

## Original Meaning of Peace

I wish this post didn't need a preface, that I could just begin and the conclusion would be satisfactory on its own, but the symbol has been steeped in so much hate and horror that to just begin would be heartlessly rude. So I am sorry if I offend anyone, if your views are too steadfast to be changed or even affected by the truth of what I have to say, just know that I only want to demonstrate the fluidity of meaning. In 1920 Hitler decided that the Nazi Party needed a symbol, something easily recognizable as their mark. He chose the *swastika*, and to this day majority of people only see the atrocities of WWII assigned to it. But the *swastika* never before meant that much pain and suffering, that symbol has been around for more than 3000 years representing life, sun, power, strength, and good luck. It comes from the old Sanskrit *svastika*- to be good. For centuries the *swastika* was used by many Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and southern European cultures as having positive connotations. They each had different names for the symbol, but it was well known as one of life and good fortune. The Native Americans even adopted it as a sign of peace, no one knows exactly when, but it shows that this symbol transcended the Atlantic. Up until the Third Reich and the Holocaust, this sign didn't hurt anybody. It is kind of sickening that it only takes one man, one group, to destroy thousands years worth of good intentions, and pervert a symbol of love into one of hate. The current problem is should we acknowledge that the *swastika* is now forevermore a sign of evil? Should groups and cultures far older than the Nazis who still have a love for it and remember its original meaning come down with censure? I really do not think it is fair that its entire existence will be inked out until the point where it is only known for despicableness. There is a movement to make the counterclockwise *swastika* (*sauvastika*), the one the Nazis used, mean bad-luck and misfortune as it did in the ancient days and the clockwise *swastika* have back its original meaning. I wish in the near future we can look at the right kind of *swastika* without fear or hate, because it will then also be a representation of hope.