

Oriental Sketches *Disclose Philosophy* *of Nicholas Roerich*

"Shambhala", by Nicholas Roerich.
F. A. Stokes Co.

Nicholas Roerich, Russian painter, philosopher and writer, has published another book of the East he knows and respects so profoundly. This volume is called "Shambhala" (Frederick A. Stokes Company), a word with a sacred significance in Asia, meaning the New Era or Advent.

The book itself is a collection of short philosophical essays, legends and descriptive sketches, the result of years of travel and study in Tibet and India. To the layman, with only a vague knowledge of the East, some of the chapters in "Shambhala" will be almost unintelligible, filled as they are with names, allusions and references entirely unfamiliar to the average Westerner. But fortunately a specialized knowledge is not necessary to the appreciation of the book as a whole. Any reader who is willing to read with care and concentration will find that he has acquired not only a fuller knowledge of the beliefs and customs and thought of ancient countries, but a new insight into the spirit of a people whose religion and philosophy are rooted deep in centuries before the West began her history.

"Shambhala" offers much variety in its pages. There are descriptive chapters which only a painter with a trained sense of the values of color, space and emphasis could have written; there are legends and stories for those who prefer to learn of a country through its folk-lore; and there are essays of religious discussion and profound thought which no one but a student and a philosopher could have given us. And all are filled with the beauty, culture and wisdom which the author has found in his study of the East.

Professor Roerich is known chiefly in this country through his pictures, and by the museum in New York which bears his name. Comparatively few, unless they have a special interest in the countries of which he writes, will care to give the time and thought to the reading of his books. This is unfortunate, for not only does his writing give us a new knowledge and appreciation of Eastern peoples, but a vision of the possibility of his deepest desire, the spiritual union of East and West. Everywhere, in India, in Tibet, in America, he finds the same renaissance of spirit. And he triumphantly asserts that in this universal need and search for the beauty that is truth the East and West will be drawn together in understanding.

A. B. T.

2

"SHAMBHALA"

I have read Prof. Roerich's book "Shambhala". I feel that it is beautiful in that it has an exotic visualization of the New Era. He has given me a vision of the New Era different from any other I have had. I see it in a truly inspirational light and now I feel that it is a reality for the world. I see Prof. Roerich as one of those who is now ushering the New Era into our lives.

Here is the picture which he has given me:

Shambhala signifies the New Era, the new soul-civilization founded on the intuitive knowledge of God and the laws of being; illumined by the light of the spirit. Its signs are manifest where there are signs of enlightenment, where some can destroy the narrow, limited sphere of selfishness and behold the higher sphere of eternity where no selfishness can flower. There selfishness is absorbed by the all powerful rays of the spirit and dies.

They who love the future, they who forego a present "good" in the vision of future grandeur; they are the ones who will build the New Era. Most triumphant shall reign the liberated soul which in itself contains the manifold mysteries of the universe. Nothing can be lost, nothing unknown, for the soul is the essence of power and knowledge; the soul is in God.

Thus, Prof. Roerich, the lover of eternal Truth, has shown to me his vision of human life in the future.

We find also in Prof. Roerich's writing, a strange reserve that conceals depth. "Real knowledge" he writes "will only enter open doors. If prejudice exists it must be outgrown through inner development". For us it is important to prove by existing facts over what immense distances ones living consciousness is open ready for the future evolution.

In the entire East, the deep veneration of the Teacher has surrounded the conception of the Guru with a sacred solicitude and impregnability. "The conception of the Guru Teacher, he writes, is understood with similar veneration only in the East".

In this closing paragraph, we find one of Prof. Roerich's finest traits-- a deep appreciation and reverence for the Truth which is still untainted with any reproaches or unjust comparisons.

This and other passages show evidence of a wonderful restraint from blame, or censure. His task is not to point out faults and shortcomings, he is one who seeks for the Truth.

Quietly and simply, he looks for the complete devotion of human beings to God. Prof. Roerich's task has been to seek for this inner purity and like a clear reflector he has shown to us his vision of the inner Truth.