

# Japanese Summer Festivals Are Linked to Hebrew Old Testament Traditions!



In midsummer Japan holds public festivals which are called in Japanese *Omatsuri*. One of the ceremonies in the festival is when men dressed in traditional Japanese garments carry an ornamental box that sits on two poles. The box is called *Omikoshi*. They carry the *Omikoshi* passing spectators while bouncing it up and down as everybody chants, “*Wa shoi! Wa shoi! wa shoi! ...*” over and over! You can hear it in the YouTube below:

This word doesn't even sound like a typical Japanese word. Most Japanese people do not know what it means. I heard it's from Hebrew meaning “Let's carry”



In the photos, you can see four men carrying the *Omikoshi* before the crowd.

On Aug. 5, 2006 while hitchhiking to downtown Niigata, a young lady named Manami offered me a ride. She said that she worked in an care center for the elderly and today they were having a festival. She invited me to come. And so I accepted her invitation because my purpose in the first place was to go out to meet people and make new friends.

From the website [Israelites Came To Ancient Japan](#) I knew that the *Omikoshi* in the festival is somewhat similar to the Ark of the Covenant of God as described in the Old Testament of the Bible. It was my first opportunity to photograph it since reading the web page. The photograph of the *Omikoshi* below was taken in the elderly care center just before the start of the festival.



**Omikoshi**

The second character from the left of the ideograph is the Chinese / Japanese word for “God”. And so it would certainly seem safe to conclude that the

Omikoshi has its roots in religious tradition. Most Japanese people today say they are non-religious, but you should see and hear them during festival time when men carry the Omikoshi through a crowd of spectators! They lean it over so the spectators can touch it and thereby get a "blessing!"

What the Bible says about the Ark of the Covenant:

1 Chronicles 15:25 So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obededom **with joy**.

26 And it came to pass, when God helped **the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD**, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.

27 And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that **bare the ark**, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen.

28 Thus all Israel brought up the **ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting**, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

The Bible also says that the Ark was supported by two poles or "staves".

Exodus 25:10 And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

11 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

12 And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it.

13 And thou shalt make **staves of shittim wood**, and overlay them with gold.

14 And thou **shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them**.

When you hear the people shout "wa shoi!" over and over in a joyful tone of voice, I don't see how anybody can say that the tradition of the Omikoshi is not related to the time when "David, and the elders of Israel ... went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obededom **with joy**." Does this indicate that the Japanese are descendants of the ancient Hebrews? It certainly seems so to me. I think at least some of them are. At the very least I think the Shinto religion on which the Omikoshi is based has its roots in Judaism.

At the festival I met a Japanese Christian lady. I asked her if she realized that the Omikoshi is a tradition that came from the children of Israel as described in the Old Testament. She replied that she hasn't been a believer

that long and didn't know. I encouraged her to read her Bible.



Miss Manami, the lady who picked me up and took me to the festival.



Man beating a drum called taiko in Japanese.  
In the back of him is the elevated stage that  
Manami was standing on.



A little girl dressed in a tradition robe  
called a *yukata*. This is different, (and  
certainly less expensive!) than a kimono.