

# 牛郎织女

## The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl

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每年的农历七月初七，是中国传统节日——七夕节，又被称为中国的情人节。说到七夕，大家都会想起牛郎织女的传说。这是一个从古流传至今的爱情故事，是最有名的中国民间爱情传说之一。

牛郎出生在一个农民家中，后来父母去世，他就跟着哥哥和嫂子一起生活。哥哥和嫂子对他非常不好，终于有一天要与他分家，最后只给了他一头牛和一辆破车，其他的都被哥哥和嫂子占了。从此牛郎就和老牛一起生活。一两年后，他们建成了一个小小的屋子，勉强可以过日子。可是除了那头不会说话的老牛以外，家里就只有牛郎一个人，日子过得相当寂寞。

有一天，老牛竟然开口说话了。牛郎这才知道，老牛原来是天上的金牛星。老牛对牛郎说：“今天你去碧莲池一趟，那里有些仙女在洗澡，她们的衣服都放在池边。你把池边红色那件衣服藏起来，穿红衣服的仙女就会成为你的妻子。”于是牛郎就按照老牛说的话，悄悄地躲在碧莲池旁，等待仙女们的到来。后来因为牛郎拿了红衣仙女的衣服，他们俩就认识了，也互相爱上了对方，这位穿红衣服的仙女就是织女，王母娘娘的第七个女儿。认识牛郎后织女就不再回天上，而是留在人间，做了牛郎的妻子。织女生了一男一女，一家人生活得很幸福。

可是幸福的时间并不长，织女偷偷在人间结婚生子的事被王母娘娘发现了，王母娘娘非常生气，亲自到人间把织女带回天上，牛郎和织女被分开了。牛郎想去追织女，可是他只是一个普通人，不能到天上去。就在牛郎发愁的时候，老牛又说话了：“你把我杀了，穿上我的皮，就能到天上去。”牛郎非常不愿意这样做，但是说不过它，又没有别的办法，就一边

流泪一边把亲如兄弟的老牛杀了。牛郎穿上老牛的皮，拉着自己的儿子和女儿一起飞到天上去追织女。

快要追到的时候，被王母娘娘发现了，她生气极了，从她的头上拿下一个金簪一划，一条天河出现了。牛郎和织女被分开在天河的两边，只能相对流泪。他们的爱情感动了喜鹊，千万只喜鹊飞来，搭成了鹊桥，让牛郎和织女在鹊桥上相会。王母娘娘对此也没有办法，只好允许两人在每年七月初七于鹊桥相会。

后来，每到农历七月初七，相传是牛郎和织女相会的日子，姑娘们就会来到月亮底下，抬头望星空，希望能看到他们一年一次的相会，期待自己也能有美满的婚姻，由此形成了七夕节。

现在，人们更多把七夕节看作是中国的情人节，在七夕节这一天，情侣们会互相送礼物，一起过情人节。

## 生词 Vocabulary

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### Proper Nouns

七夕节	Qīxījié	Qixi Festival
情人节	Qíng rénjié	Valentine's Day
王母娘娘	Wángmǔ niángniang	Goddess of the Heavens, Zhinü's mother

### Nouns

喜鹊	xǐque	magpie
农历	nónglì lunar	calendar
传说	chuánshuō	legend
屋子	wūzi	house
金簪	jīnzān	golden hairpin
日子	rìzi	day
对方	duìfāng	counterpart
婚姻	hūnyīn	marriage

### Verbs

流传	liúchuán	to spread
去世	qùshì	to pass away
占	zhàn	to occupy
藏	cáng	to hide
发愁	fāchóu	to worry
流泪	liúlèi	to weep
追	zhuī	to chase
相对	xiāngduì	to face; to pursue
搭	dā	to build
期待	qīdài	to expect

### Adjectives

寂寞	jìmò	lonely
美满	měimǎn	happy

## Adverbs

至今	zhìjīn	so far
从此	cóngcǐ	since then
勉强	miǎnqiǎng	barely
相当	xiāngdāng	quite
悄悄	qiāoqiāo	quietly
偷偷	tōutōu	secretly
亲自	qìnzì	personally

## 语法点 Grammar Points

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### 1. 起来 qǐlai

*verb.* to get up; directional complement indicating the beginning or continuity of an action or state

起来 (qǐlai) is a directional complement that can be used both literally and figuratively in Chinese.

In its literal form, 起来 (qǐlai) expresses upward movement and is similar to “up” or “to get up” in English, like when it is used in the common verb phrase, 站起来 (zhàn qǐlái; to stand up).

When following perception verbs such as 看 (kàn; look), 听 (tīng; listen) 闻 (wén; hear), 摸 (mō; touch), etc., 起来 (qǐlai) expresses that the subject seems like the succeeding adjective. When 起来 (qǐlai) is used this way, the below structure is usually followed:

Subject + Perception Verb + 起来 (qǐlai) + Adjective

For example:

这个计划听起来很复杂。

Zhège jìhuà tīng qǐlái hěn fùzá.

This plan sounds really complicated.

起来 (qǐlai) is also frequently used as a figurative directional complement in Chinese. In this usage, 起来 (qǐlai) is placed immediately after a verb to explain that an action or state has started or is continuing.

It is also common for 起来 (qǐlai) to appear following a verb to express that the verb should be initiated, as in the following example:

你把池边那件红色的衣服藏起来。

Nǐ bǎ chí biān nà jiàn hóngsè de yīfú cáng qǐlái.

Take the red clothes and hide them.

Let's look at another example:

检查人员来了，英文书全都收起来。

Jiǎnchá rényuán láile, Yīngwén shū quán dōu shōu qǐlái.

The inspector is coming, so the English books should be put away.

In both of these sentences, the objects, red clothes and English books, are followed by verbs that suggest the actions should be initiated upon them. By adding 起来 (qǐlai) after the verb, the speaker clarifies that these action should or will be put into motion.

## 2. V + 不 bù / 得 dé + 过 guò

**grammatical construction.** *to be unable to / able to surpass*

When a verb is followed directly by 得过 (dé guò), it indicates that the subject is able to surpass the object using that action. Likewise, when a verb is followed directly by 不过 (bùguò), it indicates that the subject is unable to surpass the object using that action. This grammar point typically occurs within the following sentence structure:

Subject (usually a person, animal or object) + Verb + 不 (bù) / 得 (dé) + 过 (guò) + Object (usually another person, animal or object)

Let's take a look at how V + 不过 is used in the following sentence:

牛郎非常不愿意这样做，但是说不过它。

Niúláng fēicháng bù yuànyì zhèyàng zuò, dànshì shuō bu guò tā.

Niulang didn't want to kill his cow, but the cow couldn't be persuaded.

Here, the subject, 牛郎 (Niúláng; the cowherd) is unable to win over the subject, 他, (tā; him or the cow) through the action, 说 (shuō; persuade).

Let's look at another example, this time using V + 得过:

在自然界，能打得过熊猫的动物不多。

Zài zìránjiè, néng dǎ déguò xióngmāo de dòngwù bù duō.

In the natural world, not many animals can beat pandas.

This sentence indicates that there are not many subjects, 动物 (dòngwù; animals), who are able to successfully surpass the object, 熊猫 (xióngmāo; pandas) using the action, 打 (dǎ; fight with or beat).

This grammar structure also frequently appears following 比 (bǐ, than), a verb commonly used to compare two things. When used with 比 (bǐ), 不 (bù) / 得 (dé) + 过 (guò) indicates that the subject is either able or unable to compete with, or comparable or incomparable to, the object.

For example:

年轻人记忆力好，我**比不过**你们。

Niánqīng rén jìyìlì hǎo, wǒ bǐ bùguò nǐmen.

Young people have such good memories, I'm no match for you all.

In the first clause of this sentence, the speaker provides context — that young people have good memories — in order to support the claim made in the second clause — that the speaker cannot surpass young peoples' ability to remember.

### 3. 于 yú

*prep.* at/in/on, from, for, towards, in comparison

于 (yú) is a preposition used to indicate at/in/on, from, for, towards, in comparison, and so on. It is mainly used in written Chinese and functions similarly to the prepositions 在 (zài), 从 (cóng; from), 对 (duì; for), 向 (xiàng; towards) and 比 (bǐ; than).

When used as 在 (zài), 于 (yú) works to link a verb to the time or place that it occurred. In this usage, it often occurs in the below structure:

Subject + Verb + 于 (yú) + Time or Place

Let's look at an example:

这家公司成立于1988年。

Zhè jiā gōngsī chénglì yú 1988 nián.

This company was established in 1988.

In this example, 于 (yú) is similar to the English word “in” and links the verb 成立 (chénglì; established) to the time that the verb occurred, that is, the year 1988.

Let's look at another sentence:

王母娘娘对此也没有办法，只好允许两人在每年七月初七于鹊桥相会。

Wángmǔniángniáng duì cǐ yě méiyǒu bànfǎ, zhǐhǎo yǔnxǔ liǎng rén zài měinián qī yuèchū qī yú quèqiáo xiānghuì.

The Goddess of Heaven couldn't do anything to stop them and had no choice but to allow the lovers to meet upon the bridge annually on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month.

In this sentence, 于 (yú) also functions as 在 (zài) and links the subject, 两人 (liǎng rén; two people), to the place, 鹊桥 (quèqiáo; magpie bridge) where the verb, 相会 (xiānghuì; meet), occurs. However, unlike in the first example, the verb 相会 (xiānghuì; meet) comes after the place in this sentence.

于 (yú) also commonly functions the same as the colloquial word 从 (cóng; from).

Let's look at another example:

我毕业于清华大学。

Wǒ bìyè yú Qīnghuá dàxué.

I graduated from Qinghua University.

In this sentence, 于 (yú) connects the verb, 毕业 (bìyè; graduate), with the object, 清华大学 (Qīnghuá Dàxué; Qinghua University) to express that the speaker graduated from Qinghua University.

Because 于 (yú) occurs frequently in written Chinese, it's worth understanding the numerous ways in which this preposition can be used.

## 测试 Quiz

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1. 牛郎的哥哥和嫂子把什么东西留给牛郎?
  - a. 一头猪
  - b. 一辆破车
  - c. 一件红衣服
  - d. 一套房子
  
2. 天河是怎么出现的?
  - a. 王母娘娘制造出来的
  - b. 喜鹊搭出来的
  - c. 牛郎发现的
  - d. 七月初七就会出现
  
3. 七夕节跟哪个节日差不多?
  - a. 春节
  - b. 清明节
  - c. 情人节
  - d. 中秋节
  
4. 根据文章内容，下列哪个说法是正确的?
  - a. 牛郎和织女有三个孩子
  - b. 喜鹊们帮助牛郎织女见了面
  - c. 牛郎骑着老牛飞上了天
  - d. 王母娘娘很高兴看到牛郎和织女结了婚
  
5. 姑娘们在七夕节那天的愿望是什么?
  - a. 得到一支金簪
  - b. 希望看到鹊桥
  - c. 希望自己的婚姻幸福
  - d. 得到一件红衣服

*Answer key on final page of PDF.*

## 拼音 Pinyin

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### Niúláng Zhīnǚ

Měi nián de nóngli qīyuè chū qī, shì Zhōngguó chuántǒng jiérì——Qīxījié, yòu bèi chēngwéi Zhōngguó de Qíng rénjié. Shuō dào qīxī, dàjiā dōu huì xiǎngqǐ Niúláng Zhīnǚ de chuánshuō. Zhè shì yīgè cóng gǔ liúchuán zhìjīn de àiqíng gùshi, shì zuì yǒumíng de Zhōngguó mínjiān àiqíng chuánshuō zhīyī.

Niúláng chūshēng zài yīgè nóngmín jiā zhōng, hòulái fùmǔ qùshì, tā jiù gēnzhe gēge hé sǎozǐ yīqǐ shēnghuó. Gēge hé sǎozǐ duì tā fēicháng bùhǎo, zhōngyú yǒu yī tiān yào yǔ tā fēnjiā, zuìhòu zhǐ gěi le tā yī tóu niú hé yī liàng pòchē, qítā de dōu bèi gēge hé sǎozǐ zhàn le. Cóngcǐ Niúláng jiù hé lǎoniú yīqǐ shēnghuó. Yī liǎng nián hòu, tāmen jiànchéng le yīgè xiǎoxiǎo de wūzi, miǎnqiǎng kěyǐ guò rìzi. Kěshì chúlè nàtóu bùhuì shuōhuà de lǎoniú yǐwài, jiāli jiù zhǐyǒu Niúláng yīgè rén, rìzi guòde xiāngdāng jì mò.

Yǒu yītiān, lǎoniú jìngrán kāikǒu shuōhuà le. Niúláng zhè cái zhīdào, lǎoniú yuánlái shì tiānshang de Jīnniúxīng. Lǎoniú duì Niúláng shuō: “jīntiān nǐ qù Bìliánchí yī tàng, nàli yǒu xiē xiānnǚ zài xǐzǎo, tāmen de yīfu dōu fàng zài chí biān. Nǐ bǎ chí biān hóngsè nàjiàn yīfu cáng qǐlai, chuān hóng yīfu de xiānnǚ jiù huì chéngwéi nǐde qīzi.” Yúshì Niúláng jiù ànzhào lǎoniú shuō de huà, qiāoqiāo de duǒ zài Bìliánchí páng, dēngdài xiānnǚmen de dào lái. Hòulái yīnwèi Niúláng nále hóngyī xiānnǚ de yīfu, tāmenliǎ jiù rènshi le, yě hùxiāng àishàng le duìfāng, zhè wèi chuān hóng yīfu de xiānnǚ jiùshì Zhīnǚ. Wángmǔniángniáng de dì-qī ge nǚ’er. Rènshi Niúláng hòu Zhīnǚ jiù bùzài huí tiānshang, érshì liúzài rénjiān, zuò le Niúláng de qīzi. Zhīnǚ shēng le yīnányīnǚ, yījiā rén shēnghuó de hěn xìngfú.

Kěshì xìngfú de shíjiān bìng bùcháng. Zhīnǚ tōutōu zài rénjiān jiéhūn shēngzǐ de shì bèi Wángmǔ niángniang fāxiàn le. Wángmǔ niángniang fēicháng shēngqì, qīnzì dào rénjiān bǎ Zhīnǚ dài huí tiānshàng, Niúláng hé Zhīnǚ bèi fēnkāi le. Niúláng xiǎng qù zhuī Zhīnǚ, kěshì tā zhǐshì yīgè pǔtōng rén, bùnéng dào tiānshàng qù. Jiù zài Niúláng fāchóu de shíhou, lǎoniú yòu shuōhuà le: “Nǐ bǎ wǒ shā le, chuānshàng wǒ de pí, jiù néng dào tiānshàng qù le.” Niúláng fēicháng bù yuànyì zhèyàng zuò, dànshì shuō bùguò tā, yòu méiyǒu biéde bànfǎ, jiù yībiān liúlèi yībiān bǎ qī rú xiōngdì de lǎoniú shā le. Niúláng chuānshàng lǎoniú de pí, lāzhe zìjǐ de érzi hé nǚér yīqǐ fēidào tiānshàng qù zhuī Zhīnǚ.

Kuàiyào zhuīdào de shíhou, bèi Wángmǔ niángniang fāxiàn le, tā shēngqì jí le, cóng tā de tóushàng náxià yīgè jīnzān yī huá, yītiáo tiānhé chūxiàn le. Niúláng hé Zhīnǚ bèi fēnkāi zài tiānhé de liǎngbiān, zhǐnéng xiāngduì liúlèi. Tāmen de àiqíng gǎndòng le xǐque, qiānwàn zhī xǐque fēilái, dāchéng le quèqiáo, ràng Niúláng hé Zhīnǚ zài quèqiáo shàng xiānghuì. Wángmǔ niángniang duì cǐ yě méiyǒu bànfǎ, zhǐhǎo yǔnxǔ liǎngrén zài měinián qīyuè chūqī yú quèqiáo xiānghuì.

Hòulái, měi dào nónglì qīyuè chūqī, xiāngchuán shì Niúláng hé Zhīnǚ xiānghuì de rìzi, gūniang men jiù huì láidào yuèliang dǐxia, táitóu wàng xīngkōng, xīwàng néng kàndào tāmen yīnián yīcì de xiānghuì, qīdài zìjǐ yě néng yǒu měimǎn de hūnyīn, yóucǐ xíngchéng le Qīxījié.

Xiànzài, rénmen gèngduō bǎ Qīxījié kànzuò shì zhōngguó de Qíng rénjié.

### **The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl**

The seventh day of the seventh lunar month is a traditional Chinese holiday called Double Seven Festival, also known as Chinese Valentine's Day. When people think of this holiday, the first thing that comes to mind is the legend of the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl. This legend is a traditional love story passed down from ancient times, and it is also one of the most famous romantic folktales in China.

Niulang was born into a family of farmers and, after his parents passed away, he went to live with his older brother and sister-in-law who treated him terribly. One day, they wanted to get rid of him, so they took all of their family's belongings, leaving Niulang with nothing but a cow and run-down cart. From then on, Niulang and his cow lived together. After a few years, they built a small house and did their best to survive. But, aside from the cow who couldn't say much, Niulang was completely alone and spent his days feeling very lonely.

One day, the cow suddenly opened his mouth to speak. It was at that moment that Niulang realized that this cow was actually a manifestation of the constellation Taurus. The cow said to Niulang, "Today, go to the green lotus pond. There are fairy maidens who will leave their clothes at the edge of the pond when they bathe. Take the red clothes and hide them. The fairy who owns the red clothes will become your wife." As such, Niulang did as the cow said and snuck over to hide beside the green lotus pond, waiting for the fairy maidens to arrive. Afterwards, because he had stolen her clothes, Niulang met the red-clothed fairy, named Zhinü, who was the seventh of the Goddess of Heaven's daughters, and the two of them fell in love. After meeting Niulang, Zhinü decided not to return to the heavens and instead she stayed in the human world to become Niulang's wife. She gave birth to two babies, a boy and a girl, and their family lived together happily.

The family's good fortune didn't last long, however. Zhinü's secret marriage in the human world was discovered by her mother, the Goddess of Heaven, who personally visited the Earth and forced Zhinü to return to the heavens.

Therefore, the couple was separated. Niulang was willing to do anything possible to get his wife back, but he was just an ordinary man who couldn't travel to the heavens. As he was fretting about what to do, his cow said to him, "Kill me and wear my skin so that you'll be able to enter the heavens." Niulang didn't want to kill his cow, but the cow couldn't be persuaded and there wasn't another solution, so Niulang wept as he slaughtered his beloved companion. Wearing the cow's skin as his own, Niulang took his son and daughter and soared into the heavens to find Zhinü.

Just as they had almost reached Zhinü, the Goddess of Heaven discovered Niulang and was so angry that she took a gold pin from her hair and sliced open the sky, creating the Milky Way. Niulang and Zhinü were separated, kept apart by this celestial river, and they could only weep. Touched by Niulang and Zhinü's love, millions of magpies flew up into the heavens to form a bridge where the lovers could meet together. The Goddess of Heaven couldn't do anything to stop them and had no choice but to allow the lovers to meet upon the bridge annually on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month.

Afterwards, the seventh day of the seventh lunar month became a day for celebrating Niulang and Zhinü's love. On this day, girls in ancient times would stand under the moonlight gazing at the stars, hoping to catch a glimpse of the couple's annual meeting while hoping that they themselves could marry soon. This tradition eventually formed the Double Seven Holiday.

Nowadays, most people consider the Double Seven Holiday to be Chinese Valentine's Day, a day when couples exchange gifts and celebrate their love together.

Quiz Answer Key:

1. b 2. a 3. c 4. b 5. c



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