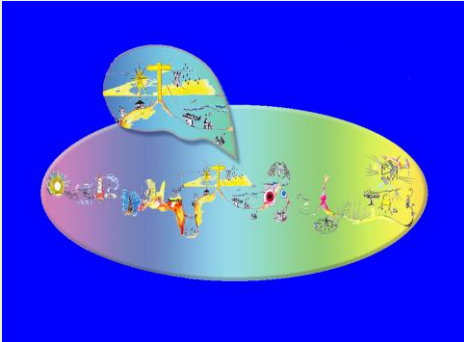


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We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testament) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!

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HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

【QUEST OF JAPANESE ORIGINE】

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come. When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Saviour, the hope of all the earth and of the farthest seas, who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations. Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth of joy.

You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with corn, for so you have ordained it. You drench its farrings and level its ridges; You soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with corn; they shout for joy and sing.

PSALM 65.

You saw him assemble a company which was different and peaceful. They are the ten tribes that were taken into exile in the days of King Hoshea, whom King Shalmaneser of Assyria made captive. Carrying them off beyond the river Euphrates, he deported them to a foreign country. But then they resolved to leave behind the gentile population and go to a more distant region never yet inhabited, and there at least to be obedient to their laws, which in their own country they had failed to keep. As they passed through the narrow passages of the Euphrates, the Most High performed miracles for them, halting the flow of the river until they had crossed over. Their long journey through that region called Arzareth took a year and a half.

2ESDRAS 13:39-45.

The only true God of the nations is the God of Israel, who created the earth and heaven, and is in control. The Psalm quoted at the beginning is a praising hymn of His goodness. Ultimately and universally all nations will know God's mighty acts in creation and redemption, when Israel will finally, and peacefully be restored in the promised land, and all creation will rejoice in His abundance. In the end of times God will claim all the nations as His own after cutting off all those who oppose Him and His people Israel, as Isaiah put it: ***'In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea...he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.'*** (Is.11:11-12).

Beyond the historical return from Assyrian and Babylonian exile, the re-gathering of Israel to the promised land from a worldwide dispersion is for the present beginning to take place exactly as Isaiah prophesied. This immigration involves that of the descendants of the so-called "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel". This theory claims that the ten tribes that had consisted of the northern kingdom of Israel were scattered to the ends of the earth and did not come back to Israel. Thus, the theory claims that the lost tribes should be found out to make the present Israel complete with twelve tribes because the present Israel is made up of only two tribes; Judah and Benjamin. Although this theory is not scriptural and the fact is that there is NO LOST TRIBE, it is undeniably true that a considerable number of Israelites had wandered around all over the world and finally settled wherever they arrived in ancient times. So, all of them need to be repatriated to the promised land.

Having made this point clear, we would like to explore the interesting signature of God. God seems to have placed His hands upon every single nation, tribe, clan, family, or land, as His own in ancient times, even though the nations of the world did not know the fact that ***'the hope of all the ends of the earth and the farthest seas'*** lay in Him alone. After the days of King Solomon, the united Davidic kingdom formed by the twelve tribes of Israel split up into two kingdoms: the Southern Kingdom of Judah consisting of two tribes and the Northern Kingdom of Israel consisting of ten tribes. The latter fell to the Assyrians in 721BCE and the people were scattered over the world because God's judgment fell on her persistent rebellion against Him from the start of the kingdom, from King Jeroboam to King Hoshea.

The first king of Israel, Jeroboam planted evil and enticed the nation away from God by the worship of two golden calves. Among all twenty kings of Israel, none turned the people back to the Lord. However, the Scripture makes it clear that while apostasy continued in the Northern Kingdom despite many prophets' warnings, the godly people in Israel slipped into Judah, the Southern Kingdom and settled there under the protection of the kings of Judah at the very early stage of the divided kingdoms. These immigrants were a significant numbers. After the complete destruction of Samaria, the capital of Israel, the Northern Kingdom disappeared from history, however, the people who had settled in Judah kept the identity of the ten tribes alive. Only those who persistently followed idolatry in the Northern Kingdom over a long period of two hundred and ten years, ignoring any chance to turn to the true God by means of immigration to the Southern Kingdom, were destroyed, enslaved, or scattered.

The Assyrian policy towards conquered lands was to deport the majority of the most influential inhabitants and to import leading Assyrians to take their places: ***'In King Hezekiah's fourth year, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it... Samaria was captured... The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River, and in towns of the Medes. This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant —all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out'*** (2Ki.18:9-12). Sargon, the king of Assyria brought foreigners from several places; northeast Babylon, Aram on the Orontes River,

Sipper on the Euphrates River and so on, and settled them in the towns of the Northern kingdom, which was now called the Assyrian province of Samaria: ***'The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites'*** (2Ki.17:24). As a result, so-called 'Samaritans', the racially mixed half-Jews between Israelites and other ancient Near East people came into being. At the same time, there is a great possibility that among the scattered Israelites, some wandered eastwards beyond the Euphrates River to look for places to settle in.

Among many, there is an interesting passage that lends support to this idea in "*the Second Book of Esdras*" in Apocrypha. This book contains a core of seven visions and the passage presented at the beginning of this letter is part of the sixth vision. ***'Arzareth'*** in the passage is a shortened transliteration of Hebrew for 'eretz aheth', i.e., 'another land' or 'eretz aherith', i.e., 'the end of land (most far away land)', which is taken from Deuteronomy 29:28: ***'In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now'*** (Line added). This verse implies that such a strict punishment upon the Northern Kingdom was the Lord's plan and although God's plans are often unfathomable and unacceptable, this verse's unusual significance might be confirmed by the supplementary verse that followed: ***'The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may follow all the words of this law'***. This appears to suggest that concerning this issue, there is yet more to be revealed in the future.

It has been said for a considerable time that the Japanese religion and culture have deeply been rooted in and influenced by the ancient Israel. Under the term, 'Search for the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel', a worldwide research has enthusiastically been conducted by "Amishav", an organization in Jerusalem. Several tribes in different countries have already been admitted as Israelis and some of them have immigrated to Israel while many await their repatriation. The places mentioned in 2Ki.18:11 are located in today's Kurdistan, where some groups of deported Jews, who were an immense multitude according to Josephus, a Jewish historian in the first century CE, first emigrated. Then they moved to the east along the Silk Road. It is said that there are many descendants from the tribes of Joseph in Afghanistan, who call themselves "Bani-Israel", i.e., 'children of Israel', living in remote mountains or secluded regions. Their ways of life and characteristics reveal their origin as ancient tribes of Israel, though they are devout Muslims.

"Pathans" in Afghanistan and Pakistan, are also thought to be Jews and they are observing many ancient Jewish traditions and customs, one of which is the wearing of "Tefilin (Phylactery)", a small box containing a verse of the Torah, although they are devout Muslims today. In "Kashmir" in India and Nepal there are also people regarding themselves as descendants from the ancient Israel, whose names and places' names indicate an Israeli origin.

Arimasa Kubo, a Japanese Christian who has been investigating the Japanese origin claims, state that 'Many of the traditional ceremonies in Japan and their DNA indicate that the Lost Tribes of Israel came to ancient Japan', and he puts it: 'In Kashmir there is a strange legend which says that Jesus did not die on the cross but in his search for the Ten Tribes reached the Kashmir valley and lived there until his death. They even point to his grave in Kashmir. This is very much like a legend which exists in Japan (Herai village, present Shingou village in Aomori prefecture), where they also have the legend that Jesus came to Japan and died there. They even point to his grave. It seems that sometimes the legend of the coming of Jesus and his tomb is born where the Ten Tribes are said to come. In Kashmir, there is another strange tradition of a small community next to the Wallar Link who point out the grave of Moses. There is yet another tradition in connection with King Solomon according to which even King Solomon reached the Kashmir Valley and through his wisdom aided the people of Kashmir by successfully regulating the Jalum river. This tradition is also connected to a place called Solomon's throne which is situated above the capital of Kashmir, Srinagar. Isn't it strange and fascinating that there are historical and even folkloristic tales of ancient Israeli heroes in these strange and exotic places? These also strangely resemble the legends of

Japan. There is so called the grave of Moses on Mt. Houdatsu in Ishikawa prefecture, Japan, and also a legend says that many secret treasures of Solomon are kept in Mt. Tsurugi in Shikoku, Japan. What is this phenomenon?' (www5.ocn.ne.jp/~magi9/isracam2.htm).

There are also "the Menashe (Shinlung) tribe" that intermarried with the Chinese but who is also conscious of their Israeli ancestry in the mountainous region bordering between India and Myanmar. Among them, after leaving Afghanistan, some migrated further eastwards up to the Tibetan-Chinese border. Along the Wei River they reached near Kaifeng in central China and settled there. Escaping slavery under the Chinese regime, some Menashe people survived in caves in poverty and later reached the area in Myanmar through Thailand. There is "the Chiang-Min tribe" in the mountainous area of northwest China, near the border of Tibet, who still keep their ancestral faith and customs despite the strong influence of intermarriage with Chinese.

All these places where the ancient Israelites settled are along the Silk Road and its destination is Japan. For the Israelites who successfully traded in the days of King Solomon in the 10th century BCE, the existence of a sea between China and Japan caused no problem at all. As the passage of 2Esdras quoted at the beginning indicates, the rest of those Israelites form the Northern Kingdom undoubtedly seem to have finally settled in Japan. Arimasa Kubo exhibits an interesting account by a German medical doctor who stayed in Japan during 1690-1693 CE, after travelling various countries in the world: 'In the book Kaempher states that the Japanese language, customs and religion are much different from the ones of the Chinese or the Koreans, and that the main race of the Japanese are not derived from the Chinese or Koreans but rather a tribe from the area of Babylon came to Japan and became the main race of the Japanese. He wrote: "The Japanese must be of a tribe who emigrated directly from the area of Babylon." The area of Babylon is the Middle East where there was the Assyrian Empire which the Ten Tribes of Israel were exiled to. Kaempher also states: "The appearance of the Japanese is so different according to regions in Japan that we can clearly distinguish. This proves that the Japanese are formed through the process that several tribes were added to a basic nation. The most noble, old lineage family and "daimyo", feudal lords, and high officials are generally intelligent, elegant in appearance than others, full of dignity, having higher nose and somewhat look European. The people in the region of Satsuma, Oosumi, and Hyuga are middle in the height, but strong and manly in language and ability...." And he states that there are differences in appearance and nature according to the peoples of various parts of Japan. He also states: "As for the roots of the Japanese and their origin, it seems that we should admit the Japanese are independent from others and did not derived from the Chinese."'

He also shares another account of Rabbi Marvin Tokayer about a chief rabbi's surprise reaction to the way of "Shinto", a traditional Japanese religion: 'Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, who used to live in Japan, tells a story about when the chief rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Goren, once visited Japan. Chief rabbi Goren was very curious and fascinated with Japan and enjoyed his stay very much. He said that he wanted to learn the essence of Japanese Shinto religion, and he attended for a while a lecture at Kokugakuin University which is a Shinto university in Tokyo. At the lecture, the chief rabbi asked the lecturer a question about how to guard Shinto grand shrine, that is, where the guards stand, how they patrol, in what turn they patrol the places, and how to shift the guards. Hearing the answer, Rabbi Goren was very surprised and said, "Unbelievable." Turning his face pale, he said to Rabbi Tokayer who was young in those days, "Do you understand the importance of what the Shinto lecturer said?" Then he added, "Read the Mishnah, and you will know why I was so surprised to hear it." The Mishnah, the teachings of ancient Jewish scholars, has an explanation on how the ancient temple of Jerusalem had been guarded. As a matter of fact, Shinto's way of guarding, patrolling, and shifting guards at shrine is just the same as the one which had been done at the ancient temple of Jerusalem. The temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E. and not yet rebuilt. How could the way of guarding at Japanese Shinto shrine be the same as the one at the temple of ancient Israel? Chief rabbi's word "Unbelievable" is a natural response.' (www5.ocn.ne.jp/~magi9/isracam3.htm). The quest for the Japanese origin in terms of biblical, genealogical and genetic evidence continues.