

Question: What Is the Origin of the Swastika?

by [N.S. Gill](#)

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- "Does anyone know where the Swastika symbol originates from. Was it used in Sumeria 3000 B.C.?"
- Was it really once considered to be the symbol of Christ?????"

HUSEY from the Ancient/Classical History Forum.

Answer: The swastika is actually an ancient symbol, but its origin is hard to define.

In "The Swastika," *Folklore*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Dec., 1944), pp. 167-168, W.

G. V. Balchin says the word swastika is of Sanskrit origin and the symbol is one of good luck or a charm or a religious symbol (the last, among the Jains and Buddhists) that goes back to at least the [Bronze Age](#). It appears in various parts of the ancient and modern world. This article mentions Christians did, indeed, consider the swastika for their symbol.

In response to this forum question about the origins of the swastika, other forum members have researched the historically popular symbol now associated almost exclusively with the much-hated Nazis and Hitler. Here is the swastika lore they found.

1. *One popular notion holds that it is a very old solar symbol. Relatedly, recent scholarship with ancient Indian and Vedic documents reveals a legend concerning a mythical demonic semi-deity who was obsessed with world conquest and the destruction of subject people/races. His name is difficult to translate from Sanskrit, but it's phonetic rendering into English sounds something like "Putz."*

~ Mizta Bumpy (HERRBUMPY)

2. *I just know that many symbols (as well as philosophers like Nietzsche, etc.) were misunderstood / mistreated / badly-used by Nazis. One of them was the swastika, which, I think, symbolized the four powers of nature. I think it was found in other ancient lands too, apart from Sumeria.*

The swastika resembles a lot the "Greek" cross in its symmetry, if you take out those little "wings" from the swastika. That's the only connection I can find with Christianity. Of course many pre-Christian symbols were redefined and "used" by Christians of all times (with varying success).

~ APOLLODOROS

3. The swastika is indeed a sun symbol from antiquity, appropriate in many themes & on many occasions. Like flood legends, the swastika (in various recognizable styles) is one of many symbols found thru-out ancient civilisations having no possible contact (as we understand contact) with each other.

Usually it meant the sun, in its scheme as "the wheel of life". (Mayan, I believe.) It was also a popular good luck symbol. For example, it can be found on pre-1930 American New Year's greeting cards.

A white swastika on a black field was the flag of an American Boy Scout Troop from its founding to some point in the 1930's, when the Troop itself voted to discontinue its use, in light of the rise of the Nazi regime. The German-American Bundt (the pre-War American Nazi movement), who also used the swastika, may also have influenced their decision.

The Indian and Vedic connection you mention is likely the swastika's oldest incarnation. The symbol itself may still be found as an architectural element, decorating sufficiently aged temples to whatever deity is involved. There is a simply fascinating documentary on the swastika, and its journey from mystic rune to fascist emblem. Unhappily, I can't recall the title.

If memory serves, a particular German woman of wealth, and the upper class, made it her cause to sponsor the swastika into its position as The Emblem of the Nazi party. As often happens after wars, mysticism and spiritualism was popular thru-out post WW1 and the 1920's. She appears to have been a true believer of some kind, and felt the swastika itself had the power to lead Germany to ultimate triumph, that soldiers who fought under it would obtain super-strength, etc.

~ SISTERSEATTL

4. *The swastika is (or was, depending on your WWII point of view) actually a symbol of good luck, and possibly of fertility and regeneration.*

I once read that several ancient cultures associated the symbol with the sun, although I'm not sure of the actual details on this. The Navajo Indians also had a similar symbol - depicting their gods of the mountains, rivers, and rain.

In India, the swastika is an auspicious mark - worn as jewellery or marked on objects as a symbol of good luck. The symbol, though, is extremely ancient and predates Hinduism. The Hindus associated it with the sun and wheel of birth and rebirth. It is an emblem of the Hindu god Vishnu, one of the supreme Hindu deities.

Hope this shed a little light ...

~ PEENIE1

5. *Swastika has nothing to do with Christ and with Christianity. It is a Buddhist symbol for peace, as it still appears nowadays on Buddhist temples in Asia. I have seen one in a bi-lingual edition of a Taiwanese magazine. The editors felt the necessity of explaining in the English text that Swastika is a Buddhist symbol of peace, and this is why the puzzled European reader could see it in pictures showing temples.*

A difference however can be noticed: the orientation of the arms is clockwise in the Buddhist swastika and anti-clockwise in the one adapted by the Nazis. Unfortunately I don't know how this change occurred or its significance.

~ MYKK1

6. The swastika ... has nothing to do with the swastika used as the symbol in Nazi Germany. That symbol is from **Nordic runes** and was used in Nordic tribes' pagan culture. Later it was also used by the **Teutonic Knights** formed in the 12th century. From this source the Nazis got a lot of their symbols, like the SS rune.

~ GUENTERHB

Gill, N.S. "What Is the Origin of the Swastika." ThoughtCo, Aug. 9, 2016



The Swastika and the Phoenician sun symbol, on the Phoenician Craig-Narget stone.

