

NICHOLAS ROERICH ARTIST, GENIUS

and UNIVERSALIST

MENSAJES DEL COMITE CULTURAL

ARGENTINO

On December 13th 1947, early in the morning, Professor Nicholas Roerich passed away in the province of Punjab, valley of Kulu, India.

He was born in 1874 in the land of Gogol and Tolstoy, and after an extraordinary artistic work all over Europe, he went to North America to continue cultural labour.

Shortly after leading an archaeological expedition in India, with the auspices of the N. American government, he and his family settled in that millenary Oriental country. There he went on painting, writing and making experiments in a private laboratory specially established at his residence, for more than a quarter of a century.

It is not necessary to dwell on a detailed information about the virtues of this contemporary exalted personality, the leader of Beauty and Goodness in all human aspects.

Enough is to say that if as a genial artist of a wonderful creative capacity, he was compared to Leonardo da Vinci, as a philosopher and teaching apostle who encouraged every social unity and constructive work, he can be ranked to the most eminent educators and thinkers of all times. His great kindness which was the natural consequence of his deep knowledge, had no limit.

He taught as a true sage, with the conviction, tolerance and patience that constitute the universal

foundations of a real essential comprehension.

Thoroughly acquainted with the most important ancient and modern languages, his word reached all cultural atmospheres and his frequent written messages, pamphlets, books, articles, poems, letters, scientific and artistic information have been printed many times and are now widely spread as a spiritual encouragement for those who long for knowledge.

Such a widely cultivated spirit leaves a deep basis so that whatever may happen, it will give excellent results for the reconstruction of human society...when the time comes for international reconstruction. In fact, the "Roerich Pact and the Banner of Peace", an institution created by himself in New York, to which all countries of America adhered in an official ceremony presided over by the late Roosevelt, will acquire universal significance in the coming years.

One of his many biographers and admirers has recently said: "He was one of the greatest proclaimers of the century, an artist whose creative genius is revealed by five thousand master paintings exhibited in the principal museums of the world. His work as an archaeologist and educator, as a philosopher, poet and leader of the Universal Unity movement by means of culture is also wonderful".

When we study his biography we find a marvellous chain of facts which contain an extraordinary educative value. By means of his indefatigable creative power, his daily work and his fruitful accomplishment, Nicholas Roerich acquired, in a universal scope, that synthetical faculty which reconciles and solves the most difficult problems. We cannot help noticing his subtle

psychology and kind understanding revealed, in his reports to the different societies that bear his name in the United States and other countries, all of which were founded under his spiritual patronage and which do their cultural work under his noblest personal inspiration.

It is impossible not to admire this master on contemplating with profound emotion his land-scapes and picture which have been painted with such delicacy and such a deep chromatic liveliness, that made Zuloaga say while looking at one of them: "I feel such a deep and transcendent artistic expression that I cannot express in words".

Many of his magnificent paintings are kept in museums of Louvre, Paris, London, Moscow, Vienna, Bruges, Leningrad, San Francisco, Rome, New York, Buenos Aires and other important art galleries, both private and public.

Professor Nicholas Roerich was great in all respects. The "New York Times", used to consider him as one of the greatest social leaders of all times, when it referred to any of his activities, as a painter, writer or leader of artistic and philosophical organization.

He was worthy of so much praise during his lifetime and so many articles and pamphlets have been dedicated to him from every civilized corner of the world, that the new biographer of such an exalted personality will find much difficulty if he tries to summarize in only one volume-however extensive-his gigantic work.

Beauty, Kindness, and Truth were the three leading virtues of his efforts in favour of human co-operation.

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Perhaps some Argentine or Spanish-American reader, who was in Paris a few decades ago, will remember that in May 1913 Stravinsky's ballet "Sacre du Printemps" was produced for the first time at the Champs Elysees theatre. Roerich, together with Nijinsky and Diaghilev, helped in the scenery of that production. Stravinsky, conscious of Roerich's genius, dedicated to him the work which was one of the most outstanding artistic events of the present century.

In the name of Beauty, which is God's smile expressed in its manifold aspects, Nicholas Roerich knew how to smile genially during his intense and enthusiastic creative work. To smile in the clairvoyance of his painting of transcendent and communicative beauty: to smile in his delicate poems, full of encouraging inspiration: to smile in his philosophical messages full of sincere ideas and friendly feelings, and in his wise advice to youth, for whose formal education he thoroughly cared; to smile, finally, in all his exceptional work because Beauty,-being God's smile-is the origin and the basis of all understanding.

The wisdom of his teaching and the vivid transparency of his art clearly reveal his passionate effort towards the welfare of humanity. In both aspects -prose and painting, thinking and feeling-the same co-operative and unifying spirit is encouraged.

Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato... his predecessors in History spread identical philosophical ideas (the Truth is one and has many forms according to circumstances) and Leonardo da Vinci Raphael and Zurbarán expressed identical transcendent beauty.

Such highly cultivated spirits make us meditate on the fundamental phrase of the German Philosopher: "God and I are as one in Knowledge", that is to say, we are chained Gods, units imbued in a carnal envelopment, and that to reach God-the Supreme Wisdom-the prodigal son through time-space, must return to the Home Unit quite deprived of the inferiority complex inherent to matter. In a few words: to hasten the process of evolution of the Ego to acquire by personal merit, the universal conscience which is the natural sphere of the Spirit purified by personal experience, that is the mother of science--- rotation and translation movements on which all human cells depend.

Nicholas Roerich has not died. He lives and will live forever in the memory of all those who long for constructive and redeeming knowledge.

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A FEW LETTERS OF PROFESSOR NICHOLAS AND DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE
WHOSE FRIENDSHIP AND AND ADMIRATION FOR EACH OTHER WHICH SPRANG
FROM THEIR FIRST MEETING IN LONDON, IN 1920, LASTED
THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES.

By courtesy of "VISVA-BHARATI" Santiniketan.

ROERICH MUSEUM
310, Riverside Drive,
New York, N.Y.
December 27, 1929.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore,
Bolpur,
Santiniketan, (sic)
Bengal, India.

My Dear Friend;

Yesterday we were elated to receive your beautiful photograph with its signature, which is so precious to us. For us, it was a new token not only of your personal friendship but also as a link between East and West, when without any prejudice and without any hatred, we can embrace each other in the name of beauty and culture.

This note will reach you after the New Year but you may feel that on the eve of the New Year I send to you my best greetings and wishes that the supreme touch of your spirit should for long uplift humanity.

I am sending you my last book, "Flame in Chalice".

With my heartiest thoughts,
believe me,
Sincerely,
Ed. N. Roerich.

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NAGGAR,
Kulu, Punjab.
April 20th, 1931

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore,
"Uttarayan"
Santiniketan, Birbhum.

Dear Brother in Spirit,

Long it is since we saw each other but with an ever burning admiration I followed up your thoughts which incessantly saturate the space. My best wishes accompanied you wherever you untiringly were sowing the beautiful garden of your seedlings of high cultural treasures. Verily

now everything striving to Culture must be united, must feel to be on the very same boat crossing the same stormy ocean of human ignorance.

I feel in my innermost your benevolent thoughts about our cultural institutions, as you no doubt feel our spiritual sendings to your glorious Santiniketan. We certainly would rejoice to print in one of our Bulletins one of your enlightened addresses and I shall myself be very happy to give for the Quarterly of Santiniketan some of my thoughts about Culture. Here with I am sending you several pamphlets of our Institutions.

You have probably heard about some of our difficulties with the sanction for land in Kulu Valley. I am happy to tell you that all difficulties are eliminated, about which we just received notification from the Government of India. Thus our peaceful cultural work can proceed. I do not remember which books of mine are in your library of Santiniketan. If you notify me which books you have I shall be very glad to supplement you with the other books. We shall appreciate any of your literature to be included in the library of our Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum.

It will no doubt be of interest to you that our first collection of the Himalayan flora sent by our Institute to leading American and French Museums and Universities has aroused deepest interest in the Scientific world.

You have probably also heard of my Peace Pact idea with a special Banner for protection of all cultural treasure which recently was unanimously accepted by the Museum's Commission of the League of Nations and was accepted enthusiastically by the representatives of Culture in all countries. Certainly your authoritative opinion on this idea calling the attention to the so urgently needed conception of Culture, would be cherished by us.

With heartiest thoughts from Mme. Roerich (her health worries us greatly) my son George and myself,

Yours in Spirit
Sd. Nicholas Roerich

* * *

Santiniketan,
April 26, 1931.

Dear Friend,

I am delighted to received your letter and to know that your cultural colony in Naggar, Kulu, is thriving as it should. I have keenly followed your most remarkable achievements in the realm of Arts and also your great humanitarian work for the welfare of the nations of which your Peace Pact idea with a special Banner for protection of cultural treasure is a singularly effective symbol. I am very glad indeed that this Pact has been accepted at the League of Nations and I feel sure that it will have far-reaching effects on the cultural harmony of nations.

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I hope this finds Mrs. Roerich in better health.

With my kindest regards to Mrs. Roerich and yourself, and my greetings to your son.

Sincerely yours,
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Santiniketan,
November 1, 1935

My Dear Friend,

It has given me great pleasure to hear from you once again after a long silence and know you have safely returned to your ashrama after an arduous expedition in Central Asia. I cannot help envying your thrills and experiences

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With kind regards to all of you.

Yours very sincerely,
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N. de Roerich Esq.,
"Urusvati"
Naggar, Kulu, Punjab.

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Naggar,
Kulu, Punjab, Br. India.
Sept. 15. 1936.

My Dear Revered Friend,

With deep enthusiasm we have read your clarion call for Peace ~~work~~ of Sept. 5th, published in the newspapers. May these ardent appeals reach the remotest parts of the world and may they create a moral impulse for mutual understanding and co-operation, for without these cultural foundations no true peace is possible. Permit me, on behalf of our World League of Culture and our Banner of Peace Committees to thank you most heartily for your enlightened authoritative defence of Peace. Verily your name like a beacon light, towers over many noble movements.

You will be interested to hear that the "Roerich Foundation pro pace, arte, scientiae et labore" in Bruges in October holds an International Day of Art for the same purpose of promulgating

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I am sending herewith for your Library the book dedicated to you, published by the President of our Latvian Society, Richard Rudzitis, a clipping from a Russian newspaper in Riga, Latvija, published on the occasion of your 75th birthday, and our Lithuanian magazine "Naujoji Samone", containing also translations of your poems. I am sending these three because Lithuanian, Latvian and Russian are rich in Sanskrit roots and all such ties should link up with your Library in Santiniketan. For the same Library I am sending you my last book in Russian "Gates into the Future". Our publishing co-operative co. in Latvia "Agni"-in Latvian "Ugnis" appears under the familiar to you significant sign.

Mme de Roerich and both my sons send you their heartiest greetings to which I add my cordial fraternal wishes.

In heart and Spirit with you,

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My Dear Friend

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The Problem of Peace is today the most serious with humanity and our efforts seem so insignificant and futile before the on-rush of a new barbarism, that is sweeping over the west with an accelerating momentum. The ugly manifestations of naked militarism on all sides forebode an evil future and I almost lose faith in civilization itself. And yet we cannot give up our efforts for that would only hasten the end.

I wish I had the good fortune to read the books you have sent me, they look so inviting. It is really very kind of you to have taken so much trouble on my behalf.

With warmest greetings to
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ROERICH'S Credo

Culture and Peace - the most sacred goal of Humanity! In these days of great confusion, both spiritual and material, the disturbed spirit strives to these radiant strongholds. But we should not unite only abstractly in the name of these regenerating conceptions. According to our abilities, each in his own field, we should bring them into actual surrounding life as the most necessary and undeferrable. We must not fear enthusiasm. Only the ignorant and the spiritually impotent would scoff at this noble feeling. Such scoffing is but the sign of inspiration for the true Legion of Honour. Nothing can impede us from dedicating ourselves to the service of Culture, so long as we believe in it and give to it our most flaming thoughts.

Above all confusions the Angels sing of Peace and Goodwill. No guns, no explosives can silence these choirs of heaven. And despite all the earthly wisdom, idealism, as the Teaching of Good, will still remain the quickest reaching and most renovating principle in life.

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"Humanity is facing the coming events of cosmic greatness. Humanity already realises that all occurrences are not accidental. The time for the construction of future Culture is at hand. Before our eyes the revaluation of values is being witnessed. Amidst ruins of valueless bank notes, mankind has found the real value of the world's significance. The values of great Art and knowledge are victoriously traversing all storms of earthly commotions. Even the 'earthly' people already understand the vital importance of active beauty. And when we proclaim: labour, beauty and action we know verily, that we pronounce the formula of the international language. And this formula which now belongs to the museum and stage must enter everyday life. The sign of beauty and action will open all gates. Beneath the sign of beauty we walk joyfully. With beauty and labour we conquer. In beauty we are united. And now we affirm these words - not on the snowy heights, but amidst the turmoil of the city. And realising the path of true reality, we greet with a happy smile the future."

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Our responsibility before the Beautiful is great! If we feel it, we can demand the same responsibility to this highest principle from our pupils. If we know that this is a necessity, as during an ocean storm, we can require of our companions the same attention to the keenest demand of the moment.

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ROERICH'S Credo

Culture and Peace - the most sacred goal of Humanity! In these days of great confusion, both spiritual and material, the disturbed spirit strives to these radiant strongholds. But we should not unite only abstractly in the name of these regenerating conceptions. According to our abilities, each in his own field, we should bring them into actual surrounding life as the most necessary and undeferrable. We must not fear enthusiasm. Only the ignorant and the spiritually impotent would scoff at this noble feeling. Such scoffing is but the sign of inspiration for the true Legion of Honour. Nothing can impede us from dedicating ourselves to the service of Culture, so long as we believe in it and give to it our most flaming thoughts.

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