

THE SWASTIKA: THE CROSS

America's Newest Fad is a Good Luck Sign Used Thousands of Years Before the Christian Era

BY JOHN ELFRE, JR. WATKINS.

THE "swastika" fad, which lately started in France, is now sweeping over America from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Everywhere we are seeing this oldest of known symbols on scarfpins, hatpins, belt buckles, pocketbooks, embroderies, pottery and what not. In the revival of this mysterious design history is oddly repeating itself. It was the fad of the prehistoric decorations of the bronze and iron ages in Europe, Asia, Africa and America long before history dawned, and now, after a hiatus of countless millenniums, it again takes the lead in human preference.

Although this prehistoric symbol is now seen everywhere in the land and is being worn by hundreds of thousands of people, only a small percentage of its holders or of its wearers, even, can so much as name it. As to its origin, no one knows that—not even the archaeologists who have spent lifetimes in endeavoring to fathom its mysteries. It was invented long before history dawned and had reached the modern world long before Columbus, or even Lief Ericsson, had put foot upon American soil.

Universal Good Luck Sign.

The swastika is a cross whose four arms of equal length, are bent at right angles and in the same direction, right or left. Although the symbol has been called by many names in many lands, nearly all countries have now accepted for it the ancient Sanskrit name "swastika," a word which illustrated the sounds of the letter A in Sanskrit grammar. In the estimation of various writers it has been respectively the emblem of the sun, rain, sky and fire gods of various primitive peoples; of Zeus, the ruling god of the Greeks, and, in some primitive religions, of the great God, the Maker and Ruler of the universe. It has also been variously held to symbolize light, the forked lightning and water. It is believed by some to be the oldest symbol of the Aryan peoples, while in the estimation of others it represents Brahma. It appears in the footprints of Buddha, engraved upon the solid rock on the mountains of India. It was also used in connection with the ruling god of the Romans, and with the Scandinavian deity, Thor. But at all times the swastika appears to have been a charm or amulet, a sign of benediction, blessing, long life, good fortune or good luck.

For what is known about the swastika today the world is chiefly indebted to Dr. Thomas Wilson, of Washington, who until his recent death was curator of prehistoric anthropology in the United States National Museum. He made an exhaustive study of its migrations, and before he announced his results, not even the word "swastika" appeared in either Webster's or Worcester's dictionaries, while but one of our popular encyclopedias had a reference to it, and that was erroneous. Dr. Wilson found the insignia in the antiquities of Persia and Egypt, of the prehistoric bronze age in Europe, and of all the countries of the extreme Orient. From these most ancient habitations of man he traced it into Africa and America.

Was on the Breast of Buddha.

In Japan it was found on statues of Buddha, one of which had eight such emblems upon its bronze pedestal. He also found that the Japanese employed it on their porcelains and bronzes. He discovered it on articles from Korea, China, Tibet and India. During a visit to the Chinese legation in Washington he found it on the state robes of one of the attaches and was told that in the Chinese language it indicated "many," "a great number," "abundantly," "life," "long life," "many years." Through the Chinese Minister he received abstracts from historical Chinese works on the origin of the emblem, in which it was traced to the work of an ancient Buddhist priest.

scribing the original Buddha as having the swastika mark on his breast. He received, through the legation, a series of Indian ink drawings illustrating the symbol used in this way, also as a sign for the sun, etc. According to this legend it was the practice of the ancient Chinese to endeavor on the seventh day of the seventh month of each year to have splendor weave the swastika on their robes and to thus be assured of good luck. This material also showed that the Chinese Emperor Tai Taung over 1100 years ago issued a decree forbidding the use of swastika on silk fabrics manufactured for any purpose. Perhaps a swastika fad, then rampant in China, got on this Emperor's nerves.

Prevents the Evil Eye.

That it is common for the people of Tibet to tattoo the swastika on their hands Dr. Wilson learned through O. W. Rockhill, our present Minister to China, who visited Tibet some years ago. It was learned also that the Tibetan women ornament their petticoats in this way and that it is also placed on the breasts of their dead. The symbol was found, too, upon Tibetan statues of Buddha. Besides appearing upon the carved footprints of Buddha, in India, this sign was found on ancient Buddhist medals of the same empire. Today in certain parts of India parents of young children liable to the "evil eye" draw it on their walls, beside their doorposts or paint it upon the shaven heads of their little ones to ward off there is a wedding in the family. In Persia the symbol is found on ancient coins and modern rugs. On a bas relief from the Elites it forms a border of the robe of a king or priest offering a sacrifice to a god. It was used also in the Caucasus as early as the first age of iron and is still used in modern times for the branding of Circassian horses.

Many specimens of the swastika were dug out of the ruins of ancient Troy by Henry Schliemann. Some were found even among the remains of the first or oldest of the seven cities excavated. In this land of the fair Helen the swastika symbol was mostly used to decorate stone spindle whorls, although it was found also on pottery, balls, idols and vases of the Trojans.

Used in 3000 B. C.

Swastikas dating back to three millenniums before Christ have been found on pottery dug up in ancient Egypt. They are found on the art works of the later Egyptians, down through the dynasties of Greek influence. They have been discovered on objects of pottery, bronze and gold belonging to the ancient Greeks, and it is remarkable that the Greek vases on which the swastika appears in largest proportion are the oldest—those belonging to antiquarians call the archaic period. The ancients of Cyprus put the sign even on some of their statues, including one of a centaur. It was employed in Italy through all the epochs of the Etruscan and Roman and into the Christian period. It was found in France, the bronze age and iron age and after the occupation of Gaul by Julius Caesar. The tribes of ancient Scandinavia and Britain punched it into their bronzes, and the triquetra, which formed the armorial emblem of the Isle of Sicily and also of the Isle of Man is said to have been a modification of it.

Used by Our Moundbuilders.

But that the swastika found its way to America in prehistoric times is much more remarkable than the fact that it was so widely scattered over the Old World with its connected grand divisions. Dr. E. S. Palmer, who excavated certain haunts of our ancient moundbuilders, found it on a shell ornament dug from a mound on Paines Island, Tennessee. This shell ornament is incised by a circle and Dr. Wilson was the first to recognize it as a swastika. This find suggested to Dr. Wilson that the swastika was a symbol of communication between the eastern



BUDDHA-LIKE CARVING OF MOUND BUILDERS FOUND WITH SWASTIKA IN TENNESSEE.



LEFT HAND AND RIGHT HAND SWASTIKAS

and prehistoric Western Hemisphere. Whether there was Buddhism on our continent before the advent of the whites was one of the first questions which suggested themselves to him. While making researches along this line he happened to find in the National Museum a mutilated and damaged shell found with another swastika by an employee of the bureau of ethnology excavating ruins of the moundbuilders in Blount County, Tennessee. This shell bears a human figure which to all appearances represents one of the Buddhist divinities. The material is similar to that of the hundreds of other relics of the prehistoric moundbuilders found in the vicinity, yet parts of its style are different from other images of the North American aborigines. The figure squats with knees outward and feet brought together, soles upmost. It has a slim waist, winged arms, long neck, broad nose and triple lines of earrings or anklets, all showing different characteristics of physique and dress from those of the ancient North Americans. This figure, taken in connection with the swastika so generally associated with the Buddhists in the Orient, as seen above, presented a group of circumstances which Dr. Wilson thought to go a long way toward circumstantial evidence of the migration of Buddhists from Asia and its presence among our Indians before the discovery of this continent by Europeans. This theory, by the way, was favored in a series of essays by M. Gustave d'Eichthal, a Frenchman writing in 1841. Five swastikas cut out of thin worked copper were also found in one

of the ruins of one of the famous Ohio moundbuilders—the Hopewell mound, at Chillicothe.

The Indians Used It.

Our moundbuilders having made the swastika, it is by no means remarkable that many such symbols have been found among their descendants, the Indians, as the white man has known them. The Kanakas of the Southwest use the swastika on their dance rattles and pot-

tery. The Navajos reproduce it on their many-colored ceremonial shawls of dry sand, and on the war shields of the Pimas it appears in the same peculiar form as found elsewhere only in Europe. The swastika was known not only to our aborigines, but to those of Nicaragua, Yucatan, Costa Rica, Brazil and Paraguay.

How the swastika became thus widely distributed on both continents has been discussed by many ethnologists. Dr. Daniel G. Brinton argued that it, like

the fire as a sacrifice to the winds, used a war chart bearing the swastika as a sign for the winds. The Sac Indians called the swastika the "luck" or "good luck." It was embrodered upon the necklaces and garters of their sun worshippers; also by those of the Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Iowas and Winnebagoes. The Sac Indians used the swastika in the silk patchwork of which they make sashes and skirt trimmings. The Pueblo Indians of the Southwest use the swastika on their dance rattles and pot-

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Was Accomplished With a Washtub

How a Boy and Girl Were Educated at Harvard.

ONE of the honor men at Harvard, class of nineteen hundred and something, was the son of a washerwoman, a widow who earned her living for herself and her two children and gave them both a college education and a profession by means of her washtub and distaff.

Mrs. Blank is now living with her son and daughter in a suburb of Boston. Her son is a lawyer with a thriving practice and her daughter, besides being the organist of a church in Boston, is a teacher in a music school.

"Both my husband and I were born and brought up on farms here in New England and on marrying we went out to live on a farm in the northwestern part of Michigan," Mrs. Blank told the reporter, who found her watering the pot plants on the piazza of her home.

"My daughter was eight and my son six my husband died and I faced the world alone with no capital except good health and a mortgage farm."

"The question, as I put it to myself, was whether I should remain in Michigan and work and pay off the mortgage, allowing the children to go without a proper education, but to have the farm free of debt on their coming of age, or to sell out and take the money left after paying off the mortgage and bring them East, where they could get an education."

"After two weeks' thought I decided to sell out and come back to the East. I selected Boston, because it was large enough to get work in and because I knew that a good education was to be had for both my son and daughter at a nominal cost, if not entirely free."

"After everything was settled and my railroad tickets were bought there was less than \$100 left. But I had good health and had been accustomed to hard work all my life, so the small amount in my pocketbook didn't worry me."

"On the train I put another question to myself. I was confident that I could make a living in two ways, as a cook or as a washerwoman. Which should it be?"

"That was the question that kept my brain busy on that long trip from me West. I went out as a cook, while I would have my meals and quarters furnished I would be compelled to put my children in an institution. On the other hand I could keep them with me and have a little home of our own if I took in washing. That decided me in favor of becoming a washerwoman."

"My first care after arriving in Boston was to get shelter. It was two small rooms in a cheap but decent part

of Boston. One room was for washing and cooking, the other for sleeping and living."

"The second day I entered my children in the public schools and set out to hunt washing. I appealed first at a large school, the very music school in which my daughter now teaches. I asked for a room with washing from four girls."

"I worked for the students exclusively for two years. Then, having saved up enough money, I went larger quarters I hired an assistant and began to take lace curtains and fine starch clothes. In less than three months I had more work than I and my assistant could do properly, so I hired another woman to do the plain things, while we did the fancy work."

"When the public schools were out I hired an assistant and began to take lace curtains and fine starch clothes. In less than three months I had more work than I and my assistant could do properly, so I hired another woman to do the plain things, while we did the fancy work."

"I took her right out and entered her as a pupil in a woman's college near Boston. In the child's presence I explained to the president of that college just what my work was and all about it. I didn't intend to allow a child of mine to feel that she had the slightest occasion to be ashamed of her mother for doing honest work."

"The president of the college must have understood my motives. In any event she would not have been more polite and courteous to the first lady of the land than she was to me."

"That was a lesson to me, and thereafter I took the greatest pains to let the teachers of both my son and daughter know about my work. It was a good move financially, so it proved, for soon I was washing from them all."

"Whenever I had occasion to visit my daughter or to see the teacher of my son I always brought it around so that I could ask about the wash I had just sent home. Did it please? I was always glad to get more. My main object was to let my children see that they had no reason to be ashamed of their mother's work."

"Didn't I allow my children to help me? Indeed I did, all they could. My son carried home the wash and after he entered Harvard often called for it Monday mornings."

"If he ever was snubbed he never told me of it, but I fancy that never happened, or at least not often, for the men who are working their way through

the cross, was a design simple enough to have been invented independently by many primitive tribes to have originated in many places by designers ignorant of the fact that others had designed it elsewhere. Dr. Wilson, after assembling all of the data above abstracted, concluded that the swastika was not simple enough to have come to the minds of many persons. He found that it was almost unknown among Christian peoples; that it was not included in any of the modern European or American decorative designs or works on decoration. He discovered that its use in modern times has been confined principally to oriental and Scandinavian countries—countries which hold close relations with antiquity; in Western Europe where the swastika was most frequent in ancient times it has become extinct in the last 1000 or 2000 years. He found it used on the same style of object in Europe, Asia and America. He came to the conclusion that the distribution of the swastika was due to migration, contact or communication between the peoples of the old and new world as early as the time of the moundbuilders, the oldest civilization in America, who flourished prior to any historic knowledge which we have of communication between the two hemispheres; that some immigrants from the old world brought this symbol to America long before the days of Lief Ericsson, who is alleged to have landed here about A. D. 1000. As to the swastika's migration to America, it has been held that the Phoenicians, finding it in the Orient, brought it across the Persian Gulf to Asia Minor and Cyprus, other peoples bringing it by the overland route from Central Asia and Asia Minor.

Is One Form of the Cross.

"I have come to regard the swastika merely one form of the cross, the distinction being merely one of detail," said Professor W. H. Holmes, chief of the bureau of ethnology, when I asked him for his theory as to the origin of the symbol. "The cross as a religious symbol, in one form or another, came into existence long before the beginning of the Christian era—so very general is its origin of history, indeed, that there is not the least possibility of obtaining definite knowledge of its earliest origin. The cross was never a symbol in America at the time of the discovery. In nearly all branches of art in which surface ornament is an important factor the spaces available for decorative design are rectangles, circles or ovals, or are borders or zones divided into squares or parallelograms for ready treatment. When simple figures are placed in these spaces they are introduced in fours, thus filling the spaces evenly and symmetrically. This quadruple arrangement in a multitude of cases induces a crossy effect."—Washington, D. C.

Secret Marks on United State's Postage Stamps

It Took Collectors Nearly a Quarter of a Century to Lay Bare Secrets of Issues of 1870-75.

SECRET marks long undiscovered and other peculiarities give exceptional value to many of the United States postage stamps issued from 1870 to 1875.

The stamps of 1870 were printed by the National Bank Note Company and were all embossed in relief on the back. They consisted of 11 denominations—one-cent, ultramarine, with the portrait of Franklin; three-cent, green, portrait of Washington; six-cent, carmine, Lincoln; seven-cent, vermilion, Stanton; ten-cent, brown, Jefferson; twelve-cent, violet, Clay; fifteen-cent, orange, Webster; twenty-four-cent, purple, Scott; thirty-cent, black, Hamilton, and ninety-cent, carmine, Perry.

In 1872 the Continental Bank Note Company, of New York, got the contract for printing the stamps, and while it used the identical plates of the former company its engravers added to each denomination a secret mark, almost undetectable by the layman, that the two issues might