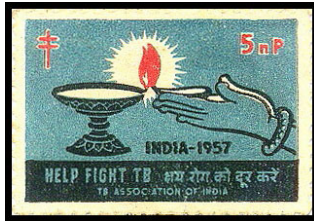


MEDICAL PHILATELY

Medical Symbols: Part 4

Asha Pai-Dhungat



TB seal India 1957 with Lamp of knowledge Lorrain crosses Lt. upper Corner

The Lamp of Knowledge (Life)

The lamp of life with its eternal flame of knowledge was added as a bowl to the top of the staff of Aesculapius. The lamp of knowledge is the official symbol of the nursing profession and of higher education. The inspiration for the traditional symbol of the nursing profession (the lamp of life) no doubt comes from the “lady with the lamp,” a title given to **Florence Nightingale** (1820-1910), the founder of the nursing profession, whose life was dedicated to all phases of nursing. Early in the Crimean War (1853-1856), Florence Nightingale was known as “the lady with the lamp” because she made her rounds by the light of the lamp she carried. Throughout the world, nurses form the largest single group of health-care workers, and the availability of good nursing care in a country is a measure of the health status of that nation.

The inspiration for adopting the lamp of knowledge as the official symbol for higher education could have come from the story of the Greek



Duke of Lorraine on crusade with double barred cross. Now used worldwide for fight against TB stamp Belgium 1934

cynic philosopher Diogenes (?412-323 BC). Diogenes is said to have carried a lantern at noon in search of an “honest man” (probably representing truth and knowledge).

Hindu religion gives a lot of importance to a lamp. Lighting of lamp purifies the environment as well as invokes divine waves to the premises.

“Tamaso ma jyotir gamayah; Asato ma sad gamayah;

Mrityor ma amritam gamayah”

Meaning, “O Lord, take me from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth, from death to eternal life”.

Double Barred Cross of Lorraine

Godfrey of Bouillon (Duke of Lorraine) was the first Christian ruler of Jerusalem and his banners and shield bearing the double-barred cross signified courage and success to crusaders.

At the first International Tuberculosis Convention held in Berlin (1902), **Dr. Gilbert Sersiron**, of Paris- France, suggested that as tuberculosis too was a crusade, it would be appropriate to



50th anniversary of Brazil Nursing association. Nightingale Lamp of knowledge. Stamp-Brazil, 1976

adopt the emblem of another crusader. Dr. Sersiron’s recommendation was adopted and the double-barred cross became the world-wide symbol of the fight against tuberculosis. Anti-tuberculosis postal and semi-postal stamps and Anti-TB Seals were printed with this cross. Tuberculosis seals were proposed by Danish Postman **Holboell** in 1904. Seals were sold as Christmas seals and money gained by selling these seals were utilized for the welfare of children suffering from tuberculosis. This proposal became popular and many nation in the world started issuing TB seals every year on world TB day (March 22) for TB awareness and fund collection. For serious TB seal collectors an authoritative specialized **-Green Catalogue** is available with proper listing and information about all TB seals issued in the world till publication date.

(Stamps-courtesy JV Pai-Dhungat)

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