

Swastika—a symbol of good and evil

[Religion](#), [God](#)



SOCS350-ON November 7, 2008 THE SWASTIKA-A SYMBOL OF GOOD AND EVIL The hackenkreuz, gamma cross, gammadion, St. Brigit's cross, fylfot cross and swastika are all references to one symbol, the oldest cross in the world. This symbol is represented several thousand years B. C. in multiple cultures. It is not until the 1900's that the term " swastika" elicits such a fervor of emotions. It is interesting to contrast the viewpoints of the Chinese community versus the enormity of human passion that ensues in a Jewish community when the symbol is displayed.

As cited in Chinese Symbols – Common Five Asian Attributes, <http://symbolic-meanings.com/2007/11/01chinese-symbols-common> Ancient Chinese symbols and their meanings are a product of a very savvy people who understood the human need to progress in their conjunction with their propensity to link positive change with visual/allegorical concepts. The Chinese believe that crises in one's life bring the opportunity for change. Symbolism is incorporated in the kanji, more commonly referred to as Chinese characters. Kanji, itself means both crises and opportunity.

As many people of China embrace the Buddhist religion, it is an opportunity to discuss the swastika from this point of view. As cited in ReligionFacts; "The Swastika Symbol in Buddhism" <http://symbolic-meanings.com/2007/11/01chinese-symbols-common>

Page 2 Swastika In Buddhism, the swastika signifies auspiciousness and good fortune as well as the Buddha's footprints and the Buddha's heart. The swastika is said to contain the whole mind of the Buddha and can often be found imprinted on the chest, feet or palms of Buddha images.

It is also the first of the 65 auspicious symbols on the footprint of the Buddha. The swastika will also be found in homes, on the doorways to temples, at the beginning of books, in decorative borders and in clothing as well as being carved into Chinese coins. The swastika is seen as a symbol of luck and life. As cited in NewsFinder. org/site/more/swastika “ The Oldest Known Symbol” In Nazi Germany, the swastika became the national symbol.

In 1910, a poet and nationalist, Guido von List suggested that the swastika be a symbol for all anti Semitic organizations. On August 7, 1920, at the Salzburg Congress, this flag became the official emblem of the Nazi Party. The actual drawing of the thousands of year old swastika remained the same with one exception after the adoption by the Nazi’s—the exclusive use of the colors black, red and white. The swastika holds a vivid, powerful vision for those of the Jewish community.

The impact though now changes from positive and serene as seen with the Chinese community to that of conjuring up memories of the holocaust, a time of horror and hate. The brief appropriation by the Nazi’s of the swastika has forever destroyed the positive and serene interpretation of this symbol for much of the world but especially for those of Hebrew belief. So deeply imbedded in the minds of those with an ancestry to Judaism that to merely see the swastika is to re-live the stories of the holocaust, the inhumanity and despair.

So powerful a symbol is that the swastika can create havoc on one’s limbic system. Though fewer victims are left now from this reign of terror, the legacy lives on to this day and assuredly shall for many generations to come.

Two cultures, two moments in time, two opposing interpretations as related to a simple drawing have been discussed. The power is of course not in the drawing, but in the meaning perceived by the drawing. In one culture we see the swastika as life, in the other we see the swastika as a vile destruction of life.