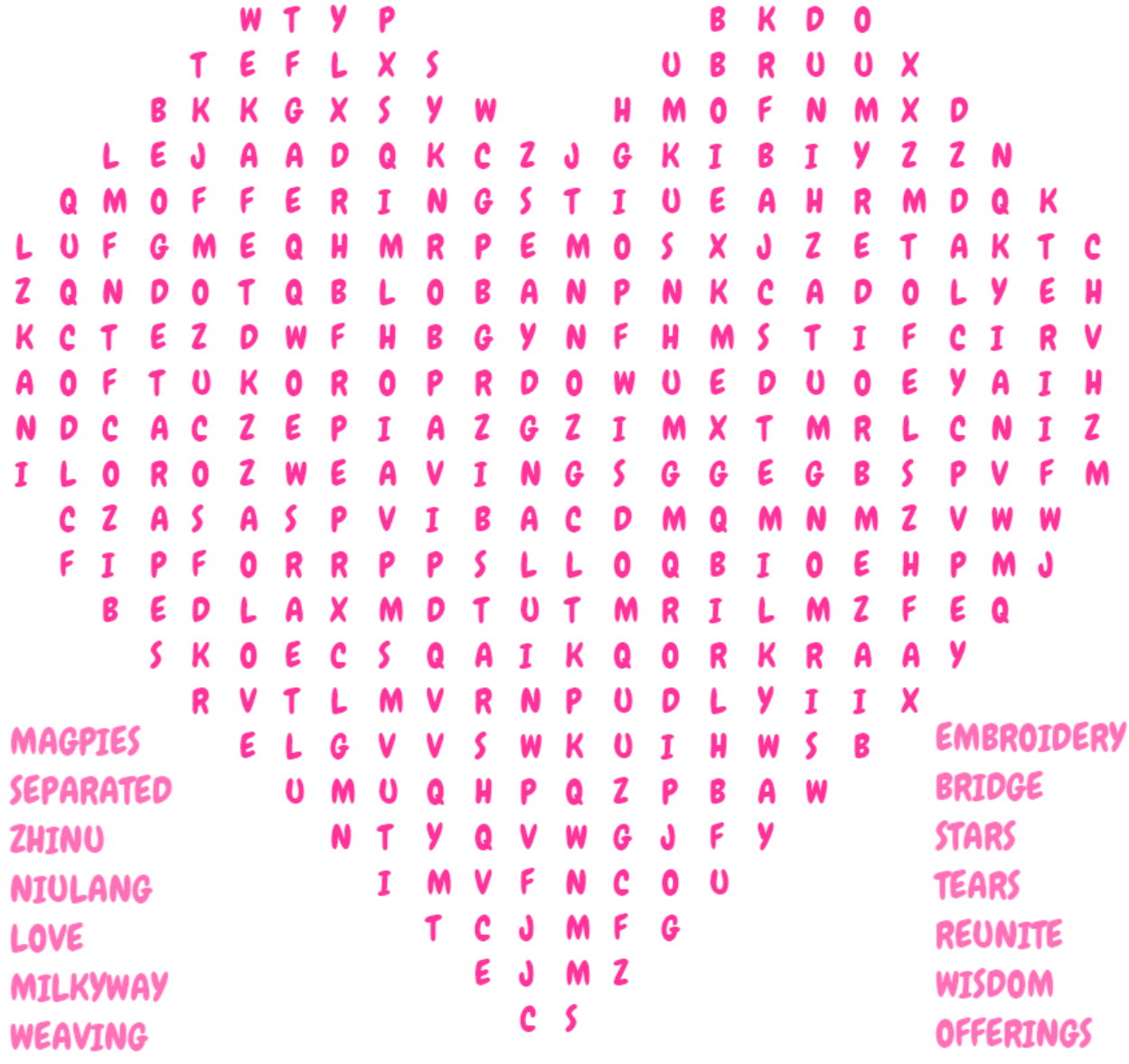
Qixi - Chinese Valentine's Day

Qīxī

Chinese Valentine's Day (七夕) originates from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD220) and falls on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. This year it is celebrated on August 17th.

As with many traditions there is a legend behind the festival. Watch this video to hear the story.

Although it has been celebrated for more than 2000 years, there have been some changes in the way it is observed. In the past girls would take part in embroidering and weaving competitions to show their skills at needlework (and their potential as good wives). Depending on the region, girls would also pray to Zhinü for skills, wisdom and a good husband or make offerings of fruit and pastries to her as well as burning paper items as offerings.

Nowadays the festival has been commercialised and influenced by the West so that couples often buy chocolate, flowers and gifts for each other. It is still believed by some of the older generation that if it rains on Qīxī that's because to Zhinü and Niulang are crying at being reunited or separated again.

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