



# THE HISTORY OF A TRADE MARK

MANY have wondered whether the peculiar design used as a trade-mark by the Northern Pacific Railway Company was adopted by them in a haphazard manner, or whether a real significance attaches to it; whether it is simply an ingenious geometric device, or whether in its origin, meaning, and adoption there is hidden a story.

It is not a creature of accident—in the sense referred to—and there *is* a tale and history back of it.

It is not hard to relate its origin; it is easy to tell the story of its adoption; but when it comes to conveying to the general reader a clear idea of its original and ancient meaning, a somewhat difficult task confronts the relator, for reasons which will appear.

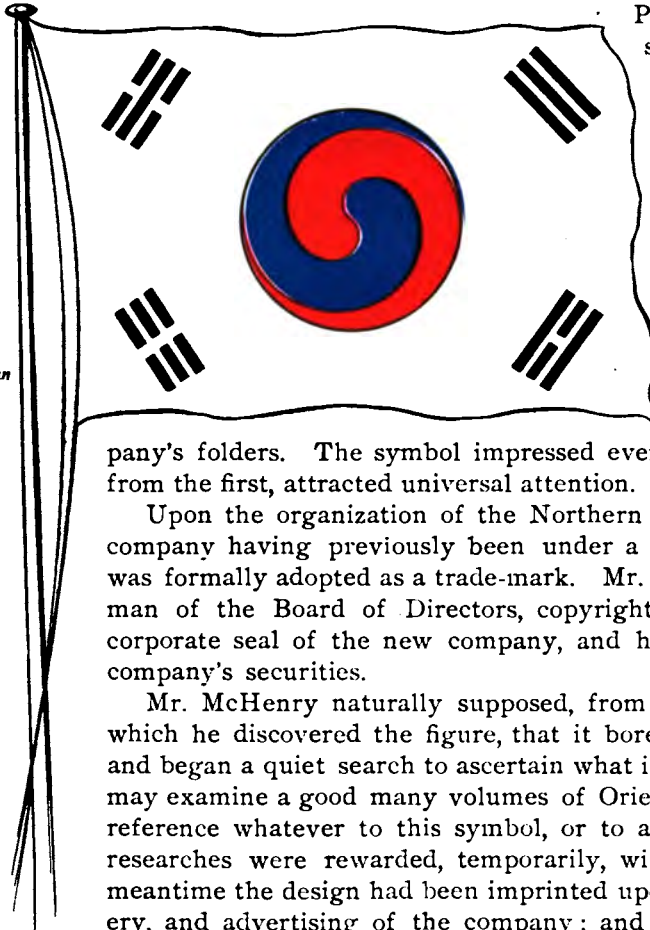
The original symbol, of which the trade-mark is an adaptation, is Chinese in invention. The diagram itself was evolved in the eleventh century A. D., but the ideas which it represents date back to more than 3,000 years before the Christ child was cradled in the manger at Bethlehem. It is really, therefore, more than 5,200 years old, and may, indeed, be much older. It is known as the Great Chinese Monad, or more commonly, perhaps, as the Diagram of the Great Extreme.

## ITS ADOPTION.

The design was discovered and adapted to its present use in 1893. Mr. E. H. McHenry and Mr. Chas. S. Fee, then, as now, the Chief Engineer and General Passenger and Ticket Agent of the Company,

respectively, are principally to be credited with its discovery and adoption.

The Northern Pacific was in search of a trade-mark. Many designs had been considered and rejected. Mr. McHenry, while visiting the Korean exhibit at the World's Fair, was struck with a geometric design that appeared on the Korean flag. It was simple, yet effective—plain, yet striking. At once the idea came to him that it was just the symbol for the long-sought-for trade-mark. With but slight modification it lent itself readily to the purpose. After Mr. McHenry returned to St.



*The Korean Flag.*

Paul, Mr. Fee sent to him several designs bearing on the trade-mark idea, for elaboration in his drafting-room. Mr. McHenry added to them the Korean figure. Mr. Fee was at once impressed with this, added the words "Yellowstone Park Line," and sent the trade-mark forth into the world emblazoned upon the com-

pany's folders. The symbol impressed every one favorably, and has, from the first, attracted universal attention.

Upon the organization of the Northern Pacific Railway—the old company having previously been under a receivership—the design was formally adopted as a trade-mark. Mr. Edward D. Adams, chairman of the Board of Directors, copyrighted it, adopted it for the corporate seal of the new company, and had it engraved upon the company's securities.

Mr. McHenry naturally supposed, from the circumstances under which he discovered the figure, that it bore an Oriental significance, and began a quiet search to ascertain what it was. As it happens, one may examine a good many volumes of Oriental lore and discover no reference whatever to this symbol, or to anything like it, and these researches were rewarded, temporarily, with little success. In the meantime the design had been imprinted upon the documents, stationery, and advertising of the company; and from the windows of its ticket offices in all the large cities between the Atlantic and the Pacific the unique device attracted the attention of the passer-by.

#### ITS HISTORY AND MEANING.

It may be that the fact that the trade-mark was first seen on the Korean flag diverted investigation, at the start, into rather unproduc-

tive channels. The symbol is not original, apparently, with the Koreans, but was appropriated by them from the Chinese.

The first authentic and definite information, in detail, relative to the Monad came from Rev. W. S. Holt, D. D., of Portland, Ore. Mr. Holt had been, for twelve years, a Presbyterian missionary in China, and was familiar with the symbol and its meaning there. As he was walking along the street he noticed the trade-mark painted upon the windows of the office of the company. It struck him as peculiar, and entering the office he made some inquiries, and then, in conversation with Mr. A. D. Charlton, Assistant General Passenger Agent, informed him of the general character and meaning of the design. Through Mr. Holt's efforts much additional information of value was secured, and now that a start was made in the right direction, investigation was also successfully pushed through other channels.

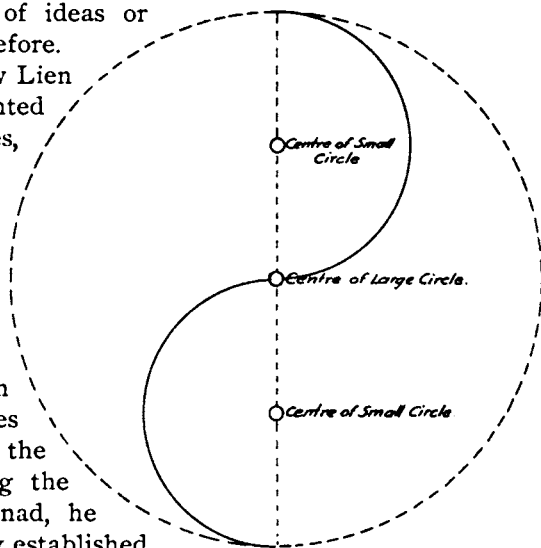
At first sight the figure appears to be rather an involved one. An analysis of it soon corrects this impression. It is really quite simple. On the vertical diameter of a circle, inscribe on opposite sides of this diameter and one above and one below the center thereof, semi-circles having diameters of one-half the larger diameter, or the radius of the large circle, and the symbol is outlined.

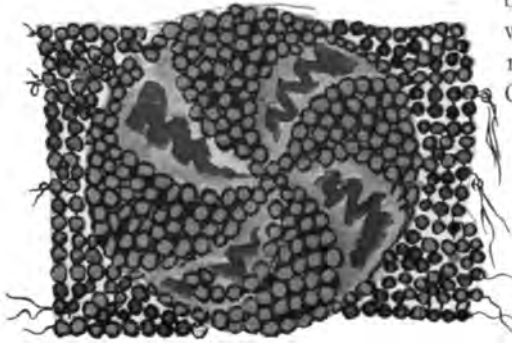
As previously stated, the symbol itself may be said to be an ideographic or pictographic representation of ideas or principles enunciated many centuries before.

In A. D. 1017 a young Chinaman, Chow Lien Ki, was born. As a young man he delighted in nature, and roamed the hills and dales, and to this we owe the existence of the trade-mark, and Chow Lien Ki the fame to which he attained.

One day in his rambling he found a cave. The cave ran through a hill and had an entrance on each side of it. Both entrances were double crescent shaped, but the cave itself was round as a moon inside. Out of these crescentic entrances and the moon-shaped cave he evolved the diagram that has become noted among the Chinese. This diagram, the Great Monad, he used to illustrate a system of philosophy established by Fuh Hi more than 3,000 years B. C., and, of course, 4,000 years before Chow found his wonderful cave.

From the mysteries of an ancient Chinese philosophy it has now been dragged forth to illustrate the modern American system of transportation. It has, so to speak, leaped across a gulf of nine centuries,





Sample of Bead Work of American Plains Indians, exhibiting crude resemblance to *Monad and Tah Gook.*

become a modern invention, as it were, and now does duty as the trademark of the Northern Pacific Railway Company.

But what was the strange philosophy that such a symbol was designed to illustrate, and how did it illustrate it?

This involves a plunge into the sea of metaphysics, from which let us hope to emerge "clothed and in our right minds."

We can hardly explain the ratiocinations of this young Chinaman's mind by which he came to believe that the figure really did represent what he intended it should, but we can at least try to state the case as lucidly as it will allow, and let the reader draw his own conclusion. It will be noticed that, however much the Chinese may deserve to be called heathen, they could, even in Fuh Hi's time, hold their own in abstruse speculation. Rev. Dr. W. A. P. Martin, evidently a close student and an authority on things Chinese, observes in his "The Chinese" (p. 277) that the Jesuits long ago pointed out that the only way in which Europeans could claim preëminence over the Chinese was in their mathematical knowledge and "the verities of the Christian faith."

Fuh Hi's philosophy is stated as follows: "The Illimitable produced the Great Extreme; the Great Extreme produced the Two Principles; the Two Principles produced the Four Figures," and from the Four Figures were developed what the Chinese call the Eight Diagrams of Fuh Hi, in 3322 B. C., according to the chronology of Doctor Legge, the best-known English sinologue.

The Two Principles, which the Chinese say were produced by the Great Extreme, are represented thus :



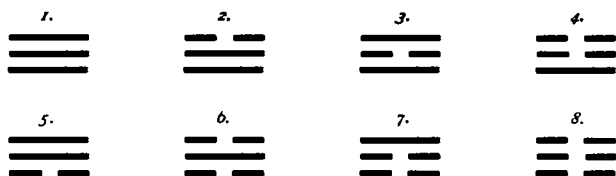
From these Two Principles the Four Figures were produced by placing the Two Principles first over the one and then over the other, thus :



By placing each of the Four Figures under each of the Two Principles in succession, the Eight Diagrams were formed, thus :



Design found on Pueblo (Zuni) Indian Pottery, resembling Tah Gook.



To the ordinary person this will seem perfectly meaningless, or more, arrant nonsense. To the Chinaman it has great significance. To us the Two Principles, Four Figures, and the Eight Diagrams are more likely to appear to be an ingenious combination or arrangement of the letters L and M of the Morse telegraphic code, had that been known to Fuh Hi.

In formulating a statement regarding this remarkable philosophy, Mr. Holt quotes from Choo Foo Tsz — a noted interpreter of, and commentator upon, the Confucian classics in the twelfth century A. D. — as follows :

“The Great Extreme is merely the immaterial principle; it is found in the male and female principles in Nature, in the five elements, and in all things. From the time the Great Extreme came into operation, all things were produced by transformation. The Great Extreme has neither residence, form, nor place which you can assign to it. If you speak of it before its development, then, previous to that emanation it was perfect stillness. *Motion and rest*, with the male and female principles of Nature (Force and Matter), are only the descent and embodiment of this principle. It is the immaterial principle of the two Powers, the four Forms, and the eight Changes of Nature. We can not say that it does not exist, and yet no form of corporeity can be ascribed to it. It produced one male and one female principle of Nature, which are called the Dual Powers.”

It would appear that the two central and peculiar figures of the trade-mark were meant by Chow Lien Ki as substitutes for, or a more graphic representation of, the Two Principles themselves. I have seen no clear statement on this point, but infer that his inventive mind saw a more forceful way of picturing the ideas to be represented by them than the bare lines themselves did.

These Two Principles in Chow's figure — the white and black or red and black commas or tadpoles, as you wish, of the trade-mark — are known as the YANG and YIN, and in the original they have a small black eye in the white or red, and a white eye in the black portion. These eyes are intended to show, according to Rev. Doctor

*Triskelion Carved in Ash-Wood, from Scotland, showing resemblance to Tah Book.*



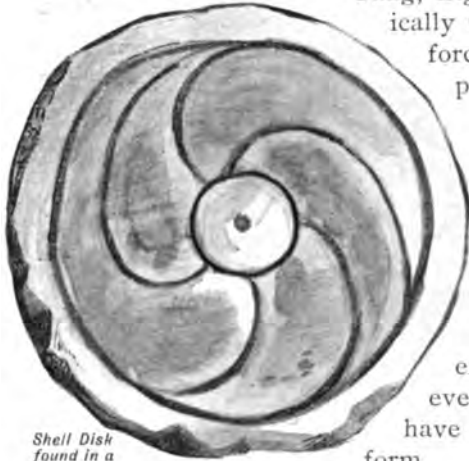
*Adaptation of the Tah Book found in Anam.*

Du Bose, that there is a male germ in the female and a female germ in the male principle.

Although the Two Principles, or the Dual Powers as they are also called, are now almost universally understood in China in a phallic or sexual sense, Doctor Martin insists that the primitive meanings were :

Yang, Light, and Yin, Darkness, and that philosophically they stood for certain positive and negative forces. As, however, they stand for the creative principle in every sense of the word, the phallic signification attached to them would seem to be a corollary of the meanings *light* and *darkness*.

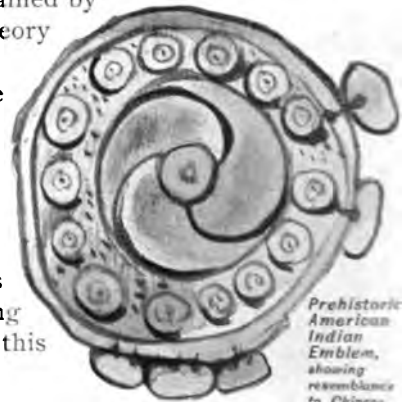
In stating that the Yang and Yin stand for light and darkness and the sexual or creative idea, practically about all that there is to say as to the original notion and its pictorial expression has been said. The expansion or elaboration of the idea, however, is quite another matter, and the changes have been rung upon it in every conceivable form.



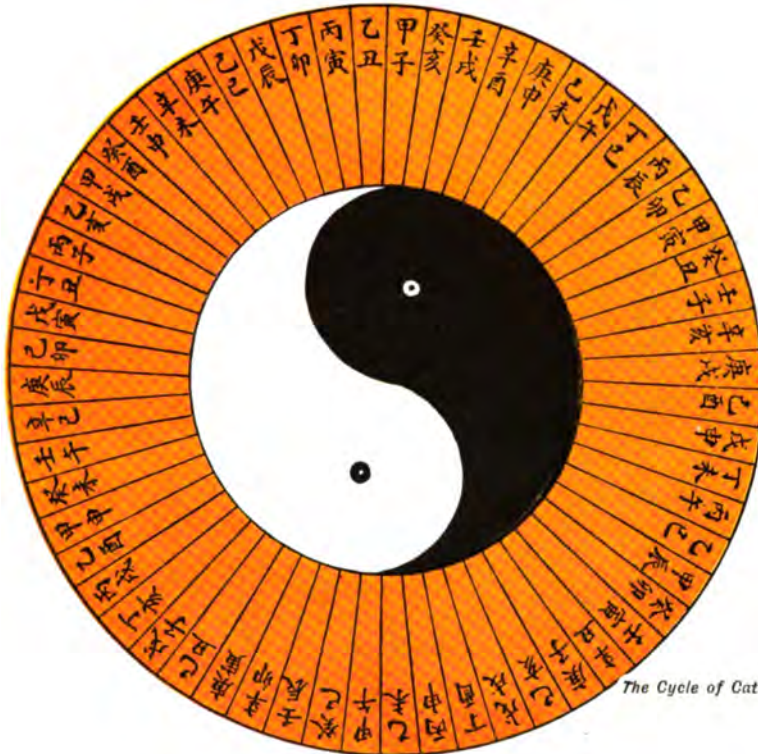
Shell Disk  
found in a  
Mound  
of the  
Mound  
Builders in  
Tennessee,  
resembling  
Tah Gook.

Dr. S. Wells Williams, Professor of the Chinese Language and Literature at Yale College, in remarking upon Chu Hi's (not Fuh Hi) philosophical notions, well says, regarding the universal application of the Dual Powers, or Yang and Yin: "His system of materialism \* \* \* allows scope for the vagaries of every individual who thinks he understands and can apply it to explain whatever phenomena come in his way. Heat and cold, light and darkness, fire and water, mind and matter, every agent, power, and substance known or supposed, are regarded as endued with these principles, which thus form a simple solution for every question. The infinite changes in the universe, the multiform actions and reactions in Nature, and all the varied consequences seen and unseen are alike easily explained by this form of cause and effect, this ingenious theory of evolution."

This expresses it in a nutshell. It were easy to quote page after page of varied renderings of the idea to fit pretty nearly everything under the sun. A few of these are here reproduced. Those who are given to such speculations will read them with interest; others, while looking upon them as vagaries and curiosities, will see how pervasive among the Chinese are the ideas symbolized by this peculiar trade-mark.



Prehistoric  
American  
Indian  
Emblem,  
showing  
resemblance  
to Chinese  
Mound.



The Cycle of Cathay.

The Chinese cycle consists of sixty years, each with a separate name. Their names are here ranged in the outer circle, and read from the top towards the left hand. The present year (1896) is the thirty-second of the seventy-sixth cycle from the beginning of the cyclic era. The figures in the inner space are the dual forces, Yin and Yang, symbolized by darkness and light, which form the starting point of Chinese philosophy.

To quote again from Doctor Williams : "Heaven was formless, an utter chaos; the whole mass was nothing but confusion. Order was first produced in the pure ether, and out of it the universe came forth; the universe produced air, and air the milky way.

"When the pure male principle Yang had been diluted, it formed the heavens; the heavy and thick parts coagulated, and formed the earth. The refined particles united very soon, but the union of the thick and heavy went on slowly; therefore the heavens came into existence first, and the earth afterward. From the subtle essence of heaven and earth, the dual principles Yin and Yang were formed; from their joint operation came the four seasons, and these putting forth their energies gave birth to all the products of the earth. The warm effluence of the Yang being condensed, produced fire; and the finest parts of fire formed the sun. The cold exhalations of the Yin being likewise condensed, produced water; and the finest parts of the watery substance formed the moon."

NOTE.—The above illustration and explanation are taken from "The Chinese," by Rev. Dr. W. A. P. Martin.



General Ticket Offices :

- (1) at Portland.
- (2) at Tacoma.
- (3) at Spokane.
- (4) at Seattle.



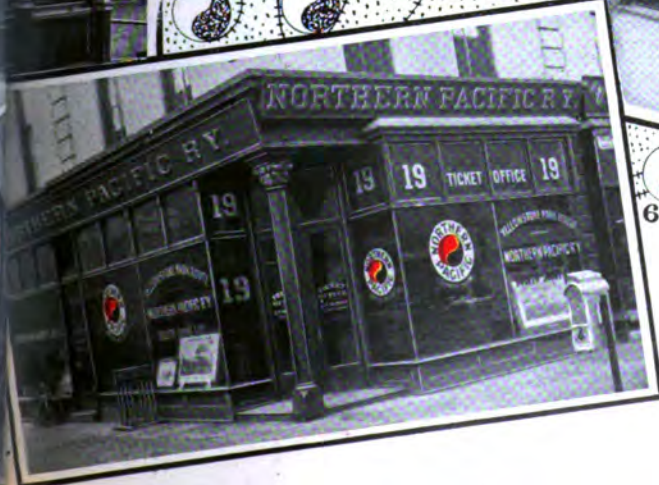
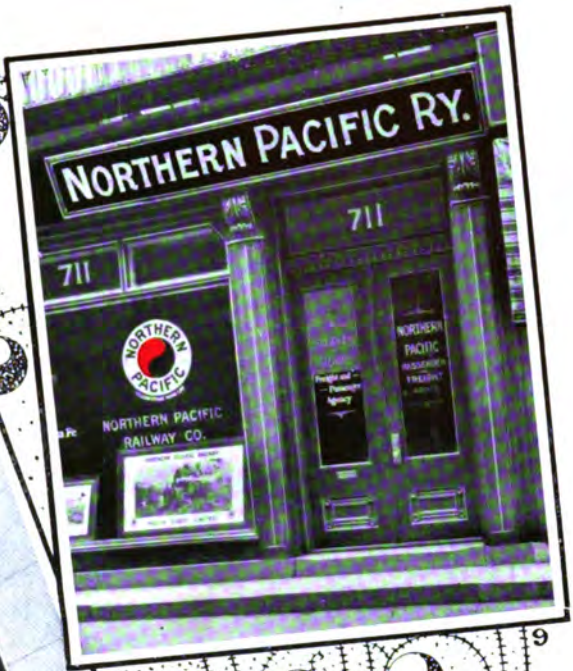
TICKET OFFICES





General Ticket Offices :

- (5) at Duluth.
- (6) at Minneapolis.
- (7) at Chicago.
- (8) at Indianapolis.
- (9) at Philadelphia.



SHOWING  
TRADE-MARK



It is not difficult to detect, in the foregoing, a striking similarity to the "nebular hypothesis" of the present-day astronomy. A glance at a statement of this theory will disclose the resemblance at once.

Sir John F. Davis, in his "History of China," quotes from the commentator Choo Foo Tsz, already mentioned, as follows:

"The celestial principle was male, the terrestrial female; all animate and inanimate nature may be distinguished into masculine and feminine. Even vegetable productions are male and female, as, for instance, there is female hemp, and male and female bamboo. Nothing exists independent of the Yin and Yang.' Although the Chinese do not characterize the sexes of plants, and arrange them systematically as we do after Linnæus, they use the above phraseology in regard to them; nor do they confine it to the vegetable and animal creation only, but extend the same to every part of Nature. Numbers themselves have their genders. A unit and every odd number are male; two and every even number, female.

"The above might, with no great impropriety, be styled 'a sexual system of the universe.' They maintain that when from the union of the Yang and Yin all existences, both animate and inanimate, had been produced, the sexual principle was

conveyed to, and became inherent in, all of them. Thus heaven, the sun, day, etc., are considered of the male gender; earth, the moon, night, etc., of the female gender. This notion pervades every department of knowledge in China. It exists in their theories of anatomy and medicine, and is constantly referred to on every subject."

Doctor Martin says (p. 126, "The Chinese"): "*Woo Kieh* produced *Tai Kieh*, *Tai Kieh* produced *Yin* and *Yang*, and these dual principles generated all things. This is the lucid cosmogony of the Chinese, and it adds little to its clearness to render the above terms, as they are usually translated, by the 'great extreme,' the 'male and female powers,' etc." Again, he says (pp. 162-3): "The common statement given in Chinese histories may be freely rendered in the following form: 'The indefinite (1—*Woo Kieh*) produced the finite or definite (2—*Tai Kieh*), the elements of Nature as yet in a chaotic state. This chaos evolved the principle of *Yang*, or light. The *Yang* produced *Yin*, i. e.,



darkness followed in the way of alternation ; and the *Yin* and *Yang* (3) together produced all things from the alternations of day and night, and the succession of the seasons.’”

Commenting on this, he says: “Commencing with this simple idea, the *Yin* and *Yang* have been gradually metamorphosed into mysterious entities, the foundation of a universal sexual system, and incessantly active in every department of Nature—at once the fountain of the deepest philosophy and the aliment of the grossest superstition.”

Without dipping deeper into this recondite discussion, an idea has been given, I hope, of the significance of the Great Monad, or the Trade-mark, to the 400,000,000 of Chinese.

Metaphysicians have noted a parallelism between the Yang and Yin and the mundane egg of the Egyptians ; have seen coincidences between it and its philosophical elaboration and the philosophies of still other nations, Persia, India, etc., and even between it and the Christian Scriptures.

The symbol is very generally used by the Chinese in the ordinary affairs of life. It is suspended over the doors of residences as a charm ; it is used to ward off evil influences ; it is much used by fortune-tellers and necromancers. The Japanese form of the Monad is also used as a symbol of good luck.

A common form in which it is found is shown in the illustration on the following page, where will be seen the *Tai Kich*, or Yang and Yin, with the eyes surrounded by the Eight Diagrams.

The symbol was obtained from a Chinese store in Portland, is circular, and measures five and one-eighth inches in diameter, the Yin and Yang in the center measuring two and one-eighth inches across. The design is most commonly seen, though, on a board six to eighteen or twenty inches square, or one foot wide by two feet long, having the Eight Diagrams painted around it, as in the illustration of the circular Monad, so as to leave the Great Extreme in the center, which is used as a charm to ward off evil spirits. In this country these charms can be found in great numbers in some of the mercantile houses on Second Street, in Portland, and in similar establishments in San Francisco. The small ones can be carried around, while the larger ones are placed over doors and at other conspicuous places as a guard against evil spirits.

The Yin and Yang in the figure here shown are black and red ; the field surrounding them is green, and the Eight Diagrams are raised characters gilded.



As the Chinese use the figure, the colors of Yang and Yin are not important. While red and black are common, so also are white and black—used also by the Northern Pacific in one-color work—and red and green.

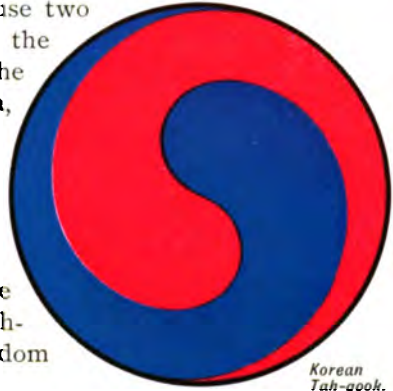


#### THE KOREAN TAH-GOOK.

Although the trade-mark is of Chinese origin, it was, as stated, first seen by a Northern Pacific official on the Korean flag. There seems to have been perfect free trade between the Orientalists, at least so far as philosophic ideas and symbols go. The emblem is found not only among the Koreans, but also in Japan. In Korea it is known as the Tah-gook—the Korean pronunciation of Tai Kieh—and its meaning

is practically identical with that in China. It is the national emblem of Korea.

The word Korea, Mr. Holt says, is derived from Kao, the first king, "Kaoli" being the form in which it appears among the Koreans. The Koreans, in speaking of their country, also use two Chinese words, "Chao Sien," pronounced by the Koreans, "Chosen," and meaning "before the dawn," or "morning calm." The name Korea, rather freely translated, means, therefore, "the land of the morning calm," from all of which is evolved our word Korea. The two principles of Nature—the Yang and Yin of the Chinese—are represented by red and blue in the Tah-gook. Red is the royal color; blue is the color of the east, the morning. The Tah-gook, therefore, to Koreans, means "The Kingdom of the Morning."



*Korean Tah-gook.*

The Koreans arrange the Yang and Yin horizontally or angularly instead of vertically. The Japanese use three heads instead of two, and the colors are red, blue, and green. The Japanese, the common people at least, regard the symbol with superstitious awe, and it is made in silver discs the size of a half-dollar and carried in the sleeve of the "kimono" as a charm.



*Chinese Monad.*

Mr. Forster H. Jenings, late of the Korean legation at Washington, says of the Tah-gook, after a careful investigation of Korean classical works: "It is found on graves dating back thousands of years B. C., and in every kind of climate, from the rattan groves of Anam to the icy shores of Yezo in the north of Japan. In the various countries the shape of the symbol has undergone but little change." Mr. Holt mentions having seen the

Eight Diagrams that usually accompany the Chinese emblem engraved on eight large and very ancient stones within the city limits of Hang Chow, China.

The eyes of the Yang and Yin in the Chinese Monad are wanting in the symbols as used by other nations.

In Korea the use and meanings of the Tah-gook seem nearly or quite as diffused and various as those of the Tai Kieh in China. On the Korean national flag the red and blue (Yang and Yin) are found upon a white field.

Accompanying this paper are certain illustrations drawn in colors, and kindly furnished by Mr. Jenings. Some of these are of the Monad and Tah-gook and its modifications in the east; others are of ancient drawings of other countries resembling them, more or less;



*Modification of Chinese Monad, as used in Japan.*

while still others show a similarity in design to the eastern figures, in the work of our own American Indians.

This is not the place for discussing these drawings, and the question as to whether the recurrence of the scroll or spiral is anything more than a very natural and varied use of a simple, easy, and ornamental geometric element is one for ethnologists and archaeologists. As used here the designs afford a curious and interesting comparison for the general reader. In the reports of the United States Bureau of Ethnology many instances can be found of the use of the spiral in ornamentation by the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, and shell ornaments covered with them have been taken from mounds made by the Mound builders, as shown in one of the illustrations.

Enough has been written to show the wide influence exercised among Oriental peoples by the Monad, Tai Kieh, Tah-gook, or Trade-mark, however one wishes to speak of it; how it permeates all life, actually and practically; how beautifully it lends itself to the mysteries of eastern philosophical speculation.

But note how appropriately it takes its place as the symbol or trade-mark of a great transportation company. Light and darkness, force and matter, motion and rest, fire and water, all are contained within this mysterious figure—and all are so closely related in the calling for which the emblem stands. Day and night the great freight and palatial passenger trains of the Northern Pacific Railway, through the agency of fire and water, are now in rapid motion and again at rest throughout the mid-continent region of the great republic of the Occident.

Where could a more appropriate emblem for a great transportation company be found than in this design? "Motion and rest," "force and matter," of which the figure conceives, are most effectively exemplified and manifested in the pursuit which it symbolizes. It would almost seem that Chow Lien Ki, with the far-seeing vision of the Yang and Yin, looked forward to that time in the nineteenth century when the Northern Pacific Railway, in need of a device emblematic of its calling, would be drawn to "The Diagram of the Great Extreme" formulated by himself and which had been awaiting its coming for five thousand years.

It would thus appear that one of the great transcontinental railway companies of the United States has, by the adoption of its unique trade-mark, linked closer together the old Chinese and Korean civilizations with the newer one of America; that the steel rails of the Northern Pacific, in connection with the steamships of its copartner in commerce, the Northern Pacific Steamship Company, have established a new bond between the young republic and the old empire, the Occident and the Orient.

There is still another and an interesting phase of the subject.

Mr. Sam Loyd, the puzzle genius of New York City, in a letter to Mr. McHenry, calls attention to the facility with which this emblem lends itself to the working out of geometric problems and puzzles. I call attention to one only, but that is peculiarly significant, considering the use made of the Monad by both the Chinese and Japanese.

It will be recalled that they use the symbol to ward off evil, etc., or in other words to bring them good luck.

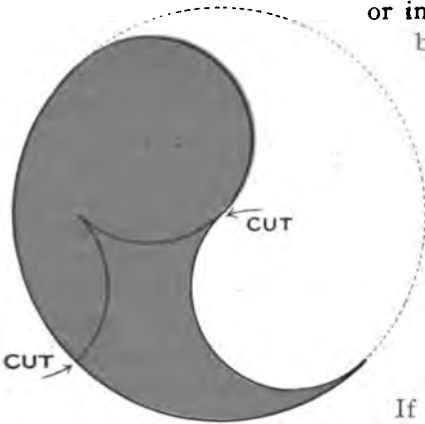


Fig. 1.

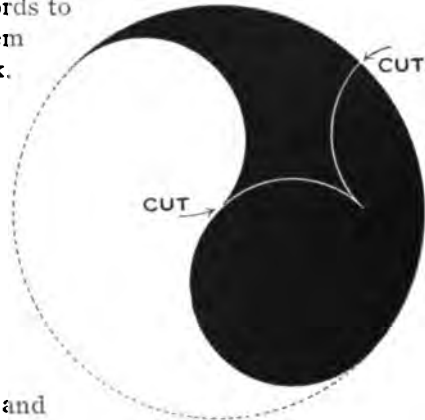


Fig. 2.

If the Yang and

Yin are cut—in two strokes each—as shown in figures 1 and 2, and the pieces rearranged or refitted, as shown in figures 3 and 4, it will be seen that the Chinese emblem of good luck becomes, at once, the Yankee symbol of good luck, the *horseshoe*, of which there are, of course, two in each Northern Pacific trade-mark.



Fig. 3.

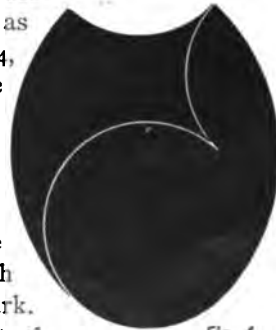


Fig. 4.

Mr. Loyd states also, that he knows that the method in vogue of covering *base-balls*, the peculiarity of which has doubtless attracted universal attention, was suggested to the patentee by the Yang and Yin of the Monad or trade-mark.