

Nicholas ROERICH--THE VIKING

by
M.M.MERU

History repeats itself! It seems as if the law of parallel dispensations is an unalterable cosmic order of things. As if the very same heroic characters come back, century after century to help and guide humanity upon its path of evolution. That the law of this cosmic order is as inevitable, as the Law of Order of God. And that these laws ^{heroes} ~~here~~ remain upon this plane until it is transformed from hell into a bit of heaven,

that these Messengers of Peace and Culture are resplendent gems in the endless chain of Hierarchy of Light-the only ladder which leads to the Highest. ^{and} Verily These high exalted beings are the very foundation of mankind's existence, for they, who could go to heaven remain on earth, until hell is empty. These heroic achievements are inscribed in the records of human evolution with the blood of their hearts, for their sufferings and burdens are as great as their deeds.

Eleven hundred years ago came one of these self-sacrificing heroes by the name of Rurik into Russia and laid the foundation of an Empire upon which the sun never sets.

Rurik is supposed to have come with his two brothers- Sinaeus and Truwar-med sin huus and tru ver! Rurik's Home and Guard - Peace and Culture, the weapon and shield of Rurik, the Messenger of Peace. And ^u this history once more repeats itself! As if the same Rurik, the Viking came again, eleven hundred years afterwards, practically, under the same name and for the same aim to lay the foundation of an Empire upon which the sun of Peace and Culture shall never set. Roerich, just as his prototype Rurik, also comes from the North. and, just as eleven hundred ^{years} ago, Roerich builds an Empire of Peace and Culture. Again with the same shield and weapon- "sin huus and tru ver-" -Roerich builds the foundation of this Universal structure.

Thus history weaves its intricate design in parallel dispensations, repeating the pattern with the same character, in the same land under the rays of the same sun.

Nicholas Roerich had but very recently thousands of admirers of his great art and followers of his high ideals of Peace and Culture. Now Roerich counts amongst his followers

^{entire} nations, cultural organizations and groups of outstanding leaders in education.

Roerich's name became a ~~banner~~ * Banner, under which are gathering the finest and noblest minds and hearts of the world. Like the sound of an Aeolian harp these

rings throughout the world a new and most significant name of this true Leader of mankind.--

The World- Leader of Peace and Culture. In this, powerful and pure , as the white peaks of the Himalayas, ~~the~~ name of Roerich is synthesized,, ⁺ The very essence of his soul , which is fearless , when it comes to serve humanity , and which is all-containing, because it embraces all mankind as one Brotherhood of Man. And inasmuch as Nicholas ~~R~~ Roerich has amongst his followers thousands over thousands of people and even nations as a whole , this great Leader has also ennemies.

Every light casts a shadow - the greater the light the greater the shadow. But the enemies of Roerich are not his own only , they are the enemies of Light, enemies of mankind 's progress , enemies of everything , which brings good to humanity. Roerich's enemies wear ^K often masqs , under which is hidden an ugly grimace of the underlings from hell.

They very often appear as crusaders of religion , but at the very sight of the cross, they fall into epileptic fits. Sometimes they appear as workers for humanity, but the mere mentioning of good deeds , brings out of their mouth s abominable blasphemy. Varied are the enemies of Roerich and varied are the masks they are wearing. These enemies of light ^{can} even fool the weak ones, but those who have faith in the future see through them. If a thief wants to insult an honest man, he calls him a thief. So one can judge these vile ones by the names they hurl at the snow -white soul of Roerich. The Banner of St. Sergius shall stop the blasphemy of the dark

shall stop the blasphemy of the dark servitors ^o of evil, and the ray of the blessed One shall burn the darkness , which has gathered before the dawn of the new day. And those who labor for the new day , shall see its rays disperse the darkness of yesterday.

And these who uphold this evil darkness shall dissolve with the substance of the evil past. In Nicholas, Roerich the world has that formidable leader of the future , to whom the future is an open book. It is no wonder that under the Banner of Roerich are gathering nations , for in this Banner is manifested the real union of nations, a union based upon Peace and fortified by the unconsuming fire of culture. - And verily , blessed are those who already unfurl the Roerich Banner all over the world, for they who do so , bring the dawn of the new day closer to the realization of the present generation. For they, who carry into the hearts of men the message of peace, break down the monstrous walls of prejudice and hate. Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God." ^{Matthew} said Mathews (5.9). Verily , the followers of Nicholas Roerich can be called "the

"the children of GOD", for they live to make peace amongst men and they are not afraid to sacrifice their life for this pan-human ideal. Roerich's call for peace is issued to all mankind and his followers seek cooperation between all nations. And in this era, when the genius of man transforms the entire world into one neighborhood, mankind needs above all a Leader who shall transform the entire world into single Brotherhood. And it is evident that Nicholas Roerich is the man to lead mankind toward this highest ideal of human aspiration. For this ideal, precisely, carries unlimited possibilities for mankind. And in practicing good will ~~for mankind~~ towards one another, nations will learn to cooperate for the supreme good and mutual benefit, and Roerich's call to peace shall then become a reality of life.

In affirming the Roerich ideal for peace one affirms an ideal, which benefits all mankind. And by unfurling the Roerich Banner of Peace, verily, ^{one} makes the history of human evolution. Thus let all, who believe that within the dimensions of this earth all are sisters and brothers, help to make the evolution of mankind a cosmic progress.

Let all those who follow Roerich as Leader of Peace, believe that the highest Power inspires such men to achieve for the benefit of mankind unprecedented results, especially in times like these, when chaos threatens to destroy the very crust of the earth. And in times like these God himself speaks "by the mouth of his holy prophets, who have been since the world began, "Amos, the prophet, said" Let justice roll down as waters and righteousness like a mighty stream", ^{precisely}, these words shall become the reality of life, when the ideal of Roerich will become the basis of social law and order.

The time has come, when every one who manifests noble deeds and good thoughts and labors for the general good of humanity becomes a warrior of Light, and helps to save his fellow-men in this darkest hour of travail. For to fulfill the Law and Word of God in such a time as this, is to become a co-worker of the Highest. And it is ^{the} duty of every one, who loves God with all his soul not only to praise God in the highest, but work and labor day and night to bring peace on earth and good-will among men. The hour has come to worship our Heavenly Father "In spirit and truth", for He is the the "One God and Father of all, Who is over all, through all and in us all". God has created all mankind of one blood which runs from the same human heart. And to bring the human consciousness to this realization of unity, first amongst mankind, then the realization

4
of a unity with God, is the present problem of humanity. The very gathering under a Banner which proclaims peace and unity in these days of disunion is a happy sign of the ^{Coming} cosmic Era.

And in Roerich-- The Viking- mankind has once more that formidable Leader of the future at the gates of which the present generation arrives, awaiting the new order of ages to begin its new course of events.

Reprinted from *The Scholar*, January 1940.

Legends on Roerich

By MAURICE M. LICHTMANN



At one time or another, every creative artist reaches the point where new horizons spread before him. He sees before him the high vault of heaven and in its midst the bright star of beauty beckoning to him with a strange, new gleam. Those who are brave enough to step over the threshold of eternity in quest of the gleam are called "Masters".

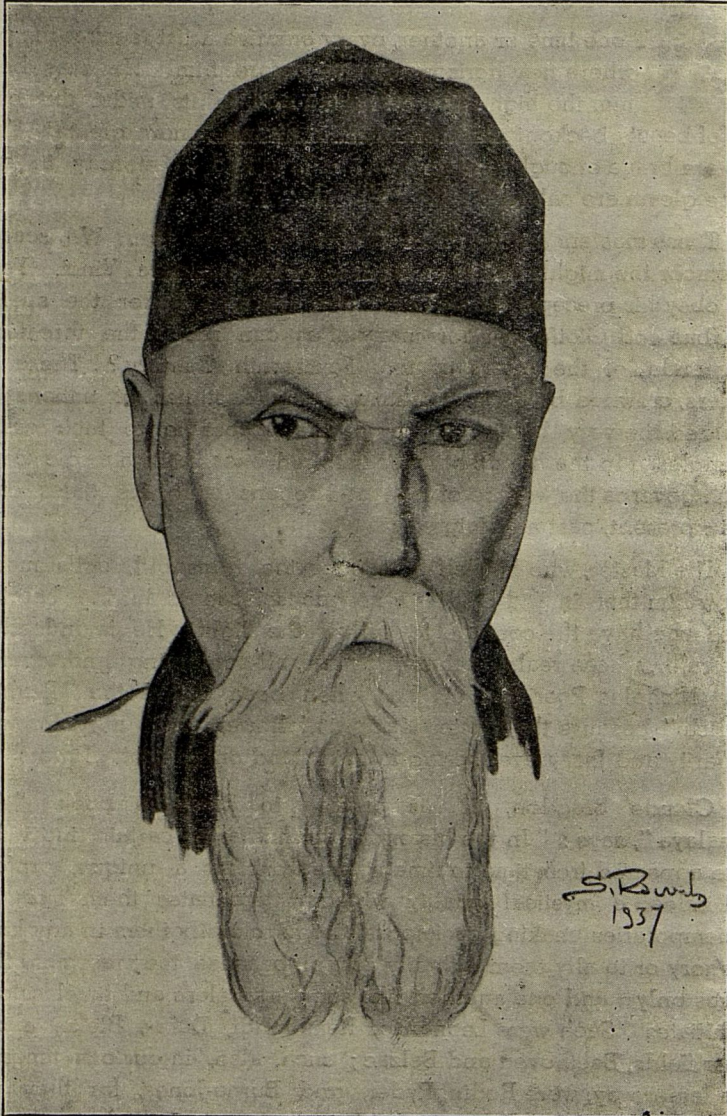
These masters are the true leaders of their age. We scarcely remember the mighty rulers of the time of Leonardo da Vinci. Yet we still obey his precepts of beauty. We are still under the spell of Cimabue and Giotto, but how many of us can recall the threatening commands of the rulers of the Fourteenth Century? These true leaders, crowned by their art, shaped the destinies of nations and moulded the very habits of the people according to their esthetic principles. In the hands of these inspired ones, art is a magic sceptre, which governs the welfare of men and opens wide the gates of all time—present, past and future.

The Master, who himself stands at the threshold, calls men to follow him therein and kindles a new consciousness in the hearts of those who have the courage to follow the light. He is indeed the wise ruler, whose realm is that of beauty, all-containing and everlasting. Nicholas Roerich's art has often been called the "Realm of Roerich" because the master leads his followers into a realm where vulgarity and fear never spring to being and only beauty flowers.

Claude Bragdon, in his preface to Roerich's book, "Altai-Himalaya", says: "In the history of the fine arts, certain individuals have appeared from time to time whose work has a unique, profound and indeed a mystical quality which differentiates them from their contemporaries making it impossible to classify them in any known category or to ally them with any school, because they resemble themselves only—and one another, like some spaceless and timeless order of initiates. Such were Leonardo, Rembrandt, Durer, Blake, and, in other fields, Beethoven and Balzac; such also, in our own times and in a lesser way, were Rodin, Ryder, and Burne-Jones, for their work shows flashes of that demoniac and eerie beauty, which is the sign whereby they may be identified as belonging to that mythical, mystic brotherhood. Roerich, in his life, in his character and in his art reveals himself as a member of this fraternity."

In her article, "Where the Lost Tribes are Remembered", Sulamith Ish-Kishor gives a picture of Nicholas Roerich, the artist and man.

"There in an office overlooking the strip of park beyond which one sees the broad stretches of the Hudson River," she writes, "is to be found a strangely charming, magician-like personality—the famous artist-explorer, Professor Nicholas Roerich. There is something archaic



Professor Nicholas de Roerich
by Svetoslav Roerich

about his small, narrow figure, his thin, pointed white beard, and large, light blue eyes which have a remote look, candid and clear as those of a very young child's. Here is a living being who might have stepped

out of an old fairy-tale book, too honest for a Merlin, too spiritual and beneficent for a Klingsor. It is satisfying to one's artistic sense to hear that the name Roerich is a variation of the medieval Rurik—the Scandinavian prince who invaded and ruled Russia in the tenth century—and that it means "rich in glory." A different kind of glory has been given it by the Roerich of today, a glory much superior in nature to that of the old bandit and Viking. 'Simplicity, Beauty and Fearlessness' expresses his artistic creed."

Roerich's art reveals a quality of the real master the power of prophecy. Before the peril of World War swept over the nations, Roerich created a series of paintings foreboding unusual events which later became true. These "Prophetic Paintings", as they are termed, have been ascribed to the period between 1912 and 1914. In the images of the "Sword of Valor", "The Serpent Awakened", "The Crowns", "The Doomed City", "Human Deeds", "Cry of the Serpent", "The Fire", and "The Last Angel", which is now in the Roerich Museum, New York, were outlined many events of the future which had not yet penetrated the consciousness of other men.

The success of the Roerich Museum was indicated in Raphael's Astrological Almanac of 1929; and indeed, when ten thousand admirers greeted the artist on that unforgettable occasion, a new page of the legend of Roerich was written.

Manifestations such as these are usually accompanied by stories and explanations, concerning both the style of the artist and his power of prophecy. This is exemplified in the biographies of Benvenuto Cellini and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as many others. In examining the biography of Nicholas Roerich one is immediately struck with the element of legend, closely interwoven with his versatile life. According to press reports of 1918, the artist was killed in Siberia, and in 1926 he visited the places where masses had been held for the repose of his soul, all of which is strangely reminiscent of the legends about Comte St Germain. All these stories and legends seem to point to the fact, that in the case of Roerich as well as in that of other great men, one personality envelopes several others.

But to those who know Roerich and have studied his life, all apparent contradictions not only do not seem strange, but are the natural consequences of his varied interests and enthusiasms. One can even understand why the Day of Buddha on April 29th, 1928, in the old church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie was dedicated to Roerich and why the symposium of the speakers rendered a worthy appraisal of the broad synthesis of the artist's remarkable life.

Conventionally-minded people have their pigeon-holes, or categories, into which they place everything that they do or do not understand. The author's attention was once directed to a legend to

the effect that all the institutions founded by Nicholas Roerich received their support from political organizations. It is clear that the authors of this legend took into consideration neither the character of the artist himself or of the organizations he founded. On the other hand, there were tales of Buddhist propaganda, while churches in Boston circles held services voicing the praise of the activities of Nicholas Roerich. The author once heard the artist's reaction to these unfounded opinions and attacks, and he spoke as follows:

"But they do not know", he smilingly said, "And we must not condemn them. Perhaps in their nature they are not such bad people after all, but this accursed misunderstanding is always cropping up." How many times have I noticed people coming away from Professor Roerich's hospitable study, where he finds time for every problem, every personal sorrow, exclaiming: "If I had only known that before!"

Because we are accustomed to meeting our heroes either on the stage, or between the pages of century-old books, we cannot therefore understand a philosopher, who would bring our daily life into a joyous approach to eternity.

Branches of the Roerich Society crop up in many countries. If one studies the names of these Societies one recognizes the same synthesis present that exists in the activities of the artist himself. It seems as if some magic influence unites former enemies in a benevolent and evolutionary work. Without premeditation, they approach a new way of living, revering old traditions kindled by the rays of contemporary knowledge. When we hear the artist speak of the life of Christ, of the resplendent image of St. Francis of Assisi, of the cosmic ray of Millikan and of Einstein's theory of relativity, only then may we understand that the master's broad comprehension brings a unifying conception into the various fields of life.

In his articles and addresses, the artist has often said: "Our chief misfortune is that we do not want to approach the facts honestly, and we always try to apply every fact, big or small, to our own small, casual point of view".

With equal attention the artist studies electrical phenomena and manifestations of psychic energy and coordinates them with the testaments of Rig Veda and Cabbala. I remember how Roerich once stopped an attack on the Koran with the simple statement: "How can you speak of that which you do not know?" And when one hears the master speak of the significance of Nirvana and how he points out that because of the incorrect pronunciation of the word Boddhisatva by the Arabs, it changed into Isaphat, one understands that one has to deal not only with a great enveloping consciousness, but one unlimited by prejudices.

"Above all, do not be afraid," says the master to his pupils. "Remember that if you act, not egoistically, but for the good of humanity, nothing can harm you." He also says: "Instead of a poor and limited 'I', let us try to pronounce, in our deeds and thoughts, the unconquerable 'we.' If you seek practical advice, this is the most practical. Also, cease to be afraid. The most destructive emotion is that of fear. Tremor before the grandeur of the Supreme is not fear, for this is a sacred tremor—a benevolent vibration before an indescribable power."

With such vigorous and practical words (the master is not afraid to use this expression) he accompanies his talks, which rid many of daily fear.

"The chief misfortune of mankind," repeats the master, from Agni Yoga, "is the fact that everyone judges the quantity and quality of help from his own narrow ideas. You can send help to a man from all the bright windows, yet he shall await help from a dark door, because his bound spirit cannot grasp the thought that 'angels can fly', and do not need dark, conventional doors."

Various names appear in the published symposiums on the art and activities of Roerich—such names as Tagore, Stokowski, Andreyev are intermingled with the opinions of Charles R. Crane, Louis Marin, Secretary Davis and Senator Borah. The art and philosophy of Roerich have made an indelible impression on his contemporaries, for they recognize in him an exact, benevolent knowledge, reminiscent of the ancient times of the Resicrucians and Alchemists who labored for the good of humanity.

In his remarkable article, "The Realm of Roerich," written just before his death, Andreyev formulates the significance of "realm-beauty" with an astounding clarity. Since the publication of that article, that realm has grown to tremendous proportions, through the many new manifestations of Roerich's new synthesis. Whether we take his constructive message in "Guru the Teacher", "Joy of Creation" or the wise hints in "Shambhala", we shall find not only faith but a firm and unconquerable knowledge which directs the artist along his unique path.

But human beings being what they are, it would be too much to expect such appreciation in every quarter. I recall an article written some time ago, probably by an active enemy of Roerich's. In it was described with malicious hatred the "grandeur" of the Roerich Expedition and of a fictitious staff of seventy-five secretaries, translators etc. The absurdity of this piece of fiction is apparent when one remembers the artist's constant tendency toward simplicity. Another article stated, as an indisputable fact, that the Expedition had been sent by a powerful Masonic organization.

In an American newspaper, Herbert Corey, in speaking of the significance of Roerich's art, asks: "Nicholas Roerich has returned from Tibet. Many people, and at least one government would like extremely well to know what Nicholas Roerich is. Not who he is, mark you. That is well enough understood. What he is. What has he been doing for six years among the deserted foothills of the Himalayas ?

"In his own time Nicholas Roerich will tell. What will he tell? How much ?

"He is a magnetic personality. His followers manifest an almost fanatic devotion. He is a first-rate artist. Perhaps even a great one. The man is a mystery here. An almost legendary figure.....".

At the same time, when Roerich founded an Association of St. Francis of Assisi there were absurd tales printed concerning his excommunication by the Pope.

One is involuntarily reminded of an article by Nicholas Roerich entitled "Praise to the Enemies", and how he answered the indignation of his friends at these tales, saying: "Do not pay attention. Indeed, they do not know of what they speak and what they are doing."

We are long accustomed to heroes of the remote past, forgetting that these demi-gods once had human form, around which the legends sprung. How fascinating to encounter a legendary figure in real life !

Roerich is, after all, still in his prime, so any kind of final biography would be premature. It is for the younger generation that these facts have been set forth. It will help them, living in the midst of the turmoil of our mechanical civilization, to know of something spiritual and incessantly constructive: to learn how a lone fighter, creative and enthusiastic, can transform his life into a beautiful legend. It will uplift them to know of a legendary figure, living in their own day.

2

Reprinted from the "*Educational Review*," Madras—September 1934.

NICHOLAS ROERICH, THE MESSENGER OF PEACE.

By M. M. MERU.

(Special to the "*Educational Review*")

THERE are a few treasures which mankind can claim as its own by divine heritage and one of them is the priceless treasure of Culture. If the law of the survival of the fittest is to be considered, then those people who adhere to the precepts of Culture shall verily survive from the chaos, created by human deeds and into which the whole world is thrown at present. Although mankind has lost its direction and wanders aimlessly around the same point, yet the spirit of men is ever ready to hearken to a new call which shall lead the world towards a new consciousness. And mankind only follows as a whole such a call when the same is imbued with the substance of salvation. It is therefore that such leaders of men as Moses, Buddha, Christ, Confucius and Mahomet have, and shall for ever have, an overlasting following of men. Every great cycle is marked by the appearance of a luminary amidst men which guides mankind out of darkness into Light.

Our present cycle is marked with the appearance of a teacher who summons men to gather under a Banner of Peace and Culture, which shall erase the man-made differences and create a new and better understanding amongst the nations. This great Teacher and Master is Nicholas Roerich. His call for Peace sounds like a trumpet call of Salvation throughout the world. It has found its

way into the hearts of men, because it bears glad tidings of a better and sweeter to-morrow, to be built upon a foundation of Beauty and Justice. Already the foundation of this Realm of Light is laid in the four corners of the earth by the Master and his call for Peace and Culture resounds in the very soul of men a new hope for a new dawn.

Roerich's guidance is shining like a flaming torch which illuminates the darkness, as the Master moves swiftly forward upon the path of evolution. The many obstacles along his path cannot stop his victorious march onward. And Roerich uses even the obstacles for the general good of humanity.

Roerich has become a legendary figure, a giant knight fighting the holy cause of Peace and Culture. With gigantic steps, he has traversed Europe, America and Asia, everywhere sowing the seeds of Peace.

Thousands follow his precepts. And there are also Nicodemuses, who seek the Master in the darkness of the night. For each one, Roerich has a gem which does not become dulled or which cannot be stolen. Whosoever follows Roerich follows verily a straightforward road. Faith, hope and love are the milestones along the road and beauty its goal. Whosoever answers the call of the Master with the heart, answers verily the innermost desire of one's soul. The Master's

call to Culture is a call to Salvation, because only Culture can save the world from utter destruction, which hovers over the world like an ominous cloud. Whosoever serves his fellowmen in the name of Peace and raises Roerich's Banner over the imperishable treasures of Culture shall make peace with his own soul. Roerich's Peace Pact shall bind a bond of brotherhood which no human hands can break asunder. The Master opens a new consciousness in men and broadens their vision to new horizons more resplendent and more glorious than those which are at present before the eyes of men.

Humanity is approaching the threshold of a New Era. And it is in such a time as this that humanity is blessed to be guided by a man whose vision and understanding is of a cosmic grandeur. In our very days of gross darkness and misconceptions, such a Leader of men as Roerich shall not only bring a new Light into the darkness which prevails but he will enlighten the spirit of mankind with a new consciousness, which will enable mankind to perceive the grandeur of the Cosmic Law. Nicholas Roerich is a Master Builder. His Temple is the Realm of Light. Upon its foundation stand erect the pillars of Glory, Victory, Justice, Love, Understanding and Wisdom. And the heart of Roerich's Temple is the pillar of Beauty. Infinity crowns this Temple of Spirit, as a crown of endless achievements of man's genius. It is out of this Temple that the Master proclaims his Message of Peace. And it is of this

Temple that his call to Culture resounds its glad tidings the world over.

What Divine Force is directing Nicholas Roerich in his heroic efforts to save humanity? Where is that next Link of the Eternal Chain of Hierarchy from which the Master draws the luminous rays with which he is guiding mankind through its present difficulties? Verily the Sacred Source is inexhaustible, as it never ceases to nourish the spirit of men and to redeem the soul of the world in the last moment of danger!

And blessed is he who draws his strength from this Source of Eternal Light and carries it further for the welfare of his fellow-men. And whosoever drinks but once from the Sacred Source shall perceive the cosmic significance of Roerich's mission. And whose soul is but once nourished by this Sacred Source of Light shall understand the grandeur of Roerich's Message of Peace! Verily humanity is facing unprecedented times! And verily the Forces of Light have forged an unconquerable sword and invincible shield, which were placed in Roerich's hands to protect humanity from utter destruction. The Master creates a movement upon the face of the earth which will counteract the destructive activities of the forces of darkness. This movement which is based upon constructive co-operation and better understanding amongst nations is taking deep roots in the hearts of men. Roerich brings to mankind the realization of a new consciousness, which will help men to face the thunder and lightning of the

Era to come with a smile. The transformation of the world has already begun and the Master leads mankind towards the transfiguration of its soul. Old wine skins no longer can contain the new wine. The old, outlived standards of prejudice are childish before the threatening storm of the Coming Age. It is therefore necessary to look upon the manifestation of Roerich as a God-sent salvation of men. Whosoever kindles the heart of men with the flame of Roerich's Message verily helps to build the Era to come. Let those who work for

Peace spread Roerich's Message and they shall verily reap a rich harvest to come. Let those who dedicate their lives to the benefit of men carry the Fire of Roerich's Spirit into the souls of their fellow-men. Verily theirs shall be the Era to come.

Gather ye, bearers of Light, into a union of kindred souls and proclaim throughout the whole world the Universal Message of the Messenger of Peace! Sow the seeds of Salvation, ye sowers of Good-will, amongst men and rich shall be your harvest of Culture.

(Rights Reserved by the Writer.)

Roerich—The Peace-Bearer

By *M. M. Meru*

There was never in the history of humanity a time such as this, when the whole world finds itself helplessly drifting upon the sea of life, like a derelict ship without sails or a helmsman to guide it into a safe harbour. The peoples of the world are now going through what is probably the darkest period in the history of mankind. Representatives of nations gather continuously to solve the difficulties of to-day, but they do not succeed in bringing about a much desired and needed peace amongst the warring nations of the earth. Universal bankruptcy of out-lived methods and standards is imminently pending to undermine the existing order and to throw the whole world into a chaos of self-annihilation. The leaders of men are facing a leaderless humanity, which has lost its faith in those whom they have chosen to guide them upon the path of life.

And yet it is not the destiny of mankind thus to perish. There is a Divine Force, which has never as yet failed to send the light into the world in its moment of extreme danger and darkness. Such a time has come. A man has been sent by this ever-protecting Power to light the darkness which prevails in our days with the resplendent glow of peace and culture. This man is proclaiming to the world a new conception of peace and culture, to be built from the priceless stones of mankind's past achievements and to be cemented by a new understanding amongst nations. Especially precious is a call in such times as these—a call, which is full of hope for a new and resplendent to-morrow, a call, which summons the dismembered branches

of the human tree to unite into a formidable union, based upon the imperishable results of mankind's greatest treasure—culture!

Nicholas Roerich is the name of this messenger of peace. It is not accidental that Professor Nicholas Roerich, who sounded this historical call, is the greatest artist of our century. There are only a few names in the history of art which can be placed next to this true leader of culture. Only a man who created masterpieces of indescribable beauty, such as Roerich did, could create a cultural movement of peace of the same quality. It is verily not accidental that the Divine Force which has sent Roerich as a messenger of peace, has endowed him with such rare mastership in art, because only one who creates in beauty can give to the world the message of beauty and can save the world to-day.

The seed of beauty, planted by Roerich over two scores of years ago, grew into a mighty tree, the roots of which are imbedded deeply in the heavens and the branches spread all over the face of the earth. Varied seem these branches to be, yet all are one, of the same tree, from the same roots and of the same seed.

The first achievements of Nicholas Roerich in the quest of culture were marked with the unrepeatable beauty of that of a Knight of the Holy Grail. But since then Roerich has found the sacred source. From his boyhood Roerich has been fighting for the preservation of the results of creative human achievements, in order to build from the wondrous stones of the past "the steps of the future." Already, when a young man, Roerich walked the difficult path of a true builder of the future. His artistic achievements had even then attracted the

attention of the whole world of art. And the creative constructiveness of the master branched out gradually into every field of culture. America is indeed privileged that Nicholas Roerich came to this country ten years ago in order to establish a group of cultural institutions, which marked the beginning of a new era in the evolution of mankind. The cultural work of these institutions took deep roots not only in America, but throughout the world. The name "Roerich" became a sterling mark for true and unselfish service to humanity in the name of peace and culture. And it is only natural that, when in 1929 Roerich's call for peace and culture sounded its glad tidings, that more than seventy countries responded to the master's call, as to an inspired solution of the unrest of nations. Thousands of letters from the representatives of the world of culture expressed not only their admiration for Roerich's peace project but offered their support as well. Resolutions were passed by outstanding artistic and scientific organizations to support Roerich's ideas of peace. One of the last resolutions passed by a woman's organization in America which counts among its members over three million women approved of the Roerich Peace Pact as a world peace movement. The recognition of this Pact by the entire world of culture is about to come. And mankind shall witness before long the Roerich Peace Banner wave its protection over all the houses of learning, religion and beauty, as well as over cities which may claim as a whole the right of protection against ruthless ignorance of men who insist upon practising destructive dissension and deadly prejudice.

This significant movement is but the beginning of a new enlightened conception of an everlasting peace on earth. The Roerich

Peace Banner shall be soon unfurled from one end of the earth to the other, like a resplendent rainbow, calling mankind to cross the bridge of beauty to a new imperishable Valhalla. The international Conference called to assemble this year in Bruges for the Roerich Peace Pact shall gather cultural leaders from the whole world, who shall take further steps to bring this pan-human project into the very heart of life.

It is as if Nicholas Roerich is a direct instrument of some Divine Force, which acts through him in order to give to humanity a new understanding and a new consciousness. The realm of Roerich is that of Light. It is, therefore, that he is like a beacon, which guides to safety the ships caught upon the stormy sea of life.

Roerich is a builder. Even darkness he does not destroy. He only brings light into darkness, and darkness disappears like a non-existent mirage. Roerich builds a new Jerusalem from the indestructable stones of men's past achievements. He does not deny anything. And he praises even his enemies. Over forty years he has laboured untiringly for peace and culture. And how many hearts has he guided to the sacred source! The heroic achievements of Roerich read like an apocrypha. It is no wonder that around his name are woven beautiful heroic legends.

Verily, the voice of the people is the voice of God!

NICHOLAS ROERICH AND SCIENCE

By

M. M. LICHTMANN

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY, VOLUME XXIX, NUMBER 5, MAY, 1930

13

NICHOLAS ROERICH AND SCIENCE

By

M. M. LICHTMANN

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY, VOLUME XXIX, NUMBER 5, MAY, 1930



CASTLES OF MAITREYA.

NICHOLAS ROERICH AND SCIENCE

By M. M. LICHTMANN

Illustrated with paintings by Professor Roerich. Courtesy of the Roerich Museum

A VAST amount of literature has been dedicated to Nicholas Roerich, describing his work from the point of view of his artistic achievements, his special style, brilliant color and the conception of his paintings. In view of the fact that Professor Roerich was recently elected a vice-president of the Archaeological Institute of America, we must give heed to the achievements of this world-renowned artist in the field of science and archaeology. His discoveries in this field were known in Russia as early as 1896, when he was elected member of the Imperial Archaeological Society, a distinction conferred only for acknowledged work in archaeology.

It is interesting to follow the archaeological activities of Professor Roerich, which so frequently coordinated with his artistic achievements. When only a boy of ten, he noticed some ancient *kurgans* in the vicinity of Iswara, his father's estate in the St. Petersburg district. Because of religious scruples, the elders of this village forbade the boy to excavate these fields; but, with remarkable perseverance, which asserted itself even then, the lad one early dawn excavated one small *kurgan* and was happy to find therein some exquisite bronze ornaments of the Xth century. This beginning encouraged the striving of the school boy, and the next year he presented a whole collection of such

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

objects to his school. In his sixteenth year he presented to the Imperial Archaeological Committee an important collection of *kurgan* antiquities of the XIIth century. While still in college, Roerich read several papers before the Imperial Archaeological Society in St. Petersburg, and was at once elected a corresponding member, an unusual distinction for so young a man. Three years later, he was elected active fellow of the same Society and still later, life member.

After graduating from the University of St. Petersburg, Roerich was invited to lecture in the Imperial Archaeological Institute of St. Petersburg. During this time he conducted several archaeological expeditions into the St. Petersburg and Pscov districts, presenting many important reports to the Archaeological Society and publishing several scientific papers discussing the Slavonic and Finnish archaeology of the period between the IXth and XIVth centuries. Considerable attention was drawn to the following articles, published by Professor Roerich at that time: Art and Archaeology; Kurgans of the District of Pscov; Shelon District of Ancient Novgorod; Stone Age on Lake Piros (Novgorod District); Finnish Tumuli (St. Petersburg District) and many others. At the same time, the Imperial Archaeological Committee entrusted him with a few commissions, and in carrying them out he excavated many hundreds of ancient tumuli. Among these early discoveries, that of the Stone Age *kurgans* in the Tver district caused a great sensation. Through the beautiful amber ornaments found in these *kurgans*, the connection between Tver and Koenigsberg on the Baltic Sea was established, as that was the only place where such amber existed. The Archaeological Society of

Prussia praised the young scientist highly for this discovery.

From 1902 to 1906 the attention of Professor Roerich was attracted by important discoveries of Stone Age implements in the Novgorod district, where for several years he worked on a collection which finally contained 100,000 pieces, one of the most important collections of Stone Age implements.

In referring to Professor Roerich's article on the Stone Age, published in ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY in 1921, we find a remarkable comparison between the primitive tribes and those of the Stone Age. He compares the harassed aborigines to the men living in the Stone Age as an idiot to a sage, very aptly. There remained a few inter-relative gestures, but they are far from the real meaning. The Stone Age inhabitants gave birth to culture, but the aborigine did not have the power to lay foundations of beauty upon which other nations and other peoples could build.

Professor Roerich found great habitations of the Stone Age in the Novgorod and Tversk Districts. It is interesting to note that the famous canals dug by Peter the Great formed large lakes in these districts which covered the ancient habitations of these primitive people. However, when water was let into these artificial reservoirs, wonderful examples of Stone Age implements were washed out on their shores. The period of these habitations is being determined by an early neolith, and throughout all the subsequent stages they approach those of the Swiss pile-dwellers. The images with human likenesses attract particular attention among the various Stone Age findings, because they are probably traces of some cult.

Professor Roerich's collection is

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

unique in its varied comparative forms of all periods of the Stone Age; it ranges from the crudest samples to the most subtle, proving that the Stone Age of Northern Russia was quite as exquisite as that of the South of France and Egypt. An interesting addition to the collection was a pattern of subtle form embellished with an intricate design.

In 1903 Professor Roerich made an

Russia. The majestic spectacle of rare national antiquities was impressed upon the canvas with a broad and fresh brush, expressively generalized and subtle in the interpretation of that benevolent repose and light which constitutes the strength of all the monuments of ancient art. It would be fitting to call this series: 'Pantheon of our former glory' or 'Russian Elysian Fields'



MENHIRS IN MONGOLIA.

extensive study of forty ancient cities and temples in Russia. (A group of sketches, the result of this expedition, is at present in the Oakland Museum.) Serge Ernst, in his monograph on Roerich, says: "After reviewing the works of this period, one must speak of the principal achievement of the years 1903 and 1904—the tremendous series of architectural sketches, painted by the artist during his sojourn in

At this time, Professor Roerich was elected member of the board of the Architectural Society, an unusual honor for an artist and archaeologist, and he delivered several lectures on architecture before that society. In 1912 he won first prize in the architectural contest for a church in the summer residence of the late Emperor Nicholas. In the same year, Professor Roerich gave a series of lectures on the



THE GUARDIAN OF THE CHALICE.

Stone Age in the palace of Prince Yousouppoff, in which he threw light upon the first attempts toward human culture. He put before the public for the first time the problem of whether the men living at the time of the Stone Age had the same primitive culture as our rapidly vanishing aborigines. He also pointed out that by their utensils we may learn to understand that far-off period. Professor Roerich lectured on "Animal Stylization", connecting it with traces of great migrations. In his latest book, *Heart of Asia*, he says: "This problem has always been of especial interest to me. In the latest discoveries of the Kosloff expedition, in the works of Professor Rostovtzeff, Borovka, Makarenko, Toll and many others is displayed a great interest in Scythian, Mongolian and Gothic antiques. The ancient discoveries in Siberia, the traces of the great migra-

tions in Asia-Minor, Altai, Ural add an extraordinary amount of richly artistic and historical material to the Pan-European Romanesque and early Gothic styles. And how these themes approach contemporary artistic creations—many of these animal and floral stylizations might have come from the best modern workshops."

Professor Roerich's remarkable foresight was again manifested in his early study of "Animal Stylization," as this subject has recently come into prominence. He showed the same foresight when, while studying the Russian ikon, he insisted that these ikons would soon be considered masterpieces. In the article entitled "Antiquities" he says that "Even the most blind, even the most ignorant, will soon understand the great importance of our primitives in the significance of Russian iconography. They will understand and

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

begin to cry out and wonder. And let them cry out. Let us prophesy that cry. Soon will end the dead attitude toward the historical and national creative power and the culture of art shall blossom still richer. Through the art of the East we shall look differently upon much of our own. Let us look with the warm eye of love and exaltation."

At this time, eminent French scientists of the International Archaeological Congress in Périgueux praised the discoveries of the Russian scientist, and compared his collection with the best specimens of the Egyptian Stone Age. In 1906 Professor Roerich made an extensive trip through France and Italy, everywhere studying ancient art and relics of the Stone Age. During that time he wrote an article on the famous "Verona fakes", in which he proved that these relics were not actually fakes but implements belong-

ing to a much more recent mountain shepherd tribe.

In 1907 he made a study of the labyrinths and ancient temples of Finland, which he wrote up in a paper under the same title. On Lake Piros, Professor Roerich found human images carved out of flint, which caused a great deal of controversy. In view of their uniqueness, many archaeologists labeled them imitations. However, Professor Veselovsky confirmed them as genuine in the next year. In that same year Professor Roerich conducted excavations in Smolensk and the Tver district, and in Gorodistche were found remarkable enameled ornaments of the Gothic period.

Professor Roerich accomplished one of the most important excavations in the Kremlin of Novgorod in 1910. This district, one of the oldest inhabited sites in Russia, was connected with the name of the first Varengian Prince.



MAITREYA ON THE ROAD.

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Despite public opinion, Roerich insisted that this particular district had never before been excavated, and he was correct. The diggings disclosed seven layers of the city and were seven meters deep. By the articles found therein, the layers could be dated back from the IXth to the XVIIth centuries.

In his article "Subterranean Russia", remarkable data of the Novgorod Kremlin stratum is mentioned. After the destruction of the stone structures of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, ornamented by beautiful ceramics, began the stratum of the wooden city, which was burned several times. At that time all Novgorod was paved with heavy oak boards. In each new stratum these streets ran in different directions. The remains of these wooden structures prove how closely they were thrown together in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, and how easily they were transformed into ruins by a fire. Under the wooden structures and various objects of the XIIIth century began the primitive stratum of the city, attributed to the IXth century, which contains characteristic Scandinavian objects. These objects prove that Novgorod was originally a habitation of the Scandinavian Varengians, who at that time constituted the ruling class of ancient Russia.

Together with his increasing archaeological findings, Professor Roerich gathered a collection of old masters and founded a museum of Pre-Petrian art. Of this collection of paintings, Serge Ernst, former Curator of the Hermitage, speaks as follows: "It is necessary to mention that in 1909 the artist began his collection of old masters, whose art was revealed to him in 1905 and 1906. The paintings of the Netherlands form a basic part of this collection, and the Roerich Collec-

tion now occupies one of the first places in private Russian galleries".

Soon after his arrival in America in 1921, Professor Roerich went to Santa Fe to study the cliff-dwellings. In 1923 began the historic Roerich Central Asiatic Expedition, which gave evidence to many scientific facts, among which was the discovery of menhirs and kromlechs in Trans-Himalaya exactly like some found at Carnac in Brittany. Ancient burial-mounds were also observed similar to the "Goth's mounds" in northern Caucasia and in the southern Russian steppes. Many animal-images were found in these districts, such as a double-eagle, a stag, a lion, etc., which made even clearer the path of the great migrations. In Little Tibet and Trans-Himalaya ancient drawings on rocks and ancient Buddhist cave temples were found. These drawings of the Stone Age, carved into rock, had long since attracted the attention of Professor Roerich. He studied them in the caves of southern France and Scandinavia, comparing them with those in the path of the great migration in Siberia and coordinating them with the conceptions of animal stylization in Asia. It was natural that he was happy when he found the same scenes of hunting, the same ritual dances, and the same sacrificial conjurations in Mongolia, Dardostan, Chinese Turkestan and Trans-Himalaya.

Throughout all his artistic and architectural work, Professor Roerich has always been greatly interested in research of the past. He has, however, combined this research with thoughts of the future, and he ends his article, "Subterranean Russia", with the significant phrase: "The one who knows not of the past cannot think of the future."