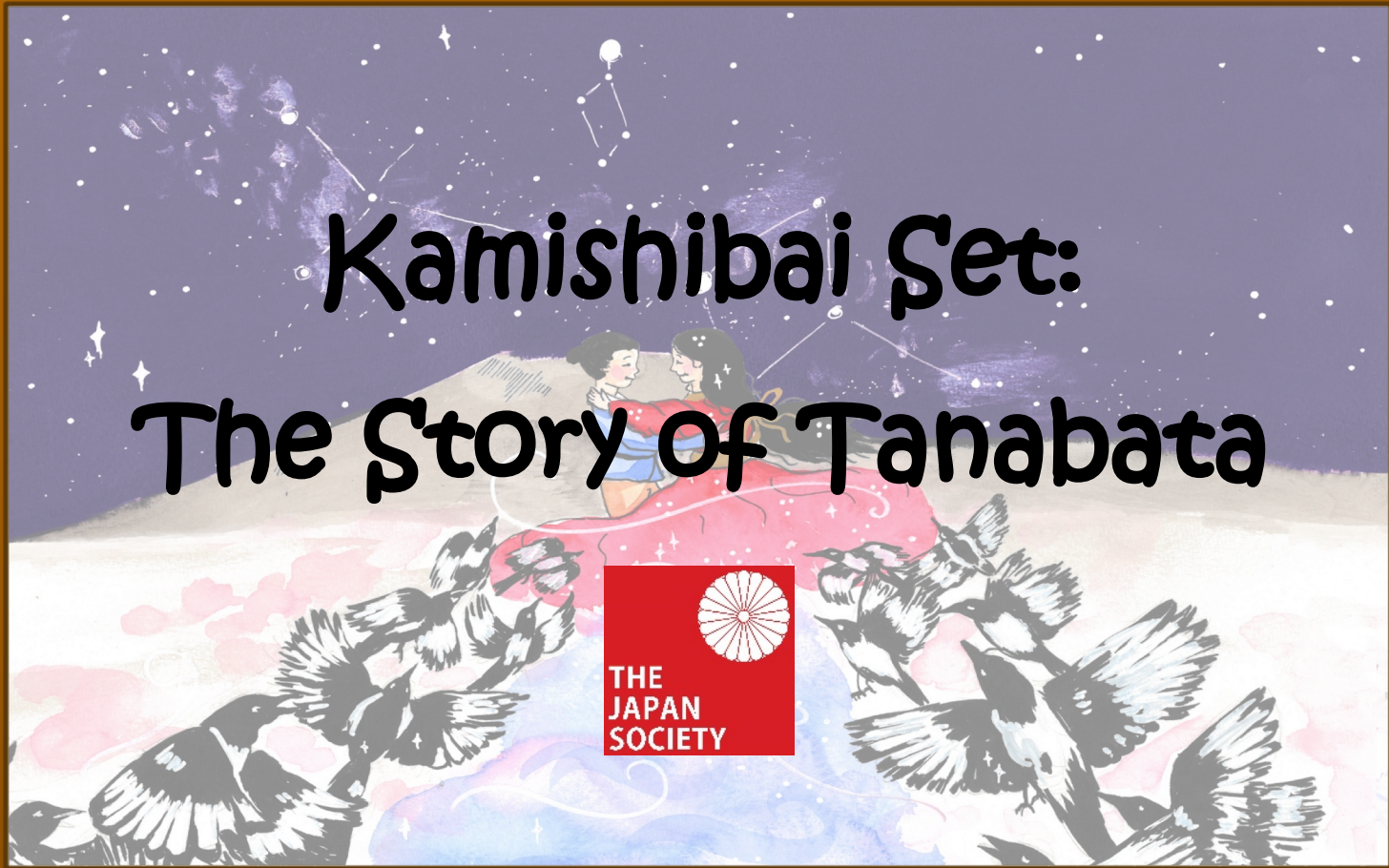


# Kamishibai Set: The Story of Tanabata



## How to Read Kamishibai

Kamishibai stories are read from the back of illustrated cards. However, you can also tell the story from memory or even improvise a little to add to the story.

Move the front card to the back after you finish one part of the story. The text now showing will be the story for the card that is at the front.

The text for the title image (card 1) goes on the back of the last card, so when showing the title image to the audience, you can read the corresponding text without turning the card around.

When you finish the story for card 1, move it to the back of the pack. The story for card 2 which is on the back of card 1 will now be at the back for you to read. Once you have told that part of the story, you move this card to the back and again the story for the card 3 will now be at the back for you. You continue this for each part of the story until the end.

**Remember, the text on the back of a card does not correspond to the illustration on its front!**

# THE STORY OF TANABATA































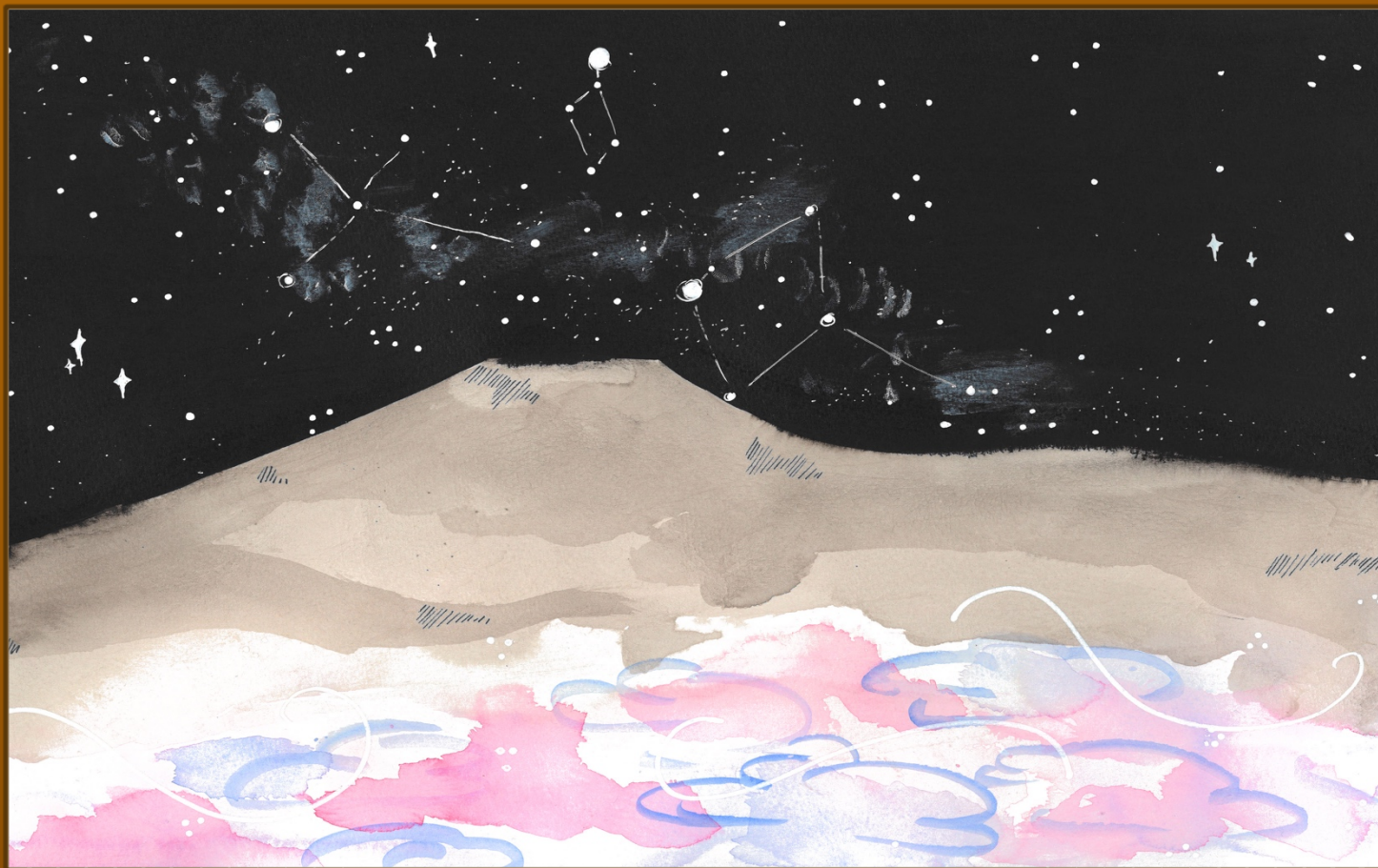












## Introduction

This is a story which arrived in Japan long ago.  
It originally came from China.

It explains the origins of a festival called **Tanabata**.  
(tah-nah-bah-tah)

In Japanese, Tanabata means 'evening of the seventh'.  
If you read the story, you will find out why this date is special.

## Pronunciation guide:

Tanabata: tah-nah-bah-tah  
Orihime: awe-ree-he-may  
Hikoboshi: he-co-bosh-ee  
Tentei: tent-ay



1.

This is a story from ancient China.

Long, long ago the Emperor of the Heavens, Tentei, had a daughter.  
Her name was Orihime, which means weaver princess.

2.

Just as her name suggests, Orihime was very good at weaving. She used the pattern of the clouds as inspiration for the designs of her beautiful cloth.

Tentei was delighted with her work, “These are indeed heavenly garments”, he said.

‘Ton karan, ton karan’.

Even today you can hear the sound of Orihime’s loom as she weaves cloth.



3.

On the other side of The Milky Way River, a young man heard the sound of Orihime's loom. He was a hard working boy who was a cattle herder.  
He was called Hikoboshi.

"What a beautiful sound, I wonder who is weaving," thought Hikoboshi.

4.

Tentei became concerned that Orihime was working too hard. He thought that she might be lonely, with nobody to talk to or help her with her work.

One day Tentei said, "I think that Orihime and Hikoboshi would get on well. If they get married, they will be able to work together, and will doubtless be even stronger than before. Orihime will be happy and they will make our life in the heavens much more prosperous."

And so...



5.

Orihime crossed the Milky Way River which divided the heavens to marry Hikoboshi.

Hikoboshi looked at the woman he had heard weaving and thought that he'd never seen anyone so beautiful.

Orihime looked at the strong, hard working young man and felt as though she'd been known him all her life.

The two gazed happily into each others eyes. Before they met, both Orihime and Hikoboshi had been all alone and had filled their days with work. However, now things were different. Together they laughed, together they sang, together they talked. It was as if the two of them were in a dream.

6.

They loved spending time together. From morning until evening, in the shade of the trees, Orihime and Hikoboshi would sit talking to each other. Orihime would comb her long black hair and nearby Hikoboshi would make music by blowing through a reed.

After only a short while, Orihime's fingers forgot how to weave and Hikoboshi's skilled hands forgot how to control cattle.



7.

Tentei despaired. He said “If this continues then all our heavenly garments will be rags and all the cattle will be left to roam freely and become sick.”

He was sad that Orihime and Hikoboshi’s great skills were lost. But the two young people continued to sit under the trees and showed no signs of doing any work.

8.

Tentei thought about what he should do and decided to take action.  
He decided that Orihime should return to her own side of the Milky Way River  
and she had no choice but to follow his orders.



9.

‘Ton karan, ton karan’, went Orihime’s loom.

Orihime began to weave again and Hikoboshi once again cared for the cattle. However, they were both overcome by sadness as a result of their separation.

“I long to meet with Hikoboshi, I long to hear his voice,” said Orihime

“I wonder what Orihime is doing. How happy I would be if I could just catch a glimpse of her,” thought Hikoboshi.

Orihime and Hikoboshi’s faces grew pale and they both gradually lost weight. Seeing this, Tentei felt sorry for them.

10.

So he announced, "Orihime and Hikoboshi, I will permit you to meet once a year."

He decided that the day would be the 7<sup>th</sup> July. So on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> July, Orihime and Hikoboshi came running from the east and from the west until they reached the banks of the Milky Way River.

11.

Suddenly a flock of magpies appeared from nowhere and spread out their wings to form a bridge. This happens every year and Orihime crosses the bridge to join Hikoboshi.

However, if it rains, it is said the Magpies don't come and Orihime is unable to cross the river to meet Hikoboshi. If this happens, the couple have to wait another year until they can be reunited.

The day on which Orihime and Hikoboshi meet has come to be known as Tanabata which means '7<sup>th</sup> evening'.



12.

On the evening of Tanabata if there is a clear night sky, why don't you try looking up.

If you do, you should be able to see the star of the Weaver Girl (Vega) and the star of the Herd Boy (Altair) shining brightly and happily next to each other.