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#### ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in the School of Education of New York University, 1936

## NICHOLAS ROERICH'S CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN LIFE AND EDUCATION

BY GARABED H. PAELIAN

### *The Problem*

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the fundamental principles of Professor Nicholas Roerich's philosophy and pedagogy, and to outline his contributions to modern life and education.

### *Purposes*

1. To give a brief account of Professor Roerich's hereditary and environmental background; outline his philosophy and his educational system; describe the institutions he has created; and discuss the type of work which is being carried on in these institutions
2. To make a comparison of Professor Roerich's experiment with other proposals for the improvement of educational methods, particularly with those of Professor John Dewey
3. To outline Professor Roerich's contribution to modern education and to evaluate its worth to the educational system of the United States

### *Sources and Material*

1. A detailed analysis was made of Roerich's works in English and in French, and of articles published in various magazines. Roerich has not written any books on his philoso-

phy of education, therefore it was necessary to analyze his works and his general philosophy in order to trace the development of his ideas on education.

The most important of his works published in English are: *Adamant*, 1924; *Altai-Himalaya*, 1929; *Flame in Chalice*, 1929; *Heart of Asia*, 1929; *Shambhala*, 1930; *Realm of Light*, 1931; *Fiery Stronghold*, 1933.

2. Many books and articles written about Roerich were read and analyzed. The most important of the works published in English are: *The World of Roerich*, by Nina Selivanova, 1923; *Roerich, Fragments of a Biography*, by Jean Duvernois, 1923.

### *Methods of Procedure*

Nicholas Konstantinovitch Roerich was born October 10, 1874, in St. Petersburg, Russia. In 1883 he entered the private gymnasium (Russian grammar school and high school combined) of the famous educator, Dr. May. In 1893, after graduating from the gymnasium, Roerich entered the School of Law, Imperial University of St. Petersburg, and at the same time entered the Imperial Academy of Art under Professor Kuindjy. In 1897 he was graduated from the University,



and he was graduated from the Academy the following year. In 1898 he became Professor of the Archaeological Institute and art editor of the magazine *Art*. Roerich made extensive trips and expeditions throughout Europe, America, and Asia, giving lectures and holding exhibitions of his paintings in most of the art centers of the world.

Professor Roerich is the president-founder of the Master Institute of United Arts, in New York, of Corona Mundi, International Art Center, New York, and of Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum in India. He is member and honorary president of numerous art, archaeological, scientific, geographical, and other societies. The Roerich Museum has branches in Philadelphia, Paris, Yugoslavia, Argentine, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, etc.

1. Books and magazines, written by Professor Roerich, in English and French, and books written about him and his institutions by others have been obtained from the directors of the Master Institute of New York City.

2. A study of Roerich's racial and environmental background was made to determine the influences which molded his character and thinking. This was done through a study of the characteristics of the Slavic races, particularly of the Russian, of which Roerich is a member. A study was also made of Russian church paintings and of Byzantine art, which were potent factors influencing the paintings of the earlier period of his life.

3. Roerich has spent the latter part of his life in the Far East, and has admired and adopted its philosophy. A careful study was therefore made of the philosophy of life and education of the Eastern peoples, and its influence upon the philosophy of Roerich was traced.

4. A special study was made to trace the sources of Roerich's inspiration which affected his works and his ideals.

5. A study of his pedagogical institutions here and abroad was made to discover his original methods.

6. A complete bibliography of Roerich's published works in English, Russian, French, and Japanese, and of all works about Roerich, was compiled.

### *Findings*

The results of this study indicate that Professor Roerich's chief aim has been to advance the cultural progress of mankind by correlating the knowledge of the present with that handed down from the ages of the past.

The Roerich principles adaptable to present-day education have been found to be:

1. The principle of combining the best in Eastern philosophy with the best in Western practice.

2. The principle of creating a philosophy of science by combining a subjective approach to knowledge with an objective approach.

3. The principle of stimulating the creative urge of the student by recognizing the existence of the soul and combining the practices of materialistic psychology with the practice of stirring the soul by introspection.

4. The principle of an interdependence between society and the individual, such as that improvement of one effects improvement of the other.

5. The principle that cultural development of the child consists in an awakening of his potential soul forces and an outward development of his soul characteristics in a process similar to the awakening of the latent powers of an acorn to expand and develop into an oak.

6. The principle that the cultural develop-



ment of the child is the supreme duty of society.

7. The principle that the mind should be released from its fetters to enable the student to think for himself.

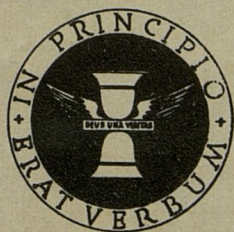
8. The principle that the teacher is responsible for the guidance and inspiration of the student, and for showing him the purpose of life, so that he may have a definite aim in life.

9. The broad principle of a cosmic religion based on the idea of universal brotherhood.

### *Influence*

Roerich's influence as a cultural leader has spread all over the world (a) through his paintings, (b) through his writings, (c) through his institutions, and (d) through his endeavors toward peace and universal brotherhood. His peace pact has been signed by the twenty-one nations of North and South America and his Banner of Peace, to be used in time of war and peace for the protection of all cultural institutions, has been adopted by these nations.





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by G. H. PARLIAN Ph. D.

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