

Reprinted from the "Educational Review," Madras—September 1937.

THE WORLD OF ROERICH.

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[In view of the forthcoming Congress of Baltic Roerich Societies and the celebration of the fortieth Anniversary of the Academicianship of Prof. Roerich and the fiftieth Anniversary of his artistic, scientific and literary activities, at Riga, on the 10th October 1937, the following article on the Master, will, we are sure, be of interest to our readers.—Ed.]

It has become the custom to deprecate the living and to exalt the dead. Let us disaffirm this custom by honouring those deserving ones who are still with us. Quite naturally, we refer to Roerich in this category. According to legend the gods of ancient times have long since left the earth. Later the half-gods went and still later even the sages retired until man lost the precious treasures of the spirit which the wise men had preserved in their hearts. Lacking the vital knowledge, man dwindled into a creature of earth, bounded by the horizon of his senses, insensible to the secret that lies in the chamber of his own heart and unable to understand him who has recaptured the secret.

We maintain, however, that as long as we have amongst us spiritual awakeners such as Roerich to guard the Gates of Beauty, we may rest assured that the precious treasures of the spirit will continue to be cherished and preserved. Roerich in a poem called "The Guard" tries to arouse the sleeper into awakening:

THE GUARD

"Guard, tell me why
Thou dost close this door? What
So constantly dost thou guard?"

"I guard
The secret of this chamber."

"But empty is the
Chamber. Worthy people
Have declared: 'There is nothing.'"

"The secret of the chamber I know.
To guard it, I am appointed,"

"But empty is thy chamber!"

"For thee it is empty!" answered the guard.

Those who are accustomed to live by their senses alone, are blind to the invisible world of Spirit. They affirm only what they can see, feel, taste, touch or hear. Nothing else exists for them but the physical proofs of life.

During this epoch of strife and dissension when the foundations of the world seem to be shaken, we are thankful that we have among us those who live by the spirit and follow the ancient path that leads to the Beatific Vision. The future owes a debt of gratitude to these men, for it is they who guarded the sacred tradition in times of danger and threatened catastrophe.

In the Book of the Ages, therefore, let us inscribe the name of Roerich, Apostle of Beauty, mighty Warrior of the Spirit, Citadel of Courage, Messenger of Culture.

When we think of the great men of past ages who have contributed largely to the advancement of humanity, we associate them with invincible daring and heroic fortitude, with the magnificent courage that remains unwavering during the most severe trials when all seems lost. Exactly these qualities are characteristic of Nicholas Roerich. He has dared to think in terms of all humanity in an age that exalts nationalism; he has dared to seek beyond the limited confines of conventional narrowness for the broader vision which guided the foot-steps of Confucius, Lao Tze, and the Buddha; he has dared to follow

the path of the spirit in a materialistic epoch. Such is the individual whom we are to study.

During his youth Roerich studied art as well as law. Fortunately, he came into contact with an inspiring art teacher who left an indelible impression on his life. It is typical of the vast range of his intellect that Roerich should not confine himself to one subject exclusively, but should avidly seek knowledge in various fields of endeavour. For example, Roerich made important discoveries in archaeology and studied the cultures of many lands.

At the beginning of the last decade Roerich received an invitation to come to the United States where an exhibition of his pictures had made him famous.

Despite his success, however, Roerich did not remain in America. He organized an expedition which led him to the lonely peaks of the austere Himalayas as well as to wild deserted regions that few Westerners have ever trodden. In these travels he learned much of the secret lore of the East which is only repeated by word of mouth to those who have prepared themselves to receive it. Personal privation was the order of his life during this time, for he had to endure the tropical heat of equatorial India as well as the intense cold of the mountain tops. When Roerich speaks of courage, therefore, we know that it is not an idle concept, but that he himself had made it an integral part of his character. One needs but to read his diary called "*Altai-Himalaya*" in order to realize the many dangers which tested his fortitude and ingenuity. At the same time he developed a remarkable understanding of the diverse peoples with whom he came into contact. In a land where strange customs prevailed, he

learned tolerance from actual experience. Though nations differ in their expression of ideals, Roerich sought the underlying spirit that animated an action.

In 1921, Roerich founded the *Master Institute*, the avowed purpose of which was to integrate the various arts and to create in the hearts of men a sincere appreciation of all that is beautiful. The mission of his life may be summed up by saying that he seeks to bring about the regeneration of man by the torch of beauty: the beauty that inspired our great religious teachers, the beauty that filled the hearts of poets, musicians and artists, the magnificent vision of beauty that will unite all peoples under one banner, and the beauty that will result in welding the bonds of brotherhood with the irresistible force of creative peace. This word beauty—it is easy to misunderstand it. For Beauty is not a descriptive word for a certain kind of concrete thing. Beauty is not only that which as someone said is skin deep. The beauty which Roerich speaks of is a beauty which is within as without. It is that beauty which is a purifying force and cleans out the ugliness even out of the darkest hidden recesses of our own character. That is true Beauty.

John Keats, the English poet, once said: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Therefore let us apply the word "Beauty" only to those things which have Infinite and Eternal value.

The nations of the world are to-day separated by innumerable barriers such as speech, differing opinions and countless prejudices. In order that a more understanding spirit be manifested, Roerich declares that Art should be cultivated, that art which brings a spiritual message to the heart and mind of man. Art

is a way of life. It is the sign of a broadened consciousness. It is a creative force.

Art is not dependent upon language, it appeals to all human beings. We do not need to undergo a long preparation in order to appreciate a Chinese poet or a German painter or a French musician. There is no stigma attached to a work simply because it was created by someone of a different nationality from our own. All that is necessary is the appreciation of beauty, the understanding of the vision before us.

If we were asked to define wherein the treasure of a nation consisted, would we not declare that it resides in the art, in the ideals, which the people have? Of what value is the material wealth of a nation if there is not a goal towards which that nation is aspiring? It is written in the Bible: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Precisely when a nation loses all conception of its spiritual destiny, it passes on the road to degeneration. Art in all its forms and not least the art of living, is a measure of the creative aspiration of a people; it represents the clearest visions, the highest ideals, the deepest intelligence and the most heroic deeds.

The true function of the artist is to be a bearer of ideals to the unknown ages that will follow after. Roerich tells us that inner sight shall be ours because there are those heroic few who are willing to go in search of the real treasures of humanity. We who have tasted the creative joy received from constantly striving for the unusual, for the blessed Kingdom of Spirit, will always continue to seek out these rare treasures in spite of the numerous temptations and threats that try to hinder us in our Search. We encounter many people on our pilgrimage, people contented

with the ordinary pleasures of life. They even try to induce us to partake of the evil fruit. Little do they realize that the treasure we search for obliterates their petty desires. Others are negatively dissatisfied; always critical and continually lament their fate. Still others are selfishly ambitious and try to seize all that their eyes fall upon. But these are so busy trying to grasp material possessions, that in their rush, they disdainfully ignore us.

Roerich beautifully expresses this picture in one of his poems and also encourages us to continue seeking even though the way is sometimes dark and the path hard to discern. He symbolically terms these treasures of the Soul—"The Sacred Signs". In a beautiful poem called "*We Shall See*" he prophesies:

WE SHALL SEE

We go to search for Sacred
Signs. We go carefully and
In silence.
People pass by. They laugh.
They summon us to follow. Others hurry
on In discontent. Others threaten us,
They want to seize what we possess.
The passers-by
Do not know that we have gone
To search for sacred signs. But
The threatening ones shall pass.
They have so much to do. But we
Shall search for Sacred Signs.
We walk
A big time. Keenly we look.
Many people pass us by.
Verily, it seems to us, they
Know the command: to find

The Sacred Signs. Darkness falls.
 It is difficult to discern
 The way. Indistinguishable the paths.
 Where can they be—
 The Sacred Signs?... To-day, it may be
 We shall not find them
 But tomorrow will be
 Light. I know
 We shall
 See them.

In art is a force which will unite the worlds, for if we appreciate the beauty that others are striving to express, we also acquire a love for those who seek to manifest it.

To surround our lives by beauty is a magnificent goal. It means that our actions should be measured in terms of beauty, that our thoughts should be evaluated by beauty, that our way of life should be regulated by the conception of beauty: That beauty which is Truth and highmindedness. If we can make our lives expressions of beauty then we will have achieved a goal which teachers of all ages have pointed out. All that is ugly and undesirable in life may be considered as an expression of darkness; but that which is beauty is truly a product of resplendent light. Roerich says that "the pledge of happiness for humanity lies in beauty. Hence, we assert Art to be the highest stimulus for the regeneration of the spirit. We consider Art to be immortal and boundless."

Yet—Roerich is not just an artist. He is a Soul who, through his art, endeavours to point a way towards the achievement of Soul-Life. In studying his paintings, we are filled with a realization that this man has a great message. He constantly conveys to us that he is not painting merely to astound us with wonderful colours, lines and design. He is not merely

trying to impress on us that he knows how to paint—but he tries to touch our own spirituality and awaken in us a love for that beauty which is also truth. He uses this medium of painting to convey to us the wisdom of the great masters. One painting in particular has inspired me often to live differently. It portrays a man standing in the midst of towering snow-capped mountains. The sleeve of his right hand is rolled up to bare a powerful forearm and the hand clutches a mighty sword with a firm tight grip. In his left hand he holds his own head which he has cut off. To the spiritually blind it is a peculiar impossibility, To the awakening Soul—it symbolizes one of the deepest truths. It gives us a sacred commandment—to cut off our own heads—to cut off the foolish reasoning and to let the heart and the intuitive spirituality in us, guide us. But we cannot do this unless we first grasp the sword of Sacrifice with a firm grip. For this is required great inner strength, or courage, as the powerful forearm in this painting symbolizes. Then it is possible to, symbolically speaking, cut off our own heads, cut off the intellectual pride which closes the mind and makes of it a dead thing. Our colleges do not help us with this problem. They succeed in filling the students' heads with facts and even help him to forget he is a Soul who is made "little lower than the angels" and who also has a divine inheritance. So Roerich says: "Cut off the head. Let thinking take the place of memorization and closed-mindedness. Intellectual pride is the most sure slayer of Friendship and all that is beautiful in life." Therefore I say such a painting is a great treasure and could do much to help us in our daily striving.

If we desire to test any action, word or deed, apply the test of beauty. That which

is beautiful is an expression of man's intuitive comprehension of truth. When we say that Christ or Buddha lived beautiful lives, we mean nothing else but that their love for the truth was so strong that their lives had to be beautiful. The measure in which we cultivate the love of truth, in the same measure will our lives become beautiful.

Therefore, when we speak of beauty we are not dealing with an abstract concept that has no value in life. The love of the beautiful must pervade our daily existence as a delicate perfume of indescribable fragrance. Our very speech should be redolent with gentle harmony, with the soothing quality of serenity; our thoughts should constantly dwell upon beautiful things, for we must not forget that we become that upon which we think. He who thinks upon infinite beauty surely becomes it, just as he who allows the ugly microbes of vice to enter his mind will debase his character. "By what men fall, by that they rise." Only by making our own lives more beautiful through overcoming the obstacles, through sacrificing the petty selfishnesses can we understand such a statement. Even under the least suspicious circumstances it is well to think of beauty which is the same as saying, "It is well to think of the Infinite and Eternal Reality at all times."

When Roerich refers to culture, it is not the purely intellectual culture of which he speaks; it is certainly not a product of the academician's intellectual speculation, it is a quality that springs spontaneously from the heart.

To be cultured has nothing to do with a nice veneer. True culture is character. This realization of a higher Culture is the synthesis of Science and Religion or Intelligent Think-

ing. Thus culture can help us realize perfection in our daily lives.

Dr. Kettner says: "A new era of freedom and friendship in human society will begin with the affirmation for true culture. We have already achieved a state of advanced civilization but not got one of real culture."

Roerich has said: "In culture is synthesized everything spiritual, everything heroic, everything constructive and creative. To call friends and co-workers to the festival of constructions and cordiality is full of dignity and beauty." Culture is a spiritual uplifting force that teaches us to live more abundantly. It is the basis of friendship and the essence of tolerance. It is found only in those who are truly wise and live actively on the basis of this wisdom.

Roerich is constantly calling us to action. Of what use to affirm the highest principles, if our lives remain as before? "The quality of action is affirmed in striving. When words are transmuted into action, the highest energy is affirmed. Therefore, only in life can one manifest the highest energies. Not words, but actions are considered as the affirmation of the highest energies. Only when the potentiality of spirit is manifested in action is the higher concordance affirmed."

In speaking of the value of Activity, Roerich relates an Ancient Legend about the great Akbar who drew a line and demanded that Birbal, his wise man, shorten the line without cutting or erasing from either side. Birbal then drew a longer line parallel to it and Akbar's line was thereby shortened. So Roerich says that "Wisdom lies in drawing the longer line." To continue the parallel, when we witness the constant rush and hurry in our daily lives we sometimes feel helpless

in our efforts to shorten this turmoil. But Roerich emphatically states that only by imagining a longer line of real activity can we shorten the line of rush.

When we compare the result of deep silent activity with that of the rush that goes on all about us we readily see which line is longer.

But Roerich has not only spoken of the foundational concepts on which humanity should rest, he has also been practical. Realizing that war oftentimes caused the destruction of art treasures that were of priceless value, he proposed that a Peace Banner be placed above cultural institutions and that combating nations refrain from destroying them. This suggestion won the approval of many outstanding leaders in various fields of activity. It was a most concrete and practical step in the direction of peace. To understand the significance of Roerich's proposal one should remember an incident that occurred many centuries ago. A Moslem warlord invading Alexandria was asked whether the soldiers should spare the famous library of that city. The warlord replied: "If the books in this library contain the same doctrines as the Koran, then they are unnecessary; if they are different, then they are heretical and should be destroyed." As a consequence the famous library of Alexandria was set into flames. Thus, the creative aspirations of many ages are destroyed by fanaticism and intolerance. To-day we have not progressed very far from this barbarous state and we must heartily thank those men of vision, like Roerich, who appreciate the treasures that are contained in art and literature and who seek to teach the world the necessity of actually applying the splendid ideals of those thinkers who sought

to build a more beautiful future for the human race.

Roerich does not disdain the achievements of the human spirit regardless of the land or the race where they are to be found. He will speak in the same glowing enthusiasm of Confucius and Lao Tze, of the Buddha and Ramakrishna, of Mohammed and the Bab. He is a citizen of the entire universe, a world citizen, for his is truly a cosmic perspective. The separative distinction of East and West has no meaning for him. When asked whether the distinctions and differences between East and West were insurmountable, he declared: "The most beautiful roses of both East and West have the same fragrance."

Roerich knows that perfection is everywhere because this universe is permeated by a Spirit, infinite and eternal in its power and essence. With deep humility, he shows he understands that cosmic thought which Christ expressed when He said, "The Father is greater than I."

In the following few words Prof. Roerich humbly makes us aware of the ocean of divinity all around us and what a small degree man is able to absorb.

DROPS

Thy benevolence fills
My hands. In profusion it is pouring
Through my fingers. I shall not
Keep all. I am not able to distinguish
The glowing streams of richness. Thy
Benevolent wave pours through the
hands
Upon earth, I do not see who will
gather
The precious fluid. The tiny sprays,
Upon whom will they fall? I shall not
have

To reach home. Out of all the benevolence,

In my tightly holding hands I shall bring only Drops.

Realizing the essence of this thought, how impossible and ridiculous it becomes to pride ourselves on our imaginary accomplishments! Filled with humility becomes our Soul. We are therefore on the path to overcoming and changing; for in no other way but the humble way is it possible to change our characters from the ordinary to the Beautiful.

Yes! "The Father is greater than I."

The New Age will not come of its own accord. The road that leads to a brighter future is strewn with innumerable dangers, with heart-rending obstacles, with infinite toil. Seeing but the darkness which obscures the path, there is a tendency to despair, to say, "Wherefore shall we strive when the goal is so hopeless? How can we expect to overcome conditions which have accumulated through many centuries?"

Shall ours be the coward's cry that fears the scene of the battle and hurries from the creative labour that will bring the New Age to birth? Shall we passively submit to the indignity of inaction? The necessity of the hour is not to submit, but to overcome. Roerich cries in ringing tones: "As long as we do not realize that obstacles are stepping stones, we have not understood the teaching. Without obstacles, there can be no real victory." Roerich says: "Blessed be the obstacles, they teach us energy and resistance."

Each obstacle is a test of our ability, a challenge to our ingenuity and creativeness. Let us consider the significance of obstacles when applied to the scriptures. We read

that the world was created out of chaos. Notice these words carefully, for even to-day man is constantly seeking to create order out of chaos, and in the measure in which he is successful, he mirrors the divine. To create cosmos from chaos was not only a necessity at the beginning of the world, it is a necessity at this very moment. Chaos is the eternal obstacle which confronts us. It is for us to transmute, not to discard it, by utilizing the wondrous power of creativeness. Thus shall our powers of creation be enhanced. To this festival of labour, to the mighty creativeness of the spirit, to the inspiring battle to wrest cosmos from chaos, Roerich summons us.

At this crucial moment when the darker forces appeal to the baser motives in human nature, we should all the more devotedly dedicate ourselves to the courageous affirmation of creative peace.

Actually, peace is vibrant activity. In peace does the artist create, in peace are the myriad mysteries of existence realized. Neither happiness nor love can exist where peace has folded its wings and fled. Without peace there can be neither friendship nor unity. Is it possible to co-operate when there is no peace? One might as well imagine an orchestra without rhythm.

Real peace has a spiritual basis, has its roots in the knowledge of the Highest. In a poem called *Light* Roerich gives us his prayer of devotion to the "Highest." He tells us that we can visualize the "Eternal Being" only through the depth of our heart, our intelligence, and through creative work. And that only through the enlightenment of this Infinite Being can we understand that which is invisible and intangible.

LIGHT.

How shall we behold Thine Image?

The all-penetrating Image,
Deeper than feeling and reason,

The intangible, the silent,
The unseen. I summon
The heart, wisdom and labour.

Who has apprehended that which has
No form, no sound, no taste,
Which has no end and no beginning?
And the darkness when all shall cease?
The thirst of the desert and the salt of
the

Ocean?

I shall await Thy
Glory.

Before Thine image

The sun does not shine. The moon does
not

Shine. Nor the stars nor the flame
Nor the lightning. The rainbow does
not shine.

The Light of the North does not
glimmer.

There shines Thine Image.

Everything gleams through Thy light.

In the darkness are shining
Particles of Thy glory.

And in my closed eyes

Dawns Thy wondrous light.

Perceiving the Inner Light is like hearing the clarion call to action. Only by action do we manifest the beauty of unified thought and the fire of creativeness. "Life rushes as a waterfall. But not many perceive this motion. As a tomb is the life of those who strive for rest. What is rest? This conception is an invention of the dark ones. What manifest caution people disclose when they speak of

rest! They conceive of rest as repose. And repose is always linked with earthly joy. But this joy of idleness is not ours. When is nature inactive?"

The youthful hearts to-day know that only with unfaltering courage can we break through the barriers of prejudice, the darkness of materialism, and the fears of the Unknown. These youths are the courageous pioneers who blaze the trail so that others may follow with comparative ease. As a result, in a short time, what was once a dangerous undertaking, becomes an everyday accepted occurrence.

Those who are aware learn from these significant experiences and they always look toward the future for their inspiration and never dare to look backward. Heroism is the most important weapon in the battle for the essential life. Dr. Kettner has said, "Why else shouldst thou wish to live unless thou canst heroic be?"

In closing I will quote the poem that brings out the central theme of Roerich's courageous spirit. It is called *At the Last Gates*.

AT THE LAST GATES.

We were told "Forbidden!"

Yet we entered none the less.

We approached the gates.

Everywhere we heard "Forbidden!"

We wanted to see the signs.

We were told: "Forbidden!"

We wanted to kindle the light.

We were told: "Forbidden!"

Gray, seeing, knowing guards,

You are erring guards.

The Host has permitted to know,

The Host has permitted to see.

No doubt it is His wish

That we shall know, that we shall see.

Behind the gates a messenger stands,
 He brings us something.
 "Let us in, guards!"
 "Forbidden!" we were told.
 And the gates were closed.
 But none the less many were the gates
 We passed. We broke our way through
 And "Permitted" remained behind us.
 The guards at the gates halted us.
 And they begged. And threatened.
 And we were warned: "Forbidden!"
 We pervaded everywhere: "Forbidden"
 All Forbidden? Forbidden all?
 To all Forbidden?
 And only behind us "Permitted?"

But on the Last Gates
 It will be traced "Permitted!"
 And behind us "Forbidden."

"Thus inscribe!" He commanded
 "Upon the Last Gates."

Let us remember the magnificence of the
 ideals which Roerich brings to us; let us
 cultivate in ourselves the deep love of beauty
 which he proclaims; and let us unceasingly
 strive to lift our thoughts to the effulgence of
 light.

Greetings to Nicholas Roerich, the Prophet
 of Beauty!

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Lecture given July 25th, 1937

by - Sol Montlack

of The Biosophical Institute

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They summon us to follow. Others hurry on
In discontent. Others threaten us.
They want to seize what we possess.
The passers-by

Do not know that we have gone
To search for sacred signs. But
The threatening ones shall pass.
They have so much to do. But we
Shall search for Sacred Signs.

- - - - -
We walk
A long time. Keenly we look.
Many people pass us by.
Verily, it seems to us, they
Know the command: to find
The Sacred Signs. Darkness falls.
It is difficult to discern
The way. Indistinguishable the paths.
Where can they be--
The Sacred Signs?...Today, it may be
We shall not find them.
But tomorrow will be
Light. I know
We shall
See them.

In art is a force which will unite the worlds, for if we appreciate the beauty that others are striving to express, we also acquire a love for those who seek to manifest it. To surround our lives by beauty is ^a magnificent goal. It means that our actions should be measured in terms of beauty, that our thoughts should be evaluated by beauty, that our way of life should be regulated by the conception of beauty: That beauty which is Truth and high mindedness. If we can make our lives expressions of beauty then we will have achieved a goal which teachers of all ages have pointed out. All that is ugly and undesirable in life may be considered as an expression of darkness; but that which is beauty is truly a product of resplendent light. Roerich says that "the pledge of happiness for humanity lies in beauty. Hence, we assert Art to be the highest stimulus for the regeneration of the spirit. We consider Art to be immortal and boundless."

Yet - Roerich is not just an artist. He is a Soul who, thru his art, endeavors to point a way towards the achievement of Soul-life. In studying his paintings, we are filled with a realization that this man has a great message. He constantly conveys to us

that he is not painting merely to astound us with wonderful colors, lines, and design. He is not merely trying to impress on us that he knows how to paint - but he tries to touch our own spirituality and awaken in us a love for that beauty which is also truth. He uses this medium of painting to convey to us the wisdom of the great masters. One painting in particular has inspired me often to live differently. It portrays a man standing in the midst of towering snow-capped mountains. The sleeve of his right hand is rolled up to bare a powerful forearm and ~~in~~ the hand clutches a mighty sword with a firm tight grip. In his left hand he holds his own head which he has cut off. To the spiritually blind it is a peculiar impossibility. To the awakening Soul - it symbolizes one of the deepest truths. It gives us a sacred commandment - to cut off our own heads - to cut off the foolish reasoning and to let the heart and the intuitive spirituality in us, guide us. But we cannot do this unless we first grasp the sword of Sacrifice with ^a firm grip. For this is required great inner strength, or courage, ~~such~~ as the powerful forearm in this painting symbolizes. Then it is possible to, symbolically speaking, cut off our own heads, cut off the intellectual pride which closes the mind and makes of it a dead thing. Our colleges do not help us with this problem. They succeed in filling the student's heads with facts and even help him to forget he is a Soul who is made "little lower than the angels" and who also has a divine inheritance. So Roerich says: Cut off the head. Let thinking take the place of memorization and closed-mindedness. Intellectual pride is the most sure slayer of Friendship and all that is beautiful in life. Therefore I say such a painting is a great treasure and could do much to help us in our daily striving.

If we desire to test any action, word or deed, apply the test

of beauty. That which is beautiful is an expression of man's intuitive comprehension of truth. When we say that Christ or Buddha lived beautiful lives, we mean nothing else but that their love for the truth was so strong that their lives had to be beautiful. The measure in which we cultivate the love of truth, in the same measure will our lives become beautiful.

Therefore, when we speak of beauty we are not dealing with an abstract concept that has no Value in life. The love of the beautiful must pervade our daily existence as a delicate perfume of indescribable fragrance. Our very speech should be redolent with gentle harmony, with the soothing quality of serenity; our thoughts should constantly dwell upon beautiful things, for we must not forget that we become that upon which we think. He who thinks upon infinite beauty surely becomes it, just as he who allows the ugly microbes of vice to enter his mind will debase his character. "By what men fall, by that they rise". Only by making our own lives more beautiful thru overcoming the obstacles, thru sacrificing the petty selfishnesses can we understand such a statement. Even under the least auspicious circumstances it is well to think of beauty which is the same as saying, "It is well to think of the Infinite and Eternal Reality at all times.

When Roerich refers to culture, it is not the purely intellectual culture of which he speaks; it is certainly not a product of the academician's intellectual speculation, it is a quality that springs spontaneously from the heart.

To be cultured has nothing to do with a nice veneer. True culture is character. This realization of a higher Culture is the synthesis of Science and Religion or Intelligent thinking. Thus culture can help us realize perfection in our daily lives.

Dr. Kettner says, "A new era of freedom and friendship in human society will begin with the affirmation for true culture. We have already achieved a state of advanced civilization but not yet one of real culture."

Roerich has said: "In Culture is synthesized everything spiritual, everything heroic, everything constructive and creative. To call friends and co-workers to the festival of construction and cordiality is full of dignity and beauty." Culture is a spiritual uplifting force that teaches us to live more abundantly. It is the basis of friendship and the essence of tolerance. It is found only in those who are truly wise.

☞ Roerich is constantly calling us to action. Of what use to affirm the highest principles, if our lives remain as before? "The quality of action is affirmed in striving. When words are transmuted into action, the highest energy is affirmed. Therefore, only in life can one manifest the highest energies. Not words, but actions are considered as the affirmation of the highest energies. Only when the potentiality of spirit is manifested in action is the higher concordance affirmed."

In speaking of the value of Activity, Roerich relates an Ancient Legend about the great Akbar who drew a line and demanded that Birbal, his wise man, shorten the line without cutting ^{or} ~~an~~ erasing from either side. Birbal then drew a longer line parallel to it and Akbar's line was thereby shortened. So Roerich says that "Wisdom lies in drawing the longer line". To continue the parallel, when we witness the constant rush and hurry in our daily lives we sometimes feel helpless in our efforts to shorten this turmoil. But Roerich emphatically states that only by imagining a longer line of real Activity can we shorten the line of Rush.

When we compare the results of deep silent activity with that of the rush that goes on all about us we readily see which line is longer.

But Roerich has not only spoken of the foundational concepts on

which humanity should rest, he has also been practical. Realizing that war oftentimes caused the destruction of art treasures that were of priceless value, he proposed that a Peace Banner be placed above cultural institutions and that combatting nations refrain from destroying them. This suggestion won the approval of many outstanding leaders in various fields of activity. It was a most concrete and practical step in the direction of peace. To understand the significance of Roerich's proposal one should remember an incident that occurred many centuries ago. A Moslem warlord invading Alexandria, was asked whether the soldiers should spare the famous library of that city. The warlord replied: "If the books in this library contain the same doctrines as the Koran, then they are unnecessary; if they are different, ~~they are different~~, then they are heretical and should be destroyed." As a consequence the famous library of Alexandria was set into flames. Thus, the creative aspirations of many ages are destroyed by fanaticism and intolerance. Today we have not progressed very far from this barbarous state and we must heartily thank those men of vision, like Roerich who appreciate the treasures that are contained in art and literature and who seek to teach the world the necessity of actually applying the splendid ideals of those thinkers who sought to build a more beautiful future for the human race.

Roerich does not disdain the achievements of the human spirit regardless of the land or the race where they are to be found. He will speak in the same glowing enthusiasm of Confucius and Lao Tze, of the Buddha and Ramakrishna, of Mohammed and the Bab. He is a citizen of the entire universe, a world citizen, for his is truly a cosmic perspective. The separative distinction of East and West has no meaning for him. When asked whether the distinctions and differences between East and West were insurmountable, he declared: "The most beautiful roses of both East and West have the same fragrance."

Roerich knows that perfection is everywhere because this universe is permeated by a Spirit infinite and eternal in Its power and essence. With deep humility, he shows he understands that cosmic thought which Christ expressed when He said, "The Father is greater than I."

In the following few words Prof. Roerich humbly makes us aware of the ocean of divinity all around us. And what a small degree man is able to absorb.

DROPS

Thy benevolence fills
My hands. In profusion it is pouring
Through my fingers. I shall not
Keep all. I am not able to distinguish
The glowing streams of richness. Thy
Benevolent wave pours through the hands
Upon earth. I do not see who will gather
The precious fluid. The tiny sprays,
Upon whom will they fall? I shall not have time
To reach home. Out of all the benevolence,
In my tightly holding hands I shall bring only
Drops.

Realizing the essence of this thought, how impossible and ridiculous it becomes to pride ourselves on our imaginary accomplishments. Filled with humility becomes our Soul. We are therefore on the path to overcoming and changing; for in no other way but the humble way is it possible to change our characters from the ordinary to the Beautiful.

Yes! "The Father is greater than I."

The New Age will not come of its own accord. The road that leads to a brighter future is strewn with innumerable dangers, with heart-rending obstacles, with infinite toil. Seeing but the darkness which obscures the path, there is a tendency to despair, to say, "Wherefore shall we strive when the goal is so hopeless? How can we expect to overcome conditions which have accumulated through many centuries?"

Shall ours be the coward's cry that fears the scene of the battle and hurries from the creative labor that will bring the New

Age to birth? Shall we passively submit to the indignity of inaction? The necessity of the hour is not to submit, but to overcome. Roerich cries in ringing tones: "As long as we do not realize that obstacles are stepping stones, we have not understood the teaching." ^{Without obstacles, there can be no real victory} Roerich says, "Blessed be the obstacles, they teach us energy and resistance."

Each obstacle is a test of our ability, a challenge to our ingenuity and creativeness. Let us consider the significance of obstacles when applied to the scriptures. We read that the world was created out of chaos. Notice these words carefully, for even today man is constantly seeking to create order out of chaos, and in the measure in which he is successful, he mirrors the divine. To create cosmos from chaos was not only a necessity at the beginning of the world, it is a necessity at this very moment. Chaos is the eternal obstacle which confronts us. It is for us to transmute, not to discard it, by utilizing the wondrous power of creativeness. Thus shall our powers of creation be enhanced. To this festival of labor, to the mighty creativeness of the spirit, to the inspiring battle to wrest cosmos from chaos, Roerich summons us.

At this crucial moment when the darker forces appeal to the baser motives in human nature, we should all the more devotedly dedicate ourselves to the courageous affirmation of creative peace.

Actually, peace is vibrant activity. In peace does the artist create, in peace are the myriad mysteries of existence realized. Neither happiness nor love can exist where peace has folded its wings and fled. Without peace there can be neither friendship nor unity. Is it possible to cooperate when there is no peace? One might as well imagine an orchestra without rhythm.

Real peace has a spiritual basis, has its roots in the knowledge of the Highest. In a poem called "Light" Roerich gives us his prayer of devotion to the "Highest" He tells us that we can visualize the

"Eternal Being" only through the depth of our heart, our intelligence, and through creative work. And that only through the enlightenment of this Infinite Being can we understand that which is invisible and intangible.

LIGHT

How shall we behold Thine Image?
The all-penetrating Image,
Deeper than feeling and reason.
The intangible, the silent,
The unseen. I summon
The heart, wisdom and labor.
Who has apprehended that which has
No form, no sound, no taste,
Which has no end and no beginning?
And the darkness when all shall cease?
The thirst of the desert and the salt of the
Ocean?

I shall await Thy
Glory.
Before Thine image
The sun does not shine. The moon does not
Shine. Nor the stars nor the flame
Nor the lightning. The rainbow does not shine.
The Light of the North does not glimmer.
There shines Thine Image.
Everything gleams through Thy light.
In the darkness are shining
Particles of Thy glory.
And in my closed eyes
Dawns Thy wondrous light.

Perceiving the Inner Light is like hearing the clarion call to action. Only by action do we manifest the beauty of unified thought and the fire of creativeness. "Life rushes as a waterfall. But not many perceive this motion. As a tomb, is the life of those who strive for rest. What is rest? This conception is an invention of the dark ones. What manifest caution people disclose when they speak of rest! They conceive of rest as repose. And repose is always linked with earthly joy. But this joy of idleness is not Ours. When is nature inactive?"

The youthful hearts today know that only with unfaltering

courage can we break through the barriers of prejudice, the darkness of materialism, and the fears of the Unknown. These youths are the courageous pioneers who blaze the trail so that others may follow with comparative ease. As a result, in a short time, what was once a dangerous undertaking, becomes an everyday accepted occurrence.

Those who are aware learn from these significant experiences and they always look toward the future for their inspiration and never dare to look backward.

Heroism is the most important weapon in the battle for the essential Life. Dr. Kettner has said, "Why else shouldst thou wish to live unless thou canst heroic be?"

In closing I will read the poem that brings out the central theme of Roerich's courageous spirit. It is called "At The Last Gates"

AT THE LAST GATES

We were told "Forbidden!"
Yet we entered none theless.
We approached the gates.
Everywhere we heard "Forbidden!"
We wanted to see the signs.
We were told: "Forbidden!"
We wanted to kindle the light.
We were told: "Forbidden!"

Gray, seeing, knowing guards,
You are erring guards.
The Host has permitted to know,
The Host has permitted to see.
No doubt it is His wish
That we shall know, that we shall see.

Behind the gates^s a messenger stands.
He brings us something.
"Let us in, guards!"
"Forbidden!" we were told.
And the gates were closed.

But none the less many were the gates
We passed. We broke our way through
And "Permitted" remained behind us.
The guards at the gates halted us.

And they begged. And threatenēd.
And we were warned: "Forbidden!"
We pervaded everywhere: "Forbidden"

All Forbidden? Forbidden all?
To all forbidden?
And only behind us "Permitted?"
But on the Last Gates
It will be traced "Permitted!"
And behind us "Forbidden."
"Thus inscribe!" He commanded
Upon the Last Gates.

Let us remember the magnificence of the ideals which Roerich
brings to us; let us cultivate in ourselves the deep love of beauty
which he proclaims; and let us unceasingly strive to lift our thoughts
to the effulgence of light.

Greetingsto Nicholas Roerich, the prophet of Beauty!