

Nicholas Roerich ranks among world-personalities. He is one of the few immortals of our age. Gandhi, Tagore, Romain Rolland, Gorki, Lenin and Roerich are colossals, and they tower over their contemporaries like giants among a world of dwarfs. Like the icecapped, sky - soaring paks of the Himalayan naked in their white grandeur, they beacon us to heavenly heights. God's glory is theirs, and their's is the Light of wisdom. They speak to us in a language full of infinite suggestions, and it is not their fault that we can only half see them, half understand them. They speak intuition, paint intuition, sing intuition, act intuition. Still they belong to us because of their great love for us, their noble visions for us.

#### A Saintly Personality

None who sees Roerich can help remember Tolstoy. Both are so typically Russian, yet so universal. A simple peasant face with great beauty and kind mellowness reflected on it, the snow-white beard, the protruding nose, and a pair of large blue eyes - ('like crystal water running deep') - which gives him unworldly look. Dignified, commanding, enthralling, selfpossessed, yet a dreamer of mysterious dreams and a painter of Cosmos ~~image~~ of ideas, forms colours. One wonders. One feels his spiritual harmony and his sage-like creative contemplation. In his Himalayan surroundings at Kulu, Roerich is irresistible.

#### Archeologist & Scholar

Few know that Roerich achieved great eminence as archeologist and scholar in his country before he became a world-figure in Art. It is these two factors that primarily colour his art-forms, and decide his subjects. In his subconscious mind are stored dates and visions of the past that irrepressibly come out on the canvas and give it a weird touch. 'The Sword of Gessal Khan', 'Buddha the Giver', 'Ramayan', Kupava, Unkrada, Saint Sergius, Sister Beatriec, Alexand Nevsky, the Messenger..... one can go on indefinitely, such is the panorama of his historical vision..

#### His Universal Language

And, of all his peers, Roerich's is a universal language which he has created for himself in order to give us his inner urge, his creative self, his dynamic personality. He is not a style. It is for lesser painters to cultivate distinctively and individually. Like God, he creates. Like God he lives in his creations. He uses the entire gamut of human experience - folklore, philosophy, nature, religion, epic, history, the world of the past and dreams of things to be. "The searching light of his interest and illumination penetrated into all corners, that passionate spirit for knowledge led him into invisible realms as it had led him through the expanse of the world, in tireless quests. Hence myriads of themes are within the compass of Roerich because the concentric circles of his interest and passion for knowledge have defined larger and larger spaces into the story world.."

The language of art is the best form of speech at our command for it comes out of heart and goes to heart, and its symbols of contour, colours, forms, lights and shade are more readily understood than what is spoken through dead and frozen words. Stand before Roerich's painting of Himavat and you feel what can be conveyed by no words. The spirits of the Himalayas communes with you, in those snow-white and sky-blue colours. You repeat Kalidasa's magnificent lines from the first of canto of Kumar Sambhava - and remember, is richly enthralled with the beauteous glory of the Himalayas and his ~~something that~~ sonorous Sanskrit is a veritable feast of joy - but there is something that eluded the ancient poet and could only be caught through the art of a Roerich. The sophisticated might discern combinations and influences, psychic and devotional depths, but who can say he is better for it? Roerich's appeal is universal. His art has the simplicity of a great Art. One might not understand all its shades of meanings and suggestions but one cannot help feeling its greatness. Take for instance Buddha the Giver. In its simple two colour arrangement, Roerich has crystallized an epic of devotee's struggle upward, and the sweet condescension of the Lord to meet him halfway. The 'Summit' like solid rock of mountain symbolises rather impossible ascent, but the unknown heights hide stairs leading to the summits 'Saintly



Guests' is too phantastic in colours. It is a dream - phantasy of a holy land where souls of the immortals feed upon manna and dew. The epic battle between the forces of light and darkness symbolising the upward march of man is Roerich's favourite subject! The Ramayan gives a graphic representation to this fight between Ram the divine and Ravan the Devil. Again and again Roerich, returns to this bass-note. ~~xxxx~~ 'Light conquers Darkness' a Painting by Roerich in the Municipal Museum, Allahabad, is a superb symbol of this idea where a faint light struggles against a mass of black paint and though darkness preponderates, the vigor of the horseman leaves no doubt about the result.

#### Greatest Intuitionist.

Intuition plays a great part in Roerich's pictures. Lot of them are just symbols of some passing vision caught by a master stroke. Roerich is called the wizard of landscape painting, the painter of soul, the singer of heavenly symphonies. But whether his subject be a Himalayan cliff or Buddha symbol, as is his painting "The Ascent", he is not contented to be a painter. He is the greatest intuitionist of our times. Be it a known historic figure or a famous peak or a frequented landscape, he veils it in the colours and forms of his intuition and associates it with deepest meanings. Peaks are thus carved into human like-ness, landscapes heaves with laughter and sighs, men and women are haloed in strange ethereal lights and in the process the canonical limits are swept away giving birth to an art of resplendent beauty and Himalayan strength. A constant stream of unconsciousness-consciousness envelopes all his effusion, be it poetry or painting, and in his epic designs and patterns a whole world of vision is re-created and co-ordinated.

#### Seer and Prophet

It is this intuitive vigour that makes him a seer and a prophet. He lives in a world of beauty and peace. Through Art and Culture to the land of eternal beauty and the heaven of Spiritual peace. This is the Roerich's Gospel to our atom-splitting world. "Art will unify all humanity", he says. Says he - "Art is to create Beauty; through beauty we gain victory; through beauty we write and ~~known~~ through beauty we pray to God." It is this prophetic vision of Art and beauty that makes Roerich see where we fail. A spirit in constant communion with God, he becomes one of the Hierarchy itself, and endows us with divine vision.

#### The Eternal Youth

And vision never grows old. I have heard Tagore at seventy speaking to an audience of youth as if he was beginning his life new. With childlike joy, he spoke of the eternity of Art and his foundness of young people. Roerich in his seventies is still experimenting with colours and technique. His latest works reveal perpetual vigour and sublimity. Roerich's galleries present to the world an eternal feast of youth and beauty, sublimity and grandeur, peace and prophecy. His colours still blaze. His contours still live. His is the eternal youth for great art, it knows ageing and the white blossoms of peace never fade.

#### Still Small Voice of Conscience.

Like Gandhi, the man of peace, Roerich is another still small voice of conscience working for world peace against heavy odds. His work for the preservation of art-treasures and the cultural heritage of man is known all over the world. In his message to the Washington conventions on April 15, 1935, when the twenty-one republics of the Americas, under the leadership of the United States, signed the Treaty of the Roerich Pact, Roerich wrote: Verily humanity is tired of destructions, vandalism and negations. Positive creativeness is the fundamental quality of the human spirit. In our life, everything that uplifts and ~~ennobles~~ ennobles the spirit must hold the dominant place. .... Be assured, it is not a truism to speak about the undeferrable and urgent strivings of culture. .... Let these resound once again the mighty prayer for peace of the entire world. As the Red Cross affirms ~~for~~ physical health, so may the Banner of Peace establish and affirm the spiritual health of mankind."

The Roerich Pact and his Banner of Peace are no dreams today. Amidst the spirit of Vendetta and vandalism when the Armageddon of war swept over the Globe like hell-fire, Roerich Banner unfurled over national treasures of art