

Topics in this handout provided by Cynthia

Rainbow

Noah's Ark

Crown (headgear) from Wikipedia

Swastika from Wikipedia

The Definition and Meaning of the Rainbow as a Catholic Christian Symbol

Catholic Christian symbolism in art provides a clear graphic illustration which represents people or items of religious significance. What is the definition and the meaning of the Rainbow? A rainbow is an arc of colored light in the sky caused by refraction of the sun's rays by rain. The colors of the rainbow are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The rainbow is stated as a sign of the Covenant with Noah (solemn agreement made between God and Noah) and God's promise to Noah that never again would the World be purified by a Great Flood. This covenant was demonstrated by a rainbow appearing in the sky as a sign He had kept His promise. The Rainbow Christian Symbol therefore represents God's faithfulness and of His pardon of the faithful which derives from the story of [Noah's Ark](#).

Gen. 9:12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

Reference to the Rainbow Christian Symbol in the Bible

The Easton Bible Dictionary provides the following definition, meaning and emblem for the Rainbow Christian Symbol in the Bible.

It was appointed as a witness of the divine faithfulness (Gen. 9:12-17). It existed indeed before, but it was then constituted as a sign of the covenant. Others, however think that it "appeared then for the first time in the vault and clouds of heaven." It is referred to three other times in Scripture (Ezek. 1:27, 28; Rev. 4:1-3; 10:1).

Christian Symbolism

The definition and the meaning of Symbols or Icon in early religious art forms. A Catholic sign or icon, such as the Rainbow Christian Symbol, is an object, character, figure, or color used to represent abstract ideas or concepts - a picture that represents an idea. A religious icon, such as the Rainbow Christian Symbol, is an image or symbolic representation with sacred significance. The meanings, origins and ancient traditions surrounding Christian symbols date back to early times when the majority of ordinary people were not able to read or write and printing was unknown.

Noah's Ark

Christian Symbolism

The definition and the meaning of the Christian Symbol or Icon in early religious art forms. A Catholic sign or icon, such as the Noah's Ark, is an object, character, figure, or color used to represent abstract ideas or concepts - a picture that represents an idea. A religious icon, such as the Noah's Ark, is an image or symbolic representation with sacred significance. The meanings, origins and ancient traditions surrounding Christian symbols date back to early times when the majority of ordinary people were not able to read or write and printing was unknown. Many were 'borrowed' or drawn from early pre-Christian traditions.

The Definition and Meaning of the Noah's Ark as a Catholic Christian Symbol

Catholic Christian symbolism in art provides a clear graphic illustration which represents people or items of religious significance. What is the definition and the meaning of the Noah's Ark? The Ark was a boat built by Noah to save his family and animals from the Great Flood, or Deluge. Noah's ark symbolised God's judgment on sin and His promise of salvation and provision for His people.

Reference to the Noah's Ark in the Bible

The Easton Bible Dictionary provides the following definition, meaning and emblem for the Noah's Ark in the Bible.

Noah's ark, a building of gopher-wood, and covered with pitch, 300 cubits long, 50 cubits broad, and 30 cubits high (Gen. 6:14-16); an oblong floating house of three stories, with a door in the side and a window in the roof.

It was 100 years in building (Gen. 5:32; 7:6).

It was intended to preserve certain persons and animals from the deluge which God was about to bring over the earth.

It contained eight persons (Gen. 7:13; 2 Pet. 2:5), and of all "clean" animals seven pairs, and of "unclean" one pair, and of birds seven pairs of each sort (Gen. 7:2, 3). It was in the form of an oblong square, with flat bottom and sloping roof. Traditions of the Deluge, by which the race of man was swept from the earth, and of the ark of Noah have been found existing among all nations.

Crown (headgear)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



The [Imperial State Crown](#) of Great Britain, Tower of London. It incorporates the "Black Prince's Ruby", a 140 ct. Badakhshan spinel. This image of the crown was taken prior to the 1953 coronation, when the crown was modified for Queen Elizabeth II



The crown of King [Christian IV of Denmark](#), currently located in [Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen](#).

A **crown** is the traditional [symbolic](#) form of [headgear](#) worn by a [monarch](#) or by a [deity](#), for whom the crown traditionally represents [power](#), [legitimacy](#), [immortality](#), [righteousness](#), [victory](#), [triumph](#), [resurrection](#), [honour](#) and [glory](#) of [life after death](#). In [art](#), the crown may be shown being offered to those on Earth by [angels](#). Apart from the traditional form, crowns also may be in the form of a [wreath](#) and be made of, flowers, [oak leaves](#) or [thorns](#) and be worn by others, representing what the [coronation](#) part aims to symbolize with the specific crown. In religious art, a crown of [stars](#) is used similarly to a [halo](#). Crowns worn by rulers often contain [jewels](#).

Terminology

Three distinct categories of crowns exist in those [monarchies](#) that use crowns or state regalia.

1. [Coronation](#) - worn by monarchs when being [crowned](#).
2. [State](#) - worn by monarchs on other state occasions. (Note that similar headgear, worn by [nobility](#) and other high ranking people below the ruler, is in English called a [coronet](#), however in many languages the same word is used, e.g., French *couronne*, German *Krone*, Dutch *kroon*);
3. [Consort crowns](#) - worn by [queens consort](#), signifying rank granted as a [constitutional](#) courtesy protocol.

In [Classical antiquity](#) the crown (*corona*) that was sometimes awarded to people other than rulers, such as triumphal [military generals](#) or [athletes](#), was actually a [wreath](#) or chaplet, or ribbonlike [diadem](#).

History



The [Iron Crown of Lombardy](#), probably the most ancient royal insignia of Europe, kept in the Cathedral of [Monza](#).



The [Imperial State Crown](#) of the [United Kingdom](#).



Ancient Greek golden decorated crown, funerary or marriage material, 370–360 BC. From a grave in [Armento](#), [Campania](#)

The precursor to the crown was the browband called the [diadem](#), which had been worn by the [Achaemenid Persian emperors](#), was adopted by [Constantine I](#), and was worn by all subsequent rulers of the later Roman Empire.

Numerous crowns of various forms were used in Antiquity, such as the [White crown](#), [Red Crown](#), combined [Pschent](#) crown and [blue crown](#) of Pharaonic Egypt.

The *corona radiata*, the "radiant crown" known best on the [Statue of Liberty](#), and perhaps worn by the [Helios](#) that was the [Colossus of Rhodes](#), was worn by Roman emperors as part of the cult of [Sol Invictus](#) prior to the [Roman Empire](#)'s conversion to Christianity. It was referred to as "the chaplet studded with sunbeams" by [Lucian](#), about 180 AD (in [Alexander the false prophet](#)).

Perhaps the oldest Christian crown in Europe is the [Iron Crown of Lombardy](#), of Roman and [Longobard](#) age, later again used to crown modern Kings of Napoleonic and Austrian Italy, and to represent united Italy after 1860.

In the Christian tradition of European cultures, where ecclesiastical sanction authenticates monarchic power, when a new monarch assumes the throne in a coronation ceremony, the crown is placed on the new monarch's head by a religious official. Some, though not all early [Holy Roman Emperors](#) travelled to Rome at some point in their careers to be crowned by the pope. [Napoleon](#), according to legend, surprised [Pius VII](#) when he reached out and crowned himself, although in reality this order of ceremony had been pre-arranged: see [coronation](#).



The Imperial crown of [Japanese emperor Kōmei \(1831 - 1867\)](#).

Today, only the [British Monarchy](#) and [Tongan Monarchy](#) continue this tradition as the only remaining anointed and crowned monarchs, though many monarchies retain a crown as a national symbol in heraldry. The [French Crown Jewels](#) were sold in 1885 on the orders of the [Third French Republic](#), with only a token number, with their precious stones replaced by glass, held on to for historic reasons and displayed by the [Louvre](#). The [Spanish Crown Jewels](#) were destroyed in a major fire in the eighteenth century while the [Irish Crown Jewels](#) (actually merely the Sovereign's insignia of the [Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick](#)) were stolen from [Dublin Castle](#) in 1907.



Heraldic crown of the Russian Empire

Special headgear to designate rulers dates back to pre-history, and is found in many separate civilizations around the globe. Commonly, rare and precious materials are incorporated into the crown, but that is only essential for the notion of crown jewels. [Gold](#) and precious [jewels](#) are common in western and oriental crowns. In the [Native American](#) civilizations of the [Pre-Columbian New World](#), rare [feathers](#), such as that of the [quetzal](#), often decorated crowns; so too in Polynesia (e.g. Hawaii).

- ▲ [Coronation](#) is often combined with other rituals, such as enthronement (the throne is as much a symbol of monarchy as the crown) and anointing (again religious sanction, the only defining act in the Biblical tradition of Israel).

In other cultures no crown is used in the equivalent of coronation, but the head may still be otherwise symbolically adorned, as a royal [tikka](#) in the Hindu tradition of India.

As an emblem



Crown of Flowers, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1884

A crown is often an [emblem](#) of the monarchy, a monarch's government, or items endorsed by it. The word itself is used, particularly in Commonwealth countries, as an abstract name for the monarchy itself, as distinct from the individual who inhabits it (see [The Crown](#)). A specific type of crown (or [coronet](#) for lower ranks of peerage) is employed in [heraldry](#) under strict rules. Indeed some monarchies never had a physical crown, just a heraldic representation, as in the constitutional kingdom of Belgium, where no coronation ever took place; the royal installation is done by a solemn oath in parliament, wearing a military uniform: the King is not acknowledged as by divine right, but assumes the only hereditary public office in the service of the law; so he in turn will swear in all members of "his" federal government.

- ⤴ [Costume](#) headgear imitating a monarch's crown is also called a crown. Such costume crowns may be worn by [actors](#) portraying a monarch, people at costume parties, or ritual "monarchs" such as the king of a [Carnival krewe](#), or the person who found the trinket in a [king cake](#).
- ⤴ The [Eastern Orthodox](#) marriage service has a section called the crowning, wherein the bride and groom are crowned as "king" and "queen" of their future household. In Greek weddings, the crowns are [diadems](#) usually made of white flowers, synthetic or real, often adorned with [silver](#) or [mother of pearl](#). They are placed on the heads of the newlyweds and are held together by a ribbon of white [silk](#). They are then kept by the couple as a reminder of their special day. In Slavic weddings, the crowns are usually made of ornate metal, designed to resemble an imperial crown, and are held above the newlyweds heads by their best men. A parish usually owns one set to use for all the couples that are married there since these are much more expensive than Greek-style crowns.
- ⤴ Women, mainly girls, sometimes connect flowers together in a chain, and wear the [wreath](#) as if it were a crown (see illustration, left).
- ⤴ Crowns are also often used as symbols of religious status or veneration, by divinities (or their representation such as a statue) or by their representatives, e.g. the [Black Crown](#) of the Karmapa Lama, sometimes used a model for wider use by devotees.



[Our Lady of Warfhuizen](#) wearing a crown with a [halo](#) surrounded by [stars](#) attached to it, typically worn by statues of the virgin Mary

- ⤴ A [Crown of thorns](#) according to [the Bible](#), was placed on the head of [Jesus](#) before his [crucifixion](#) and has become a common symbol of martyrdom. Rapper [Kanye West](#) raised controversy when he appeared on the February 2006 cover of [Rolling Stone](#) wearing a crown of thorns. So did [Madonna](#) when she wore one on the opening night of her World Tour in May 2006.^[1]
- ⤴ According to [Roman Catholic tradition](#) the [Blessed Virgin Mary](#) was crowned as [Queen of Heaven](#) after her [assumption](#) into [heaven](#). She is often depicted wearing a crown, and statues of her in churches and [shrines](#) are [ceremonially crowned](#) during May.
- ⤴ The [Crown of Immortality](#) is also common in historical symbolism.

The heraldic symbol of [Three Crowns](#), referring to the three evangelical [Magi \(wise men\)](#), traditionally called kings, is believed thus to have become the symbol of the Swedish kingdom, but it also fits the historical (personal, dynastic) [Kalmar Union](#) (1397-1520) between the three kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

Numismatics

Because one or more crowns, alone or as part of a more elaborate design, often appear on coins, several monetary denominations came to be known as 'a crown' or the equivalent word in the local language, such as [krone](#). This persists in the case of the national currencies of the Scandinavian countries and the Czech Republic. The [crown](#) of the [United Kingdom](#) became a commemorative coin and, as at a value of 25p was last minted in 1981, although the size was resurrected for 5 pound pieces. The generic term "crown sized" is frequently used for any coin roughly the size of an American [silver dollar](#).

See also

- ⤴ [Polos](#)
- ⤴ [Circlet](#)
- ⤴ [Coronet](#)

- ⤴ [Crown jewels](#)
- ⤴ [Diadem](#)
- ⤴ [Helmet](#)
- ⤴ [Hoop crown](#)
- ⤴ [Heraldic crowns](#)
- ⤴ [Imperial Crown](#)
- ⤴ [Laurel wreath](#)
- ⤴ [Nemes](#)
- ⤴ [Papal tiara](#)
- ⤴ [Pschent](#)
- ⤴ [Tiara](#)
- ⤴ [Royal Crown](#)
- ⤴ [Pinna](#)
- ⤴ [War bonnet](#)

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Categories:

- ⤴ [Crowns](#)
- ⤴ [Formal insignia](#)
- ⤴ [Headgear](#)
- ⤴ [Types of jewellery](#)
- ⤴ [Monarchy](#)
- ⤴ [State ritual and ceremonies](#)

Swastika

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



The counter clock swastika to evoke 'shakti' in the decorative [Hindu](#) form.



The Administrative Office of [Woljeongsa](#) in [South Korea](#).



The swastika was the official emblem of the [Nazi Party](#), and is often used by modern [Neo-Nazis](#).



Two [sauwastikas](#) (opposite-facing swastikas) on an ancient Greek [Kantharos](#), Attica, ca. 780 BC. It is displayed at [Staatliche Antikensammlungen](#)

The **swastika** ([Sanskrit](#):) is an [equilateral cross](#) with its arms bent at [right angles](#), in either right-facing (卐) form in counterclockwise motion or its mirrored left-facing (卍) form in clockwise motion. Earliest archaeological evidence of swastika-shaped ornaments dates back to the [Indus Valley Civilization](#) of [Ancient India](#) as well as [Classical Antiquity](#). Swastikas have also been used in other various ancient civilizations around the world. It remains widely used in [Indian religions](#), specifically in [Hinduism](#), [Buddhism](#) and [Jainism](#), primarily as a tantric symbol to evoke 'shakti' or the sacred symbol of auspiciousness. The swastika is also a [Chinese character](#) used in [East Asia](#) representing eternity and Buddhism.

Following a brief surge of [popularity in Western culture](#), the counter clock motion swastika was adopted as a symbol of the [Nazi Party](#) of [Germany](#) in 1920. After [Adolf Hitler](#)'s rise to power in the 1930s, a swastika was incorporated into the Nazi party flag, which was made the State Flag of

Germany. As a result, the Swastika became strongly associated with Nazism and related ideologies such as [Fascism](#) and [White Supremacism](#) since the 1930s in the [Western world](#) and is now largely stigmatized. It has notably been [outlawed in Germany](#) if used as a symbol of Nazism. Many modern political extremists and [Neo-Nazi](#) groups such as the [Russian National Unity](#) use stylized swastikas or similar symbols.

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Name

The word *swastika* came from the [Sanskrit](#) word *suastika*, meaning any lucky or auspicious object, and in particular a mark made on persons and things to denote auspiciousness. It is composed of [su-](#) meaning "good, well" and *asti* "to be" *suasti* thus means "well-being." The suffix *-ka* either forms a diminutive or intensifies the verbal meaning, and *suastika* might thus be translated literally as "that which is associated with well-being," corresponding to "lucky charm" or "thing that is auspicious."[\[1\]](#) The word in this sense is first used in the [Harivamsa](#).[\[2\]](#) As noted by [Monier-Williams](#) in his Sanskrit-English dictionary, according to [Alexander Cunningham](#), its shape represents a monogram formed by interlacing of the letters of the auspicious words *su-astí* (*svasti*) written in [Ashokan characters](#).[\[3\]](#)



[Hindu](#) child with head shaven and red Swastika painted on it.

The [Sanskrit](#) term has been in use in English since 1871, replacing [gammadion](#) (from [Greek](#) γαμμάδιον). Alternative historical English spellings of the Sanskrit phonological words with different meanings to include *suastika*, *swastica* and *svastica*.

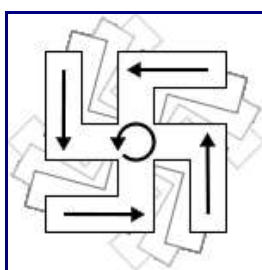
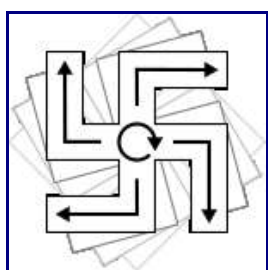
Other names for the shape are:

4. *crooked cross*, *hook cross* or *angled cross* (Hebrew: , German: *Hakenkreuz*).
5. *cross cramponned*, *~nnée*, or *~nny*, in [heraldry](#), as each arm resembles a [crampon](#) or angle-iron ([German](#): *Winkelmaßkreuz*).
6. [fylfot](#), chiefly in heraldry and architecture. The term is coined in the 19th century based on a misunderstanding of a Renaissance manuscript.
7. [gammadion](#), *tetragammadion* (Greek: τετραγαμμάδιον), or *cross gammadion* ([Latin](#): *crux gammata*; French: *croix gammée*), as each arm resembles the [Greek letter](#) Γ ([gamma](#)).

8. *tetraskelion* (Greek: τετρασκέλιον), literally meaning "four legged", especially when composed of four conjoined legs (compare [triskelion](#) (Greek: τρισκέλιον)).
9. The Tibetan swastika (卍) is known as *g-yung drung*

The Buddhist sign has been standardised as a [Chinese character](#) 卍 ([pinyin](#): *wàn*) and as such entered various other East Asian languages such as Japanese where the symbol is called 卍字 (*manji*). The swastika is included as part of the [Chinese script](#) in the form of the character "萬" ([pinyin](#): *wàn*) and has [Unicode](#) encodings U+534D 卍 (left-facing) and U+5350 卐 (right-facing).^[4] In Unicode 5.2, four swastika symbols were added to the [Tibetan block](#): U+0FD5 ༄ (right-facing), U+0FD6 ༅ (left-facing), U+0FD7 ༆ (right-facing with dots) and U+0FD8 ༇ (left-facing with dots).

Geometry



A right-facing swastika might be described as "clockwise" or "counter-clockwise".

[Geometrically](#), the swastika can be regarded as an irregular [icosagon](#) or 20-sided [polygon](#). The proportions of the Nazi swastika were fixed based on a 5×5 diagonal grid.^[5]

Characteristic is the 90° [rotational symmetry](#) and [chirality](#), hence the absence of reflectional [symmetry](#), and the existence of two versions of swastikas that are each other's [mirror image](#).

The mirror-image forms are often described as:

- ⤴ clockwise and anti-clockwise;
- ⤴ left-facing and right-facing;
- ⤴ left-hand and right-hand.

"Left-facing" and "right-facing" are used mostly consistently referring to the upper arm of an upright swastika facing either to *the viewer's* left (卍) in clockwise motion or right (卐) in counterclockwise motion. The other two descriptions are ambiguous as it is unclear whether they refer to the arms as leading or being dragged or whether their bending is viewed outward or inward. However, "clockwise" usually refers to the "right-facing" swastika. The terms are used inconsistently in modern times, which is confusing and may obfuscate an important point, that the rotation of the swastika may have symbolic relevance, although ancient vedic scripts describe the symbolic relevance of clock motion and counter clock motion. Less ambiguous terms might be "clockwise-pointing" and "counterclockwise-pointing."

Nazi [ensigns](#) had a [through and through](#) image, so both versions were present, one on each side, but the [Nazi flag](#) on land was right-facing on both sides and at a 45° rotation.^[6]

The name "[sauwastika](#)" is sometimes given to the left-facing form of the swastika (卍).^[7]

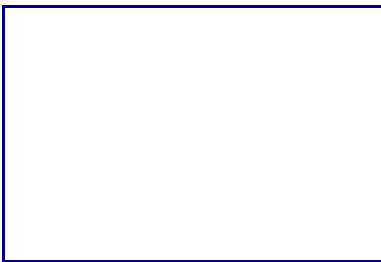
Origin hypotheses



The [archaic Gorgon](#) at the [pediment](#) of the [Temple of Artemis in Corfu](#) as shown at the [Archaeological Museum of Corfu](#). The [stylistic](#) positioning of her legs in a swastika arrangement is meant to evoke a sense of motion.[\[8\]](#)

The swastika is a repeating design, created by the edges of the reeds in a square basket-weave. Other theories attempt to establish a connection via [cultural diffusion](#) or an explanation along the lines of [Carl Jung's collective unconscious](#).

The genesis of the swastika symbol is often treated in conjunction with [cross symbols](#) in general, such as the [sun cross](#) of pagan [Bronze Age religion](#). Beyond its certain presence in the "[proto-writing](#)" symbol systems emerging in the [Neolithic](#),[\[9\]](#) nothing certain is known about the symbol's origin. There are nevertheless a number of speculative hypotheses. One hypothesis is that the cross symbols and the swastika share a common origin in simply symbolizing the [sun](#). Another hypothesis is that the 4 arms of the cross represent 4 aspects of nature - the sun, wind, water, soil. Some have said the 4 arms of cross are four seasons, where the division for 90-degree sections correspond to the [solstices](#) and [equinoxes](#). The Hindus represent it as the Universe in our own spiral galaxy in the fore finger of Lord Vishu. This carries most significance in establishing the creation of the Universe and the arms as 'kal' or time, a calendar that is seen to be more advanced than the lunar calendar (symbolized by the [lunar crescent](#) common to Islam) where the seasons drift from calendar year to calendar year. The [luni-solar](#) solution for correcting season drift was to [intercalate](#) an extra month in certain years to restore the lunar cycle to the solar-season cycle. The [Star of David](#) is thought to originate as a symbol of that calendar system, where the two overlapping triangles are seen to form a partition of 12 sections around the perimeter with a 13th section in the middle, representing the 12 and sometimes 13 months to a year. As such, the Christian cross, Jewish hexagram star and the Muslim crescent moon are seen to have their origins in different views regarding which calendar system is preferred for marking holy days. Groups in higher latitudes experience the seasons more strongly, offering more advantage to the calendar represented by the swastika/cross.



Ancient Roman mosaics of [La Olmeda](#), Spain

[Carl Sagan](#) in his book *Comet* (1985) reproduces [Han period](#) Chinese manuscript (the [Book of Silk](#), 2nd century BC) that shows comet tail varieties: most are variations on simple comet tails, but the last shows the comet nucleus with four bent arms extending from it, recalling a swastika. Sagan suggests

that in antiquity a [comet](#) could have approached so close to Earth that the jets of gas streaming from it, bent by the comet's rotation, became visible, leading to the adoption of the swastika as a symbol across the world.[10] Bob Kobres in [Comets and the Bronze Age Collapse](#) (1992) contends that the swastika like comet on the Han Dynasty silk comet atlas was labeled a "long tailed pheasant star" (Di-Xing) because of its resemblance to a [bird's foot](#) or [track](#). Kobres goes on to suggest an association of mythological birds and comets also outside China.

In *Life's Other Secret* (1999), [Ian Stewart](#) suggests the ubiquitous swastika pattern arises when parallel waves of neural activity sweep across the [visual cortex](#) during states of altered consciousness, producing a swirling swastika-like image, due to the way quadrants in the field of vision are mapped to opposite areas in the brain.[11]

[Alexander Cunningham](#) suggested that the Buddhist use of the shape arose from a combination of [Brahmi](#) characters abbreviating the words *su asti*.[3]

Archaeological record



The Samarra bowl, at the [Pergamonmuseum](#), Berlin.[12]



Seals from the [Indus Valley Civilization](#) preserved at the [British Museum](#)

Another early attestation is on pottery from the [Samarra culture](#), dated to around 4000 BC. [Joseph Campbell](#) in an essay on *The Neolithic-Paleolithic Contrast* cites an ornament on a Late Paleolithic (10,000 BC) mammoth ivory bird figurine found near Kiev as the only known occurrence of such a symbol predating the Neolithic.[13]

The swastika appears only very rarely in the archaeology of ancient [Mesopotamia](#). It is found on prehistoric pottery, of which the Samarra bowl is the oldest known example, and on a number of early seal impressions, but then disappears from the record for the remainder of the Near Eastern Bronze Age.[14] In India, Bronze Age swastika symbols were found at [Lothal](#) and [Harappa](#), on [Indus Valley](#) seals.[15]

Swastikas have also been found on pottery in archaeological digs in Africa, in the area of [Kush](#) and on pottery at the Jebel Barkal temples,[16] in [Iron Age](#) designs of the northern [Caucasus](#) ([Koban culture](#)), and in [Neolithic China](#) in the [Majiabang](#),[17] [Dawenkou](#) and Xiaohayan cultures.[18] Other Iron Age attestations of the swastika can be associated with [Indo-European](#) cultures such as the [Indo-Iranians](#),

[Celts](#), [Greeks](#), [Macedonians](#) and [Germanic peoples](#) and [Slavs](#). The *Tierwirbel* (the German for "animal whorl" or "whirl of animals"[19]) is a characteristic motive in Bronze Age Central Asia, the [Eurasian Steppe](#), and later also in Iron Age [Scythian](#) and [European](#) ([Baltic](#)[20] and [Germanic](#)) culture, showing rotational symmetric arrangement of an [animal motive](#), often four birds' heads. Even wider diffusion of this "Asiatic" theme has been proposed, to the Pacific and even North America (especially [Moundville](#)).[21]

Historical use in the East

The swastika is a historical sacred symbol both to evoke 'Shakti' in tantric rituals and evoke the gods for blessings in [Indian religions](#). It first appears in the archaeological record here around[22] 2500 BC in the [Indus Valley Civilization](#). It rose to importance in [Buddhism](#) during the [Mauryan Empire](#) and in [Hinduism](#) with the [decline of Buddhism in India](#) during the [Gupta Empire](#). With the [spread of Buddhism](#), the Buddhist swastika reached Tibet and China. The symbol was also introduced to [Balinese Hinduism](#) by [Hindu](#) kings. The use of the swastika by the [Bön](#) faith of [Tibet](#), as well as later [syncretic](#) religions, such as [Cao Dai](#) of Vietnam and [Falun Gong](#) of China, can also be traced to Buddhist influence.

Buddhism

[Buddhism](#) originated in the 5th century BC and spread throughout the [Indian subcontinent](#) in the 3rd century BC ([Maurya Empire](#)). Known as a "yung drung"[23] in ancient Tibet, it was a graphical representation of eternity.[24]

East Asian traditions



Swastika on building in [Seoul](#), Korea

The paired swastika symbols are included, at least since the [Liao Dynasty](#), as part of the [Chinese writing system](#) (卐 and 卞) and are variant characters for 萬 or 万 (*wàn* in Mandarin, *man* in Korean, Cantonese and Japanese, *van* in Vietnamese) meaning "all" or "eternity" (lit. [myriad](#)). The swastika marks the beginning of many Buddhist scriptures. In East Asian countries, the left-facing character is often used as symbol for Buddhism and marks the site of a Buddhist temple on maps.

In Chinese and Japanese the swastika is also a homonym of the number 10,000, and is commonly used to represent the whole of Creation, e.g. 'the myriad things' in the [Dao De Jing](#). During the Chinese [Tang Dynasty](#), Empress [Wu Zetian](#) (684-704) decreed that the swastika would also be used as an alternative symbol of the Sun.

In Japan, the swastika is called *manji*. Since the Middle Ages, it has been used as a [coat of arms](#) by various Japanese families such as [Tsugaru clan](#), [Hachisuka clan](#) or around 60 clans that belong to [Tokugawa clan](#). [25] On [Japanese maps](#), a swastika (left-facing and horizontal) is used to mark the

location of a Buddhist temple. The right-facing *manji* is often referred to as the *gyaku manji* (逆卍, lit. "reverse *manji*") or *migi manji* (右卍, lit. "right *manji*") , and can also be called *kagi jūji* (literally "hook cross").

In [Chinese](#) and [Japanese](#) art, the swastika is often found as part of a repeating pattern. One common pattern, called *sayagata* in Japanese, comprises left- and right-facing swastikas joined by lines. [\[26\]](#) As the negative space between the lines has a distinctive shape, the sayagata pattern is sometimes called the "*key fret*" motif in English.

As a pottery graph of unknown provision and meaning the swastka-like sign is known in Chinese Neolithic culture (2400-2000 BCE, Liu wan 柳湾, [Qinghai](#) province).

Hinduism



Swastika on the doorstep of an apartment in [Maharashtra](#), India

In Hinduism, the swastika is considered a symbolic representation of [Ganesha](#). In Hindu rites, Ganesha is offered first offerings in every [pooja](#). The swastika is made with [Sindoor](#) during any Hindu religious rite.

Among the Hindus of [Bengal](#), it is common to see the name "swastika" ([Bengali](#): *shostik*) applied to a slightly different symbol, which has the same significance as the common swastika, and both symbols are used as auspicious signs. This symbol looks something like a stick figure of a human being. [\[27\]](#)

▪ Jain swastika

Jainism

[Jainism](#) gives even more prominence to the swastika as a tantra than does Hinduism. It is a symbol of the seventh [Tirthankara](#), [Suparshvanath](#). In the [Svetambara](#) tradition, it is also one of the symbols of the [ashtamangala](#). All [derasars](#) and holy books must contain the swastika and ceremonies typically begin and end with creating a swastika mark several times with rice around the altar. Jains use rice to make a swastika in front of statues in a temple. Jains then put an offering on this swastika, usually a ripe or dried fruit, a sweet ([Hindi](#): , Miṭhāī), or a coin or currency note.

▪ Golden necklace of three Swastikas found in [Marlik](#), [Gilan](#) Province [Iran](#), dates back to first millennium B.C.

Iran

In Iran, Golden necklace of three Swastika in [Marlik](#), [Gilan](#) province [Iran](#), dates back to first millennium BC probably.

Ural

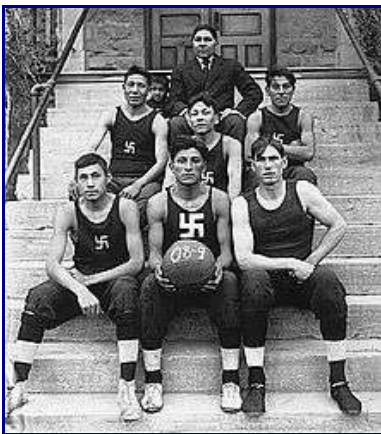
In South [Ural](#) Mountains the swastika meets in archaeological barrows and in culture the [Bashkir](#).

▪ Bashkir swastika

Armenia

Swastikas in [Armenia](#) can be seen on early medieval churches and fortresses, such as the principal tower in Armenia's historical capital city of [Ani](#).

Native American traditions



[Chilocco Indian Agricultural School](#) basketball team in 1909



[S.E.C.C.](#) design from [Oklahoma](#)

The swastika shape was used by some Native Americans. It has been found in excavations of [Mississippian](#)-era sites in the [Ohio](#) and [Mississippi River](#) valleys. It is frequently used as a motif on objects associated with the [Southeastern Ceremonial Complex \(S.E.C.C.\)](#). It was also widely used by many [southwestern](#) tribes, most notably the [Navajo](#). Among various tribes, the swastika carried different meanings. To the [Hopi](#) it represented the wandering Hopi clan; to the Navajo it was one symbol for a [whirling log](#) (*tsil no'oli*), a sacred image representing a legend that was used in healing rituals).[28] A brightly colored [First Nations](#) saddle featuring swastika designs is on display at the [Royal Saskatchewan Museum](#) in Canada.[29]

A swastika shape is a symbol in the culture of the [Kuna people](#) of [Kuna Yala](#), Panama. In Kuna tradition, it symbolizes the octopus that created the world; its tentacles, pointing to the four cardinal points.[30]

In February, 1925, the Kuna revolted vigorously against Panamanian suppression of their culture, and assumed autonomy in 1930; the flag they adopted at that time is based on the swastika shape, and

remains the official flag of Kuna Yala. A number of variations on the flag have been used over the years: red top and bottom bands instead of orange were previously used, and in 1942 a ring (representing the traditional Kuna nose-ring) was added to the center of the flag to distance it from the symbol of the Nazi party.[\[31\]](#)

Historical use in the West

In [Bronze Age Europe](#), the "[Sun cross](#)" (a three- or four-armed hooked cross in a circle) appears frequently, often interpreted as a solar symbol. Swastika shapes have been found on numerous artifacts from [Iron Age](#) Europe ([Greco-Roman](#), Illyrian, [Etruscan](#), [Baltic](#), [Celtic](#), [Germanic](#), Georgian Bordjgali and [Slavic](#)). This prehistoric use seems to be reflected in the appearance of the symbol in various folk cultures of Europe.

Antiquity

Greco-Roman antiquity



Swastika on a Greek silver [stater](#) coin from [Corinth](#), 6th century BC.



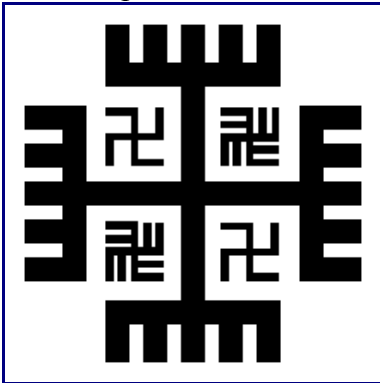
Bronze Age [Mycenaean](#) "doll" with human, solar and tetragammadion (swastika) symbols. [Louvre Museum](#), Paris.



Greek helmet with swastika marks on the top part (circled), 350-325 BC from [Taranto](#), found at [Herculanum](#). [Cabinet des Médailles](#), Paris.



[Etruscan](#) pendant with swastika symbols, [Bolsena](#), Italy, 700-650 BC. [Louvre Museum](#).



[Hands of God](#), a symbol of Polish neo-pagans

[Ancient Greek](#) architectural, clothing and coin designs are replete with single or interlinking swastika motifs. There are also found gold plate [fibulae](#) from the 8th century BC decorated with an engraved swastika.[32] Related symbols in classical Western architecture include the [cross](#), the three-legged triskele or [triskelion](#) and the rounded [lauburu](#). The swastika symbol is also known in these contexts by a number of names, especially [gammadion](#).[33]

In [Greco-Roman](#) art and architecture, and in [Romanesque](#) and [Gothic art](#) in the West, isolated swastikas are relatively rare, and the swastika is more commonly found as a repeated element in a border or tessellation. The swastika often represented perpetual motion, reflecting the design of a rotating windmill or watermill. A meander of connected swastikas makes up the large band that surrounds the [Augustan Ara Pacis](#). A design of interlocking swastikas is one of several [tessellations](#) on the floor of the cathedral of [Amiens](#), France.[34] A border of linked swastikas was a common Roman architectural motif,[35] and can be seen in more recent buildings as a neoclassical element. A swastika border is one form of [meander](#), and the individual swastikas in such a border are sometimes called [Greek keys](#).[36]

Celtic antiquity

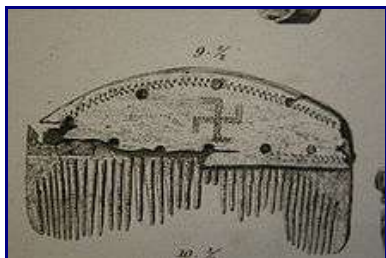
The bronze frontpiece of a ritual pre-Christian (c. 350-50 BC) shield found in the [River Thames](#) near [Battersea Bridge](#) (hence "[Battersea Shield](#)") is embossed with 27 swastikas in bronze and red

enamel.[37] An [Ogham](#) stone found in English, [Co Kerry](#) ([CIIC](#) 141) was modified into an early Christian gravestone, and was decorated with a [cross pattée](#) and two swastikas.[38] At the Northern edge of [Ilkley Moor](#) in [West Yorkshire](#), there is a swastika-shaped pattern engraved in a stone known as the [Swastika Stone](#).[39]

Germanic antiquity

Main article: [Swastika \(Germanic Iron Age\)](#)

The swastika shape (also called a [fylfot](#)) appears on various Germanic [Migration Period](#) and [Viking Age](#) artifacts, such as the 3rd century [Værlose Fibula](#) from Zealand, Denmark, the [Gothic](#) spearhead from [Brest-Litovsk](#), Russia, the 9th century [Snoldelev Stone](#) from [Ramsø](#), Denmark, and numerous Migration Period [bracteates](#) drawn left-facing or right-facing.[40]



A comb with a swastika found in [Nydam Mose](#), Denmark

The [pagan Anglo-Saxon ship burial](#) at [Sutton Hoo](#), England, contained numerous items bearing the swastika, now housed in the collection of the [Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology](#). [41] The Swastika is clearly marked on a hilt and sword belt found at [Bifrons](#) in [Kent](#), in a grave of about the 6th century.

[Hilda Ellis Davidson](#) theorized that the swastika symbol was associated with [Thor](#), possibly representing his hammer [Mjolnir](#) - symbolic of thunder - and possibly being connected to the Bronze Age [sun cross](#). [41] Davidson cites "many examples" of the swastika symbol from Anglo-Saxon graves of the pagan period, with particular prominence on cremation urns from the cemeteries of East Anglia. [41] Some of the swastikas on the items, on display at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, are depicted with such care and art that, according to Davidson, it must have possessed special significance as a [funerary symbol](#). [41] The [runic inscription](#) on the 8th-century [Sæbø sword](#) has been taken as evidence of the swastika as a symbol of Thor in [Norse paganism](#).

Illyrian antiquity

Swastika was wide spread among the [Illyrians](#), symbolizing the Sun. The Sun cult was the main Illyrian cult, and the Sun was represented by a swastika in clockwise motion, and it stood for the movement of the Sun. [42]

Pre-Christian Europe and folk culture

Baltic

See also: [Auseklis](#)

The swastika is one of the most common symbols used throughout Baltic art. In [Latvian](#) the symbol is known as either [Ugunskrusts](#), the "Fire cross" (rotating counter-clockwise), or [Pērkonkrusts](#), the "Thunder cross" (rotating clock-wise), and was mainly associated with [Pērkons](#), the god of Thunder and justice. It was also occasionally related to the Sun, as well as *Dievs* (the god of creation), *Laima* (the goddess of destiny and fate). The swastika is featured on many distaffs, dowry chests, cloths and

other items.

Slavic



Swastika in [Kruszwica](#), Poland

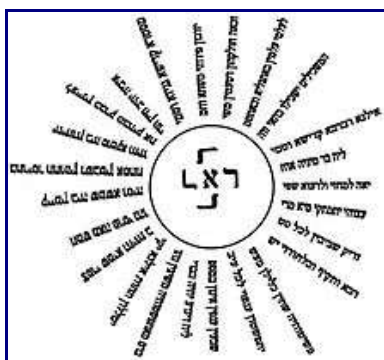
In the Slavic tradition, swastika are found only on ornaments, such as embroidery patterns.

Currently, [Slavic neo-pagans](#) and neo-Nazis frequently use the standard and eight-pointed ("kolovrat") swastika. They believe that swastika and kolovrat are ancient Slavic pagan symbols. [\[43\]](#)[\[44\]](#)[\[45\]](#)[\[46\]](#)[\[47\]](#)

Sami

An object very much like a hammer or a double axe is depicted among the magical symbols on the drums of [Sami](#) shamans, used in their religious ceremonies before Christianity was established. The name of the Sami thunder god was [Horagalles](#), thought to be derived from "Old Man Thor" (*Pórr karl*). Sometimes on the drums, a male figure with a hammer-like object in either hand is shown, and sometimes it is more like a cross with crooked ends, or a swastika. [\[41\]](#)

Medieval and early modern Europe



A mandala-like meditative image from the [Kabbalistic](#) work "Parashat Eliezer"



The swastika mark on the tower of Armenian fortress [Ani](#) (10th century AD)



Swastika symbols on the [Church of Christ Pantocrator](#) (13th-14th century) in [Nessebar](#)

In Christianity, the swastika is used as a hooked version of the [Christian Cross](#), the symbol of Christ's victory over death. Some Christian churches built in the [Romanesque](#) and [Gothic](#) eras are decorated with swastikas, carrying over earlier Roman designs. Swastikas are prominently displayed in a [mosaic](#) in the St. Sophia church of [Kiev](#), Ukraine dating from the 12th century. They also appear as a repeating ornamental motif on a tomb in the Basilica of St. Ambrose in [Milan](#). A proposed direct link between it and a swastika floor mosaic in the [Cathedral of Our Lady of Amiens](#), which was built on top of a pagan site at [Amiens](#), France in the 13th century, is considered unlikely. The [stole](#) worn by a priest in the 1445 [painting of the Seven Sacraments](#) by [Roger van der Weyden](#) presents the swastika form simply as one way of depicting the cross. Swastikas also appear on the vestments on the effigy of Bishop [William Edington](#) (d. 1366) in [Winchester Cathedral](#).

In the Polish First Republic the symbol of the swastika was also popular with the nobility. According to chronicles, the [Rus'](#) prince [Oleg](#), who in the 9th century [attacked Constantinople](#), nailed his shield (which had a large red swastika painted on it) to the city's gates.^[45] Several noble houses, e.g. Boreyko, Borzym, and Radziechowski from Ruthenia, also had Swastikas as their [coat of arms](#). The family reached its greatness in the 14th and 15th centuries and its crest can be seen in many heraldry books produced at that time. The Swastika was also a heraldic symbol, for example on the [Boreyko coat of arms](#), used by noblemen in Poland and Ukraine. In the 19th century the swastika was one of the Russian empire's symbols; it was even placed in coins as a background to the [Russian eagle](#).^{[46][47]}

An unusual swastika, composed of the Hebrew letters [Aleph](#) and [Resh](#), appears in the 18th century [Kabbalistic](#) work "Parashat Eliezer" by Rabbi Eliezer Fischl of Strizhov, a commentary on the obscure ancient eschatological book "Karnayim", ascribed to Rabbi Aharon of Kardina. The symbol is enclosed by a circle and surrounded by a cyclic hymn in Aramaic. The hymn, which refers explicitly to the power of the Sun, as well as the shape of the symbol, shows strong solar symbolism. According to the book, this [mandala](#)-like symbol is meant to help a mystic to contemplate on the cyclic nature and structure of the Universe. The letters are the initial and final characters of the Hebrew word, ‏, or "light".

[Freemasons](#) also gave the swastika symbol importance. In medieval Northern European Runic Script, a counter-clockwise swastika denotes the letter 'G,' and could stand for the important Freemason terms God, [Great Architect of the Universe](#), or [Geometry](#).^[48]

Western use in the early 20th century

Main article: [Western use of the swastika in the early 20th century](#)



The aviator [Matilde Moisant](#) (1878-1964) wearing a swastika medallion in 1912; the symbol was popular as a [good luck charm](#) with early aviators

In the Western world, the symbol experienced a resurgence following the archaeological work in the late 19th century of [Heinrich Schliemann](#), who discovered the symbol in the site of ancient [Troy](#) and associated it with the ancient migrations of [Proto-Indo-Europeans](#). He connected it with similar shapes found on ancient pots in Germany, and theorized that the swastika was a "significant religious symbol of our remote ancestors", linking Germanic, Greek and Indo-Iranian cultures. [\[49\]](#)[\[50\]](#) By the early 20th century, it was used worldwide and was regarded as a symbol of good luck and success.

The work of Schliemann soon became intertwined with the [völkisch](#) movements, for which the swastika was a symbol of the "[Aryan race](#)", a concept that came to be equated by theorists such as [Alfred Rosenberg](#) with a [Nordic master race](#) originating in northern Europe. Since its adoption by the [National Socialist German Worker's Party](#) of [Adolf Hitler](#), the swastika has been associated with Nazism, fascism, racism ([white supremacy](#)), the [Axis powers](#) in World War II, and [the Holocaust](#) in much of the West. The swastika remains a core symbol of [Neo-Nazi](#) groups, and is used regularly by [activist](#) groups to signify their opinion of supposed Nazi-like behavior of organizations and individuals they oppose.



Carlsberg's [Elephant Tower](#)

The Benedictine choir school at [Lambach Abbey](#), Upper Austria, which Hitler attended for several months as a boy, had a swastika chiseled into the monastery portal and also the wall above the spring grotto in the courtyard by 1868. Their origin was the personal [coat of arms](#) of Abbot [Theoderich Hagn](#) of the monastery in Lambach, which bore a golden swastika with slanted points on a blue field. [\[51\]](#) The Lambach swastika is probably of Medieval origin. The Danish brewery company [Carlsberg Group](#) used the swastika as a logo [\[52\]](#) from the 19th Century until the middle of the 1930s when it was discontinued because of association with the Nazi Party in neighbouring Germany. However, the swastika carved on elephants at the entrance gates of the company's headquarters in [Copenhagen](#) in

1901 can still be seen today.[53]

The swastika is seen on binders of pre-Nazi era publications of works by Rudyard Kipling. Both left and right orientations were used.

Iceland

[Eimskip](#) (founded in 1914), a major import/export company in Iceland once used the swastika as their company logo. Although they have since replaced their logo, the swastika remained on their old headquarters, located in downtown [Reykjavík](#). When the [Radisson SAS](#) hotel franchise bought the building, the company was banned from destroying the symbol since the building was on the list of historical sites in Iceland. A compromise was made when the company was allowed to cover the symbol with the numbers 1919 which was the year when the building was erected.[54]

Ireland

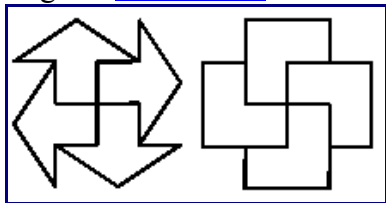
The [Swastika Laundry](#) was a laundry founded in 1912, located on Shelbourne Road, [Ballsbridge](#), a district of [Dublin](#), Ireland. In the fifties [Heinrich Böll](#) came across a van belonging to the company while he was staying in Ireland, leading to some awkward moments before he could realize the company was older than Nazism and totally unrelated to it. The chimney of the boiler-house of the laundry still stands, but the laundry has been redeveloped.[55][56]

Finland

In Finland the swastika was often used in traditional folk art products, as a decoration or magical symbol on textiles and wood.



Logo of [Lotta Svärd](#)



Variation of tursaansydän

Certain types of symbols which incorporated the swastika were used to decorate wood; such symbols are called [tursaansydän](#) and [mursunsydän](#) in Finnish. Tursaansydän was often used until 18th century, when it was mostly replaced by a simple swastika.[57]

The tursaansydän is used by [scouts](#) in some instances[58] and a student organization.[59] The village of Tursa uses the tursaansydän as a kind of a certificate of authenticity on products made there.[60] Traditional textiles are still being made with swastikas as parts of traditional ornaments.



Present-day flag (from 1958) and its pole of the [Training Air Wing](#) with three swastikas



Present-day brigade marks of the Finnish Air Force staff and the Training Air Wing

The [Finnish Air Force](#) uses the swastika as an emblem, originally introduced in 1918. The swastika was also used by the women's paramilitary organization [Lotta Svärd](#), which was banned in 1944 in accordance with the [Moscow Armistice](#) between Finland and the [allied Soviet Union](#) and [Britain](#).

The [President of Finland](#) is the grand master of the [Order of the White Rose](#). According to the protocol, the president shall wear the Grand Cross of the White Rose with collar on formal occasions. The original design of the collar, decorated with 9 swastikas, dates from 1918, and was designed by the artist [Akseli Gallen-Kallela](#). The Grand Cross with the swastika collar has been awarded 41 times to foreign heads of state. To avoid misunderstandings, the swastika decorations were replaced by fir crosses at the decision of president [Urho Kekkonen](#) in 1963 after it became known that the [President of France Charles De Gaulle](#) was uncomfortable with the swastika collar.



Grand Cross
with star of
the Order of
the Cross of
Liberty

Also a design by Gallen-Kallela from 1918, the [Cross of Liberty](#) has a swastika pattern in its arms. The Cross of Liberty is depicted in the upper left corner of the standard of the President of Finland.^[61] The same Cross of liberty with the swastika is still seen on the coat of arms of [Mikkeli](#), wherein marshal Mannerheim and the general headquarters were situated, in both the [Winter war](#) and [Continuation war](#).



Coat of arms on the town of Mikkeli

In December 2007, a silver replica of the [WWII](#) period Finnish air defence's relief ring decorated with a swastika became available as a part of a charity campaign.[\[62\]](#)

The original war time idea was that the public swap their precious metal rings for the State air defence's relief ring, made of iron.

As the symbol of Nazism



Since World War II, the swastika is often associated with the flag of [Nazi Germany](#) and the [Nazi Party](#) in the [Western world](#). Prior to this association, swastikas were used throughout the western world.



Plane of [Ernst Udet](#) used for aerobatic shows held during the [1936 Summer Olympics](#) on display in the [Polish Aviation Museum](#)

Further information: [Nazi symbolism](#)

In the wake of [widespread popular usage](#), the [Nazi Party](#) (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or NSDAP) formally adopted the swastika (in German: *Hakenkreuz* (hook-cross)) in 1920. This was used on the party's flag (*right*), badge, and armband.

In his 1925 work [Mein Kampf](#), [Adolf Hitler](#) wrote that: *I myself, meanwhile, after innumerable attempts, had laid down a final form; a flag with a red background, a white disk, and a black swastika in the middle. After long trials I also found a definite proportion between the size of the flag and the size of the white disk, as well as the shape and thickness of the swastika.*

When Hitler created a flag for the Nazi Party, he sought to incorporate both the swastika and "those revered colors expressive of our homage to the glorious past and which once brought so much honor to the German nation." (Red, white, and black were the colors of the [flag](#) of the old [German Empire](#).) He also stated: "As National Socialists, we see our program in our flag. In *red*, we see the **social** idea of the movement; in *white*, the **nationalistic** idea; in the *swastika*, the mission of the struggle for the victory of the [Aryan](#) man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work."[\[63\]](#)

The swastika was also understood as "the symbol of the creating, acting life" (das Symbol des schaffenden, wirkenden Lebens) and as "race emblem of Germanism" (Rasseabzeichen des Germanentums).[\[64\]](#)

The use of the swastika was incorporated by Nazi theorists with their conjecture of Aryan cultural descent of the German people. Following the [Nordicist](#) version of the [Aryan invasion theory](#), the Nazis claimed that the early Aryans of India, from whose Vedic tradition the swastika sprang, were the prototypical white invaders. The concept of [racial purity](#) was an ideology central to Nazism, though it is now considered mostly [unscientific](#). For [Alfred Rosenberg](#), the Aryans of India were both a model to be imitated and a warning of the dangers of the spiritual and racial "confusion" that, he believed, arose from the close proximity of races. Thus, they saw fit to co-opt the sign as a symbol of the Aryan [master race](#). The use of the swastika as a symbol of the [Aryan race](#) dates back to writings of [Emile Burnouf](#). Following many other writers, the German nationalist poet [Guido von List](#) believed it to be a uniquely Aryan symbol. Before the Nazis, the swastika was already in use as a symbol of German *völkisch* nationalist movements ([Völkische Bewegung](#)). In *Deutschland Erwache* ([ISBN 0-912138-69-6](#)), Ulric of England (*sic*) says:

[...] what inspired Hitler to use the swastika as a symbol for the NSDAP was its use by the [Thule Society](#) (German: Thule-Gesellschaft) since there were many connections between them and the DAP ... from 1919 until the summer of 1921 Hitler used the special Nationalsozialistische library of Dr. Friedrich Krohn, a very active member of the *Thule-Gesellschaft* ... Dr. Krohn was also the dentist from Sternberg who was named by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* as the designer of a flag very similar to one that Hitler designed in 1920 ... during the summer of 1920, the first party flag was shown at Lake Tegernsee ... these home-made ... early flags were not preserved, the *Ortsgruppe München* (Munich Local Group) flag was generally regarded as the first flag of the Party.

José Manuel Erbez says:

The first time the swastika was used with an "Aryan" meaning was on December 25, 1907, when the self-named [Order of the New Templars](#), a secret society founded by [Adolf Joseph] Lanz von Liebenfels, hoisted at Werfenstein Castle (Austria) a yellow flag with a swastika and four [fleurs-de-lys](#).[\[65\]](#)

However, Liebenfels was drawing on an already established use of the symbol. On March 14, 1933, shortly after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany, the NSDAP flag was hoisted alongside Germany's national colors. It was adopted as the sole national flag on September 15, 1935 (see [Nazi Germany](#)).

The swastika was used for badges and flags throughout [Nazi Germany](#), particularly for government and military organizations, but also for "popular" organizations such as the *Reichsbund Deutsche Jägerschaft* (German Hunting Society).[\[66\]](#)

While the DAP and the NSDAP had used both right-facing and left-facing swastikas, the right-facing swastika was used consistently from 1920 onwards. However, Ralf Stelter notes that the swastika flag

used on land had a right-facing swastika on both sides, while the ensign (naval flag) had it printed through so that a left-facing swastika would be seen when looking at the ensign with the flagpole to the right.[\[67\]](#)

Several variants are found:

- ♣ a 45° black swastika on a white disc as in the NSDAP and national flags;
- ♣ a 45° black swastika on a white lozenge (e.g., [Hitler Youth](#)[\[68\]](#));
- ♣ a 45° black swastika with a white outline was painted on the tail of aircraft of the [Luftwaffe](#);
- ♣ a 45° black swastika outlined by thin white and black lines on a white disc (e.g., the German War Ensign[\[69\]](#));
- ♣ an upright black swastika outlined by thin white and black lines on a white disc (e.g., [Personal standard of Adolf Hitler](#) in which a gold wreath encircles the swastika; the *Schutzstaffel*; and the *Reichsdienstflagge*, in which a black circle encircles the swastika);
- ♣ small gold, silver, black, or white 45° swastikas, often lying on or being held by an eagle, on many badges and flags.[\[70\]](#)



Divisional insignia of 11.SS-Freiwilligen-Panzergrrenadier-Division *Nordland*

- ♣ a swastika with curved outer arms forming a broken circle, as worn by the [SS Nordland Division](#).[\[71\]](#)

There were attempts to amalgamate Nazi and Hindu use of the swastika, notably by the French writer [Savitri Devi](#) who declared Hitler an [Avatar](#) of [Vishnu](#) (see [Nazi mysticism](#)).

Post-WWII stigmatization in Western countries

Because of its use by [Nazi Germany](#), the swastika since the 1930s has been largely associated with Nazism and [white supremacy](#) in most Western countries. As a result, all of its use, or its use as a Nazi or hate symbol is prohibited in some jurisdictions. Because of the stigma attached to the symbol, many buildings that have contained the symbol as decoration have had the symbol removed. [Steven Heller](#), of the [School of Visual Arts](#), has argued that from the moment it was "misappropriated" by the Nazis, it became a mark and weapon of hate, and could not be redeemed.[\[72\]](#)

Germany

Further information: [Strafgesetzbuch § 86a](#)

The German (and Austrian) postwar [criminal code](#) makes the public showing of the *Hakenkreuz* (the swastika) and other Nazi symbols illegal and punishable, except for scholarly reasons. It is even censored from the illustrations on boxes of model kits, and the decals that come in the box. Modellers seeking an accurate rendition often have to either stencil on the marking, or purchase separate decals. It is also censored from the reprints of 1930s railway timetables published by the Reichsbahn. The eagle remains, but appears to be holding a solid black circle between its talons. The swastikas on Hindu and Jain temples are exempt, as religious symbols cannot be banned in Germany.

A German fashion company was investigated for using traditional British-made folded leather buttons after complaints that they resembled swastikas. In response, [Esprit](#) destroyed two hundred thousand catalogues.[\[73\]\[74\]](#)

A controversy was stirred by the decision of several police departments to begin inquiries against anti-fascists.[\[75\]](#) In late 2005 police raided the offices of the [punk rock](#) label and mail order store "Nix Gut Records" and confiscated merchandise depicting crossed-out swastikas and fists smashing swastikas. In 2006 the [Stade](#) police department started an inquiry against anti-fascist youths using a placard depicting a person dumping a swastika into a trashcan. The placard was displayed in opposition to the campaign of right-wing nationalist parties for local elections.[\[76\]](#)

On Friday, March 17, 2006, a member of the [Bundestag](#), [Claudia Roth](#) reported herself to the German police for displaying a crossed-out swastika in multiple demonstrations against Neo-Nazis, and subsequently got the Bundestag to suspend her immunity from prosecution. She intended to show the absurdity of charging anti-fascists with using fascist symbols: "We don't need prosecution of non-violent young people engaging against right-wing extremism." On March 15, 2007, the [Federal Court of Justice of Germany](#) (Bundesgerichtshof) holding that the crossed-out symbols were "clearly directed against a revival of national-socialist endeavors", thereby settling the dispute for the future.[\[77\]\[78\]\[79\]](#)

European Union

The [European Union's Executive Commission](#) proposed a European Union-wide anti-racism law in 2001, but European Union states failed to agree on the balance between prohibiting racism and freedom of expression.[\[80\]](#) An attempt to ban the swastika across the EU in early 2005 failed after objections from the British Government and others. In early 2007, while Germany held the European Union presidency, Berlin proposed that the European Union should follow German Criminal Law and criminalize the [denial of the Holocaust](#) and the display of Nazi symbols including the swastika, which is based on the Ban on the Symbols of Unconstitutional Organisations Act. This led to an opposition campaign by Hindu groups across Europe against a ban on the swastika. They pointed out that the swastika has been around for 5,000 years as a symbol of peace.[\[81\]\[82\]](#) The proposal to ban the swastika was dropped by Berlin from the proposed European Union wide anti-racism laws on January 29, 2007.[\[80\]](#)

Legislation in other European countries

2. In Hungary, it is a criminal misdemeanour to publicly display "totalitarian symbols", including the swastika, the [SS](#) insignia and the [Arrow Cross](#), punishable by fine.[\[83\]](#) Display for academic, educational, artistic or journalistic reasons is allowed. Note that the communist symbols of [hammer and sickle](#) and the [red star](#) are also regarded as a totalitarian symbols and have the same restriction by Hungarian criminal law.
3. In Poland, public display of Nazi symbols, including the Nazi swastika, is a criminal offence punishable by up to eight years of imprisonment.[\[84\]](#)

Latin America

- ♣ The use of the swastika or any Nazi symbol, their manufacture, distribution or broadcasting, with the intent to propagate Nazism is a crime in [Brazil](#) as dictated by article 20, paragraph 1, of federal statute 7.716, passed in 1989. The penalty is a two to five years prison term and a fine.[\[85\]](#)
- ♣ The flag of the [Kuna Yala](#) autonomous territory of [Panama](#) is based on a swastika design. In 1942 a ring was added to the centre of the flag to differentiate it from the symbol of the [Nazi](#) party (this version subsequently fell into disuse).[\[31\]](#)

Media

In 2010, Microsoft officially spoke out against the use of the swastika in the [first-person shooter Call of Duty: Black Ops](#). In *Black Ops*, players are allowed to customize their name tags to represent, essentially, whatever they want. The swastika can be created and used, but Stephen Toulouse, director of [Xbox Live](#) policy and enforcement, stated that players with the symbol on their name tag will be banned (if someone reports as inappropriate) from Xbox Live.[\[86\]](#)

Satirical use

A book featuring "120 Funny Swastika Cartoons" was published in 2008 by New York Cartoonist Sam Gross. The author said he created the cartoons in response to excessive news coverage given to swastika vandals, that his intent "...is to reduce the swastika to something humorous."[\[87\]](#)

The powerful symbolism acquired by the swastika has often been used in graphic design and propaganda as a means of [drawing Nazi comparisons](#); examples include the cover of [Stuart Eizenstat's](#) 2003 book [Imperfect Justice](#),[\[88\]](#) publicity materials for [Constantin Costa-Gavras's](#) 2002 film *Amen*,[\[89\]](#) and a billboard that was erected opposite the [U.S. Interests Section](#) in [Havana](#), Cuba, in 2004, which juxtaposed images of the [Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse](#) pictures with a swastika.

Controversies over Asian products

In recent years, controversy has erupted when consumer goods bearing the symbol have been exported (often unintentionally) to North America.

When a ten-year-old boy in [Lynbrook, New York](#) bought a set of [Pokémon](#) cards imported from Japan in 1999, his parents complained after finding that two of the cards contained the [Manji](#) symbol which is the mirror image of the Nazi swastika. This also caused a lot of concern amongst fans from Jewish communities. [Nintendo](#) of America announced that the cards would be discontinued, explaining that what was acceptable in one culture was not necessarily so in another; their action was welcomed by the [Anti-Defamation League](#) who recognised that there was no intention to be offensive but said that international commerce meant that "isolating [the Swastika] in Asia would just create more problems."[\[90\]](#)

In 2002, [Christmas crackers](#) containing plastic toy [pandas](#) sporting swastikas were pulled from shelves after complaints from consumers in Canada. The manufacturer, based in China, explained the symbol was presented in a traditional sense and not as a reference to the Nazis, and apologized to the customers for the cross-cultural mixup.[\[91\]](#) In 2007, Spanish fashion chain Zara withdrew a handbag from its stores after a customer in Britain complained swastikas were embroidered on it. The bags were made by a supplier in India and inspired by commonly used Hindu symbols, which include the swastika.[\[92\]](#)

Contemporary use in Asia

South Asia



Jain - Five Coloured Flag

In the [Indosphere](#) (South Asia, [Greater India](#)), the swastika remains ubiquitous as a symbol of wealth and good fortune. In India and Nepal, electoral ballot papers are stamped with a round swastika-like pattern (to ensure that the accidental ink imprint on the other side of a folded ballot paper can be correctly identified as such).^[93] Many businesses and other organisations, such as the [Ahmedabad Stock Exchange](#) and the [Nepal Chamber of Commerce](#),^[94] use the swastika in their logos. The red swastika was suggested as an emblem of [International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#) in India and Sri Lanka, but the idea was not implemented.^[95] Swastikas can be found practically everywhere in Indian and Nepalese cities, on buses, buildings, auto-rickshaws, and clothing. Swastika continues to be prominently used in Hindus' religious ceremonies and temples, and is recognised as a Hindu religious symbol. Interpretations of the Vedic scriptures have in recent times have pointed out to the erroneous use of counter clock motion swastika in Hindu auspicious rituals that were used to evoke the 'Shakti' in tantric rituals. In India Swastik(Swasthik) is a commonly used name for persons, especially among Jain communities.

East Asia

Swastikas are widely used in Buddhist temples in China, and the symbol is most commonly associated with Buddhism.

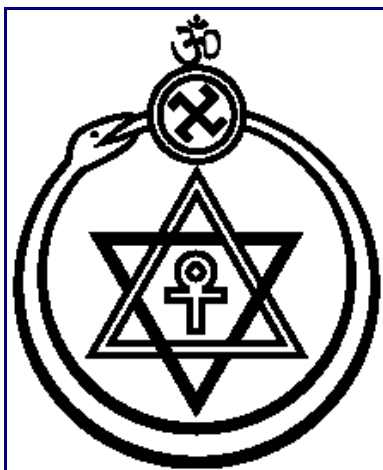
[Japanese maps](#) use the swastika symbol to denote a [Buddhist temple](#).^[96] [Hirosaki City](#) in [Aomori Prefecture](#) uses this symbol as official emblem.

In [Korea](#) and [Taiwan](#), maps use the swastika symbol to denote a temple. The swastika is also a very common sight at both rural and urban [Buddhist](#) Temples.

Central Asia

In 2005, authorities in Tajikistan called for the widespread adoption of the swastika as a national [symbol](#). President [Emomali Rahmonov](#) declared the swastika an [Aryan](#) symbol and 2006 to be "the year of Aryan culture," which would be a time to "study and popularize Aryan contributions to the history of the world civilization, raise a new generation (of Tajiks) with the spirit of national self-determination, and develop deeper ties with other ethnicities and cultures."^[97]

New religious movements



The seal of the Theosophical Society

Besides the use as a religious symbol in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, which can be traced to pre-

modern traditions, the swastika is also used by a number of [new religious movements](#) established in the modern period.

The [Theosophical Society](#) uses a swastika as part of its seal, along with an [Aum](#), a hexagram, a [star of David](#), an [Ankh](#) and an [Ouroboros](#). Unlike the much more recent Raëlian movement (see below), the Theosophical Society symbol has been free from controversy, and the seal is still used. The current seal also includes the text "There is no religion higher than truth."[\[98\]](#)

The [Raëlian Movement](#), who believe that Extra-Terrestrials originally created all life on earth, use a symbol that is often the source of considerable controversy: an interlaced [star of David](#) and a swastika. The Raelians state that the Star of David represents infinity in space whereas the swastika represents infinity in time i.e. there being no beginning and no end in time, and everything being cyclic.[\[99\]](#) In 1991, the symbol was changed to remove the swastika, out of respect to the victims of the [Holocaust](#), but as of 2007 has been restored to its original form.[\[100\]](#)

The [Tantra](#)-based [new religious movement](#) [Ananda Marga](#) (Devanagari: , meaning *Path of Bliss*) uses a motif similar to the Raëlians, but in their case the apparent star of David is defined as intersecting triangles with no specific reference to Jewish culture.

The [Falun Gong qigong](#) movement uses a symbol that features a large swastika surrounded by four smaller (and rounded) ones, interspersed with [yin-and-yang](#) symbols. The usage is taken from traditional Chinese symbolism, and here alludes to a [chakra](#)-like portion of the esoteric human anatomy, located in the stomach.

The [Odinic Rite](#) claims the [fylfot](#) as a holy symbol of [Odinism](#), citing the pre-Christian [Germanic use of the symbol](#).

⤴ [Brigid's cross](#)

⤴ [Camunian rose](#)

⤴ [Celtic cross](#)

⤴ [Fascist symbolism](#)

⤴ The [Red Swastika Society](#) (China)

⤴ [Solar symbols](#)

⤴ [Sun cross](#)

⤴ [Swastika curve](#)

⤴ [Swastika Stone](#)

⤴ [Tursaansydän](#)

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Notes

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External links

General

- ⤴ [History of the Swastika](#) (*US Holocaust Memorial Museum*)
- ⤴ [The Origins of the Swastika](#) *BBC News*
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Dharmic religions

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- ⤴ [Om, Swastika and Shivalinga](#) (Book by Narsibhai Patel)

Nazi use

- ⤴ [The variants of the NS-swastika flag](#)
- ⤴ [Documentary about the use of the swastika in the Third Reich](#)
- ⤴ From [Flags of the World](#):
 - ⤴ [Origins of the Swastika Flag \(Third Reich, Germany\)](#) (collection of links and comments)
 - ⤴ [Neo-Nazi flags](#) (links to other *FOTW* pages)

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Cross symbols