

The Ancient Israelites and the Islands of Japan

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The ancient Israelites were Semitic inhabitants in the land of Canaan, the west of modern Jordan. In the Hebrew Bible, they are referred to as direct descendants of any of the sons of the patriarch Jacob, a.k.a. Israel (*"He who struggles with God"*). Jacob's twelve sons (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin) became the twelve tribes forming the Israeli kingdom. After the death of King Solomon in circa 931 BCE, Israel was split into two; the southern Kingdom of Judah (the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) and the northern Kingdom of Israel (the other ten tribes).

The ten tribes were said to have been deported and exiled from the Kingdom of Israel after its conquest by the Assyrian Empire in circa 722 BCE. [Samaritans](#) claim they are descendants of the northern Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who survived the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel, but the exact trace of the ten tribes after the exile is still unknown (i.e., the *"Ten Lost Tribes"*). The Kingdom of Judah, on the other hand, remained as an independent state until 586 BCE when it was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar II's Babylonian Empire, which broke through Jerusalem's walls and destroyed Solomon's Temple. Most of the elite in Judah were taken into captivity in Babylon. They returned to Judah and rebuilt the Temple after the Persian Achaemenid Empire conquered Babylonia in 539 BCE.

In 1878, Nicholas McLeod, a Scottish missionary in Japan, published a book titled *"Epitome of the Ancient History of Japan,"* in which he hypothesized that the Japanese people included descendants of the ancient Israelites and that they formed the aristocracy and traditional priestly castes in the country. Many authors have followed McLeod in speculating about parallels between Japanese and Israelite rituals, culture and language in an attempt to support the hypothesis. Below are major similarities between the two.

1. Language

Japanese [Katakana](#) is surprisingly similar to Hebrew alphabet.

	k	k	q	th	n	f	i	w	h	s	ts	'
Hebrew	ק	ך	ך	ח	נ	פ	י	ו	ה	ס	צ	ע
Japanese	コ	ク	カ	ト	ノ	フ	レ	ワ	ハ	サ	ソ	ヒ
	ko	ku	ka	to	no	fu	re	wa	ha	sa	so	hi

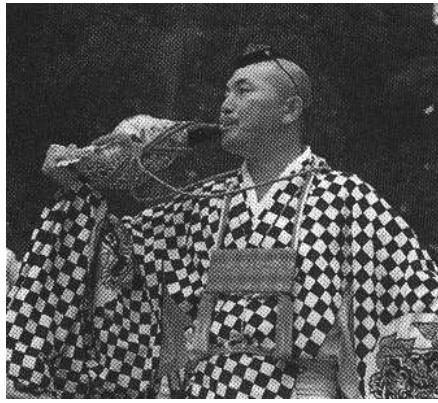
	Group B					
	r	n	w	z	k	a
Hebrew	ר	נ	ו	ז	כ	א
Hebrew with vocalic marks	רַ	נַ	וַ	זַ	כַּ	אַ
Japanese	ラ	ナ	ウ	ソ	ケ	ア
	ra	na	u	so	ke	a

	Group C						
	'	ts	sh	m'	g	i	f'
Hebrew	ע	ץ	ש	מ	ג	י	פ
Japanese	ヒ	ス	シ	ミ	ク	イ	フ
	hi	su	shi	mi	ku	i	fu

2. Religion

Left: [Yamabushi](#) blowing [Horagai](#)
(wearing [Tokin](#) on the foreheads)

Right: Jews blowing [Shofar](#)
(wearing [Tefillin](#) on the foreheads)



[Tengu](#) statue holding [Toranomaki](#) ([Torah](#)?)



Left: [Torii](#) at shrine gates
(Left-Bottom: Nagasaki in 1945)

Right: Blood painted on door frames

Exodus 12:7

Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

Exodus 12:13

The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.



Left: [Mikoshi](#)

Right: [Ark of the Covenant](#)



3. Symbol

Left: [Imperial 16-Petal Chrysanth](#)

Right: [Herod's Gate](#)
(with a 16-petal symbol)



Left: [Vysoka synagoga](#)
(with a 16-petal symbol)

Right: [Ishtar Gate](#)
(with 16-petal symbols)



4. Bible

Jeremiah 16

13: So I will throw you out of this land into a land neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.

Isaiah 24

15: Therefore in **the east** give glory to the Lord; exalt the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, in **the islands of the sea**.

16: From **the ends of the earth** we hear singing: "Glory to the Righteous One." But I said, "I waste away, I waste away! Woe to me! The treacherous betray! With treachery the treacherous betray!"

Isaiah 41

1: Be silent before me, you **islands**! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment.

2: Who has stirred up one from **the east**, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow.

3: He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before.

4: Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the

Lord—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.

5: The **islands** have seen it and fear; **the ends of the earth** tremble. They approach and come forward;
6: they help each other and say to their companions, “Be strong!”

7: The metalworker encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer spurs on the one who strikes the anvil. One says of the welding, “It is good.” The other nails down the idol so it will not topple.

8: But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend,

9: I took you from **the ends of the earth**, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

10: So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

(snip)

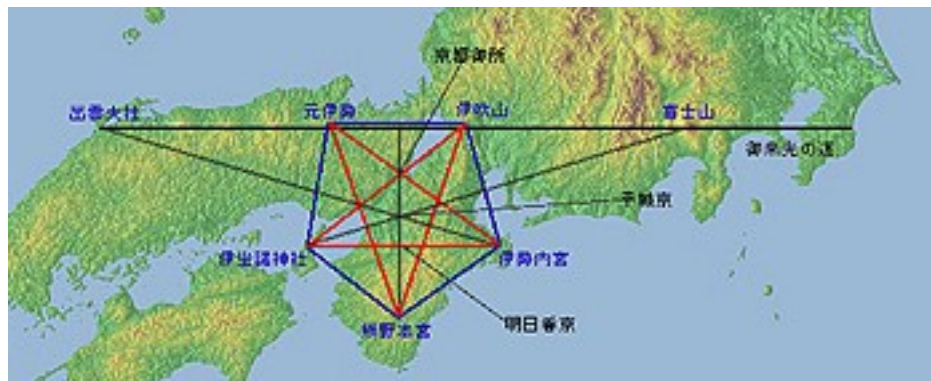
25: I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes—one from **the rising sun** who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay.

Isaiah 43

5: Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from **the east** and gather you from the west.

6: I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from **afar** and my daughters from **the ends of the earth**—

7: everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.



Pentagram centered at [Heian-kyo](#) (meaning “peaceful capital”).
[Jerusalem also means “The City of Peace”](#)