

Cultural Analysis 文化解析

Valentine's Day (情人節), named after Saint Valentine, is the day of celebration for love and affection between lovers, and is held on February 14 each year. In the United States and many parts of the world, it is common to send cards, flowers, chocolates, and gifts on Valentine's Day. In Chinese culture, Valentines' Day is traditionally called **Qi-xi** (七夕), celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. According to a legend, the beautiful seventh daughter of the Goddess of Heaven escaped from heaven to look for fun. A young **cowherd** (牛郎) came across this beautiful girl and they fell in love with each other. The cowherd married her and they lived happily with their two children. When the Goddess found out about this, she was very upset and ordered her daughter to come back to heaven. The cowherd was very sad when his wife went back to heaven. Suddenly, his ox began to talk and told him that if he killed it, he would be able to go to heaven to find his wife. The cowherd cried and killed it and took his two children to heaven in search for his wife. The Goddess was very upset and formed a river between the two lovers, separating them forever. This river is known as the Milky Way. The cowherd takes care of their children from the other side of the Milky Way as he watches his wife weaving in the distance. But once a year, on the seventh night of the seventh month of the lunar calendar, magpies feel sympathetic to the couples and form a bridge across the Milky Way so that the lovers can get together. This bridge is known as "**the bridge of magpies**" (鵲橋). Many Chinese couples today celebrate both Western Valentine's Day and Chinese Valentine's Day, allowing them to celebrate Valentine's Day twice a year.

