

THE TREE OF LIFE



In the summer, people across Japan write their wishes for the year on small strips of paper (called *tanzaku*) and tie them to bamboo branches. *Tanabata*, or the ‘Star Festival’, is believed to be a 2,000-year old tradition to celebrate the day when Orihime and Hikoboshi, two lovers driven apart, are able to be together.

At the same time, people sit in solitary confinement on Japan’s notoriously secretive death row. At the end of 2016, at least 141 people were under the sentence of death by hanging. As a family member, you’re unlikely to find out your loved one has been executed until afterwards. One of Amnesty’s long term cases, Matsumoto Kenji, has been on death row for 25 years and suffers from a delusional disorder as a result of his prolonged detention.

In the spirit of love and hope for a better future, we invite you to write your own wish on a *tanzaku*, and attach it to one of the trees. You can write your own message about the death penalty in Japan, or you could use one of the following:

- I wish for a moratorium on executions in Japan
- I wish for Japan to commute Matsumoto Kenji’s death sentence
- I wish Japan would end solitary confinement
- I wish for an abolition of the death penalty in Japan

ACTION REQUEST

- If you would like to have a set of tags sent to your local group for an event or action, please contact Rhiannon.griffiths@amnesty.org.uk for further details.
- Once completed, please send the completed tags to:
Michael Quinn, Amnesty International UK, the Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London Ec2A 3EA
- To sign up to updates go to <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/death-penalty-project>