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MY REMINISCENCES <sup>of</sup> WITH MAHARSHI N. ROERICH.

In August 1927 I happened to visit Adyar in company of the family of Sir Chinubhai of Ahmedabad while returning from Ooty. Mrs. Cousins escorted us through various quarters. At perhaps Col. Olcott Hall we were shown one large painting in the centre of the principal wall. I had of course seen large European paintings at Art Galleries of Baroda, Calcutta, and Jamnagar but never was so much attracted by the mysterious harmony and brilliancy of colour. In this picture Mrs. Cousins at once introduced us with the name of the artist and the title of the picture. It was painted in tempera colours by a great Russian Artist named N. Roerich who had now made <sup>the</sup> Himalayas his permanent home and was painting the eternal snow peaks of greatest heights in a unique manner. This particular picture was painted earlier and it was named 'The Gate Opens'. A youthful angel-like maiden was holding the big door of the monastery just opened and bright expansive landscape greets us; quite simple but full of emotional throbs. The darkness of the night is gone and beautiful morn smiles to the soul who has opened the doors of his conscience. A happy vision; a message portent with flights of thoughts. It really opened my way to the Great Roerich. I could not shake off the charm it passed on me. The same evening I was presented two small books on Roerich Art by my great noble friend and host late Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar. I digested the spirit and message of the little works and the same year I started communications for more publications of Roerich. My friend Sir C. ordered out the big publications <sup>Altai H.</sup> Altai Himalayas and few others. In the meanwhile I prepared some small monographs in Gujarati about the Great Artist and offered my humble tribute to the new message and beauty he was thus giving the world.

I felt I was now in the folds of large brotherhood created by a benign leader for beauty, love & art. I used to get replies of all my letters directly from the pen of the beloved personality



and each one was always accompanied by a beautiful picture or an outprint of some inspiring monograph generally suited to my mood at the time. It was a telepathic operation on my innerself and gave me a lift to higher consciousness and courage to go ahead in the service of Art and mankind.

In 7th December 1936 Kulpati Dr. <sup>a</sup> F.M. Cousins visited Ahmedabad after many years and he was received by the citizens as one of the pioneer benefactors of Indian Art & Culture in modern India. A public reception was given to him by the members of the Bharat Kala Mandal of which I was the then <sup>no</sup> Secretary. We talked about the great Himalayan Artist and I asked him to bring me into a closer contact with his personality and Art. Prof. Cousins encouraged the idea and wrote to Maharshi Roerich about my wishes. Again I was assured through his spiritual letters that already he had accepted me as a soldier under the banner of Love, Beauty & Art.

In October 1937 <sup>11</sup> First Baltic Congress of Roerich Societies met at Riga, Latvia, to celebrate the great event of completion of 50 years of his extraordinary artistic, scientific and literary achievements so varied in their scope that legends were woven out about him, Artist, Archaeologist, Academician, thinker, writer, humanitarian. I sent my humble tribute and congratulations to this Congress and they were accepted, acknowledged and published in the beautiful Brochure of the event. I felt now fully inculcated in his cult, the army of beauty and love to conquer ignorance and hatred and help peace and culture.

In summer of 1939 Prof. Cousins and Mrs. Cousins wrote to me that he was to be the guest of Prof. Roerich at Naggar-Kulu his abode in Himalayas for a couple of months and that was the occasion for me to see the great artist personally. I atonce agreed and soon I got a cordial invitation from Roerich House to be their guest so long I chose to stay there. Dr. Cousins wrote to me detailed instructions as to the journey from Amritsar via Pathankot, Mundi and Kulu. I took up the adventure and went alone in that beautiful Himalayan valley. It was a novel exper-



ience and I have narrated it fully in <sup>the</sup> Kumar the Gujarati Journal I owned and edited at the time. I was expected very keenly and proper accomodations for my stay was made at the Dak Bunglow (really an old palace) at Naggar. Professor Cousins and Mrs. Cousins greeted me first at my <sup>d</sup>loge, brought tea and breakfast from Roerich. Next morning was fixed for our first meeting. Cousins were put up in another banglow, and we were to meet at the gate of Roerich house at 9 A.M. exactly. I prepared early. I had with me a decorated khadi bag filled with prints of Gujarat Artists and a small brass image of Garuda kneeling and bowing. It was a fine summer morning and I could see all the plains of the valley below. Farms and cottages on steps of the hill created <sup>reminded of a</sup> a Kang Dap picture. I could see the yard of every cottage. Happy mothers and girls were singing and beyond in the depths a streak of water in long ~~maendee~~ <sup>maendee</sup> sparkled. It was river Bias, and was guarded by high peaked mountains hiding distant snow summits of high Himalayas. Just 200 feet above my abode was the Roerich house quite visible from my balcony. Yet I had to climb and walk for ten minutes to reach there. I was earlier by few minutes. So I waited for Prof. Cousins and Mrs. Cousins at the gates. It was all very small quiet and happy abode. Just above it the hill path went up covered by orchards of large apples for which the valley is famous. I stretched my eyes for my Cousins friends and was enjoying the scene when all of a sudden came out of the Bunglow a neatly dressed Chaprassi. He approached me with Indian Namaskars and said in Hindi: Yours honour, you are our guest, come in, master sends greeting. I explained I was waiting for Prof. Cousins. "Doesn't matter, please come inside. I went with him and reached the cottage door where the long desired figure of the Great Master without much ceremoney but with indiscribable sincerity hailed me with right hand lifted in blessing "Welcome friend! we know each other since long" and he took me by hand, made me sit in the Varanda. I was impressed



by his benign looks and the way in which he made me at home. It was all beyond anticipation. I felt a favoured being. Immediately came the joyful voice of Prof. Cousins and remarked "A bit hurried". I wanted to make a romance of the introduction for you. But I said "nothing better would make it more romantic than this simple and direct happening."

Mr. Svetoslav, ~~tall & young~~ appeared in the door and very politely asked us to come inside the hall and meet Mother Madam Helena Roerich. A grand lady born to bless and rule with happy smile acknowledged my greetings. I asked Prof. Cousins to present her the picture bag with khadi decorations to her and the Garuda image to Prof. Roerich on my behalf. Now Prof. Cousins took up the thread, opened the bag and brought out the picture-prints mounted on uniform tints and titles written with mention of each artist. I was asked to describe the subject of each picture and few words about the Artists. Prof. Roerich seemed very much pleased and satisfied by the treatment and sentiments of the pictures and said, "all speak of your achievements and struggles for the Glory of Art".

Prof. Cousins proposed I should be shown <sup>Some of</sup> ~~all~~ the Roerich canvasses. The great sage looked at Mr. Svetoslav who was all the while waiting and standing with the courtesy of an Indian disciple. He at once went to the balcony facing the valley and asked the servants to arrange some seats for us. In a few minutes ~~he~~ appeared and said 'Father, everything is ready'. It was ~~very small space~~ very beautifully decorated by colourful tapestries from India and Tibet. We could see the snow summits of Himalayas of which many pictures were painted from this very place.

Mr. Svetoslav started to show the canvasses and I forgot myself and time as these vistas of inspiring vision <sup>came</sup> ~~paraded~~ before my eyes. About an hour and a half I was spell-bound and thought and thought how this pleasure be given to many of my country men who had no idea of the power of great art. We had just finished when new people arrived, Capt. Mahn <sup>o</sup> and Mr. George Roerich, another



son of the Great Artist. He as I know was a great scholar, traveller and linguist and a writer. Capt. Mahn was the friend of the family and was <sup>staying</sup> ~~camped~~ at Manali, <sup>the last village is Ruly</sup> a nearby ~~military outpost~~ of India. Mr. George was versatile in his talks. Mr. Svetoslav was known to me for the first time but I was interested in his art and art studies. We could not get much time to gather them but our mutual attachment increased as the time progressed. I loved Mr. George Roerich more when I read his diary of travels, <sup>the book</sup> "Heart of Asia", later on.

It was noon and meal time. Father Roerich was addressed by a charming young <sup>girl</sup> ~~girl~~ who invited in Russian Language all the guests to the table.

The inner hall ~~the hall~~ was very cosy and inspiring. Every wall and corner was an example of high taste and classical setting. There was no electricity but the flickering lights of candles gave it an old time romance and happiness which is absent in our city illuminations. I was seated on the right hand of Prof. Roerich and he very lovingly said "everything is vegetarian, we know and appreciate your high principles". He was brief but sincere and significant. About him he said 'We' as some of our Indian Gurus talk with their pupils. But it all fitted his dignified attitude.

The meals continued for an hour and Prof. Cousins kept on the interest of conversations and ~~one~~ all contributed to it. I too had some of my subtle experience and phenomenal narrations which they attended with seriousness.

In such a short time I felt I was introduced to a family who lived in my ideals only and was much aggrieved when I said good-bye to them all. I spent the evening with Cousins and that was again a memorable occasion I have remembered upto-day with happiest feelings.

I was to leave next day because clouds were gathering in the sky and if the torrents started the mountain roads might be blocked up my time. The journey itself was through most picturesque rights and novel costumes, people. I happened to see a Kulu --



procession which Mr. Svetoslav had painted. The kulu trip has been one of my life's rare experience and contact. My great ambition of showing Roerich pictures in Gujerat soon fructified. Prof. Cousins after reaching Trivandrum made up plans so that it became easier to get the pictures drawn on plains. My friends at Ahmedabad encouraged my idea and we risked all the costs and expenses for the packages of pictures to reach us. The rest of the journey to Trivandrum was promised by the Travancore Govt. ✓

Prof. Cousins was invited to celebrate the occasion on behalf of Bharat Kala Mandal at Ahmedabad on 30th September 1939. Prof. Roerich wrote "although I have had no occasion to visit Ahmedabad upto now, there have been ties for many years and I am happy now that my paintings now like messengers of goodwill are visiting your city."

The exhibition was considered a great event in the local history of Ahmedabad when people of all grades partook and enjoyed an Art Festival. We had risked great expenses of Railway and other transhipment of pictures from mountains and travelling costs of the worthy lecturer but it was liberally met with by the constant flow from the public by gate-money only. If children, young and aged Mill agents and labourers all felt a new joy before these Himalayan vistas and many were moved by religious feelings of a pilgrimage before the pictures. Local press took notice of it under great headings and the organisers felt justified and in their attempts to honour Art and the Artist. When the exhibition was closed many people were disappointed to have missed it. It seemed a wave had come over the city. Real art requires no arguments.

In the meanwhile I received a very touching and inspiring letter from Naggar:-

Naggar

Kulu, Punjab, Br. India,

27th September 1939.

Our very dear friend,

In your lines of Sept. 21st I felt much sincerity of the heart that it moved greatly as artist and as man. Above all earthly



havocs there remains Art and Religion and if human beings reveal exalted feeling they come through these two channels. At the moment there are few joys on the earthly plane and the human heart is very much in need of rejoicing. We artist should be grateful to fate for having been given one of the nearest channels to bring people happiness of the heart. For someone else these words may appear as nebulous abstractions but for you as for an artist they represent reality. Already from 1923 we are bound with India. Even earlier we admired the lofty thoughts of your motherland and since we are here this admiration has become more deeply inrooted. When you entered under our roof here, we all felt a true friend had come. And we were glad to see you also reciprocated with similar emotions. How precious it is when human hearts can be opened to each other. We shall be most happy to receive from you and from Dr. Cousins particulars about the exhibition. Perhaps you will also send some maps. I was very glad to hear from you about Sir Chinubhai's cordial attitude and request you to transmit to him our warm greetings. The reaction of your artist friends whose paintings we liked so much will also be most interesting to hear. Gujerat is especially significant in Indian Art. May all your endeavours be blessed.

In spirit with you,

N. Roerich.

He used to reply all my letters with similar spirit and each letter gave me a lift in new spiritual delight. He often grouped my name in all his articles about renaissance<sup>2</sup> of India and mentioned to other friends in a way I felt shy to assume. But it all confirmed me of his great benevolent attitude to me. I only could not properly express my deepest feeling for all that.

<sup>2nd</sup>  
In December 1940 we had another Roerich exhibition when Mr. Svetoslav Roerich himself attended the function and the same enthusiasm was shown by the public. This time Mr. S. Roerich also contributed to the show many of his best compositions of Indian life. People could see how he had inherited the lofty ~~motives~~ motives of his great Father with his own definit technique. We



We all felt that here was a great friend of India who can help a true movement and study of art in India. Mr. Svetoslav was no longer a stranger to us. He lived and moved with us as an old comrade and made himself quite at home. This again brought me closer to the house. The exhibition was transhipped to Trivandrum where Mr. Svetoslav had executed some portraits for the palace - and a Roerich room also was projected. =

In the meanwhile the Bombay Art Society was moved to hold a Roerich exhibition, it being the year of its silver jubilee. The Society invited me to supervise the hanging of the pictures. Prof. Roerich rejoiced at knowing that I was to be there and at my request sent a message to the Society and it was published in the year's catalogue. He even sent big brochures on Roerich art to be presented to the then Excellencies Viceroy and the Governor. It was significant gesture of courtesy and nobility. Bombay could appreciate the great art. Mr. Langhamner had helped me to set up the Roerich room and when I asked him what was his candid opinion about the show. He exclaimed after some deep breath "He is a great composer" It was a tribute worth nothing. ✓

I could not stay in Bombay when the exhibition was closed and the pictures were packed off by the jobbers of the exhibition and when they reached Kulu it must have been a great pain to the creator of them to see that they were badly packed and damaged as a result I received this letter.

Naggar,

20th March 1940.

My dear friend,

Your fraternal letter of the 16th instant has been just received and I am forwarding it to Svetoslav who is still in Trivandrum where he is completing a huge portrait (10 ft. x 6 ft.) of the Maharaja for the Durbar Hall. We were touched by your insight pre-vision as to what had occurred to the paintings. The enclosed copy of ~~xxx~~ my letter to Mr. Oak will give you an idea of what has happened to them. It is really tragic that the Society has such inefficient packers.



20-3-40.

Dear Mr. Oak,

To-day we received back our paintings. Cases were opened in presence of witnesses and everybody was amazed to see in what pitiful conditions paintings were found, because of improper packing. Evidently the packer had no idea how to handle works of Art. It was not a packing but a mass of paintings and heavy books thrown together, and the small paintings lying loose on the surface of the bigger ones. "Mountain Monastery" is ruined, as well as "Brahmaputra", "Maulbeck", "Sources of Indus", "The Great Wall" and a small Himalayan landscape is practically destroyed by a heavy book. On many others are <sup>six</sup> scratches and stretchers are broken. On Svetoslav's painting "Two Summits" the sky is marred. All this is the result of unsuitable packing. Besides on Mikula's steed an eye had been rudely painted by someone, but of course I do not know whether this latter vandalism occurred in Bombay or elsewhere?

By the way we have received six Monographs only, instead of seven. We have sent 12 Monographs for Bombay - 4 through Mr. Raval and 8 to your address. One was sold and 4 were presented, so the balance must be seven. I am enclosing the receipt for one small painting & one Monograph sold, also a bill representing expenses from Paprola to Katrain Rs. 82/10/3 and Rs. 11/14/6. Please let me know where have been sent the several cuts? If they are still in Bombay, please send them to Mr. P. Tamy, his address is - K.P. Padmanabhan Tamy, B.A. New Lodge, Chettikulankara. Trivandrum.

I am indeed sorry that the results proved to be so disastrous, apparently the packer is quite unexperienced and I strongly recommend *to the Society* to get a more efficient packer.

Sincerely yours



We like very much your noble endeavours in the field of rural art. In Russia I have patronised this art and therefore am able to state that the rural population is very receptive to all kinds of applied Arts. We introduced folkloVe and home artisanship. I enclose my article on "Talashkino" (This was the name of the estate of our late friend Princess Mary Terrishever). After perusal, please publish it in ~~one~~ of the magazines or return to me.

In spirit with you,

N.Roerich.

Should I reproduce a few lines from the letter addressed to Mr.Oak? Here they are:-

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Sincerely Yours



Does it bring any credit to Bombay? How this old sage is roused to pious anger at the treatment of his beloved creations and he is perfectly right, that we possess exhibition spirit but not the Art spirit.

~~Yet~~ in the following years I often had news cheering me up for fresh adventures and attempts for Art. He wrote-

Hall Estates,

April 28, 1942.

My dear friend,

I rejoiced heartily in receiving the brochure about 1st Bombay Provincial Art Conference. Your address is so timely. Just now during sinister days of Armageddon the voice of the great artist, ~~as~~ you are, is specially needed. Carry on. Swami Vivekananda's saying "The Artist is the witness who testifies of the beautiful. Art is the most unselfish form of happiness in the world.

Indeed this is a splendid pronouncement.

Best Wishes from us all,

Greeting and blessing;

N. ROERICH. -

His brief letters were always like definite messages for me and they ever and ever reverberate in my heart with his <sup>sacred</sup> ~~pious~~ memory.

His banner of love, beauty and art be ever flowing--

Ravishankar M. Raval.



In August 1927 I happened to visit Adyar in company of the family of Sir Chinubhai of Ahmedabad while returning from Ooty. Mrs. Cousins escorted us through the various quarters. At Adyar, and, I believe at Col. Olcott's Hall, we were shown a large painting hung in the middle of the principal wall. I had, of course, seen large European paintings in the Galleries of Baroda, Calcutta and Jamnagar, but never was I so much attracted by the mysterious harmony and brilliancy of colours.

Mrs. Cousins acquainted us with the name of the Artist and the title of the picture. The painting was painted in tempera colours by a great Russian Artist named Nicholas Roerich, who had now made the Himalayas his permanent home, and who was painting the eternal snow peaks of those greatest heights in his unique manner. This particular picture was painted earlier and it was named "The Messenger". A youthful maiden was holding the big door of a monastery half open and a bright, expansive landscape greeted us, quite simple, but full of emotional throbs. A figure of a man was standing in the doorway, "The Messenger". The darkness of the night is gone and the beautiful morn smiles to the soul who has opened the doors of his conscience. A happy vision. A message portent with sublime thought. It really opened my way to the Great Roerich. I could not shake off the charm, it possessed me. The same evening I was presented with two small books on Roerich Art by my great noble friend and host, the late Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar. I imbibed the spirit and the message of these works, and the same year I wrote for more publications of Roerich. My friend, Sir Chinubai, ordered the big publications 'Alti Himalaya' and a few others. In the meanwhile I prepared some small monographs in Gujerati about the Great Artist and offered my humble tribute to the new message and beauty he was giving to this world.



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works, and the same year I wrote for more publications of poetry.



I felt I was now in the folds of a large brotherhood created by the benign leader of beauty love and art. I used to get replies to all my letters directly from the pen of the beloved personality and each one was always accompanied by a beautiful picture or an off-print of some inspiring monograph generally suited to my mood at the time. It was like some sort of "telepathic" operation upon my inner self and gave me an uplift to higher consciousness and courage to persevere in the service of Art and mankind.

On December 7th, 1936, Kulapati Dr H.M.Cousins visited Ahmedabad after many years and he was received by the citizens as a pioneer of the benefactors of Indian Art and Culture in our day. A public was given to him by the members of the Bharat Kala Mandal, of which I was then the Secretary. We talked about the great Himalayan Artist and I asked him to bring me into a closer contact with his personality and Art. Professor Cousins encouraged the idea and wrote to Maharshi Roerich about my wishes. Again I was assured through his spiritual letters that he had accepted me as a soldier under the banner of Love, Beauty and Art.

In October 1937 the first Baltic Congress of Roerich societies met at Riga, Latvia, to celebrate the great event of the completion of 50 years of Roerichs extraordinary artistic, scientific and literary achievements so varied in their scope that legends were woven about him, Artist, Archaeologist, Academician, Thinker, Writer, Humanitatin I sent my humble tribute and congratulations to this Congress and they were accepted, acknowledged and published in the beautiful volume of this event. I felt now fully inculcated with Roerich's adeals the array of beauty and love to conquer ignorance and hatred and help Beauty and Culture.

In the summer of 1939, Prof. Cousins and Mrs Cousins wrote me that they were to be the guests of Prof. Roerich at Naggar-Kulu, his



Himalayan abode for a couple of months and that it was the occasion for me to meet the Great Artist personally. I at once agreed and soon I got a cordial invitation to be a guest at the Roerich house for as long as I chose to stay there.

Dr Cousins wrote me detailed instructions about the journey from Amritsar to Kulu via Pathankot and Mundi. I took up the adventure and went alone to that beautiful Himalayan Valley. It was a novel experience and I have narrated it fully in the Kumar, the Gujarati Journal I owned and edited at that time. I was expected, and proper accommodation for my stay was made at the old Nagar Castle. Professor and Mrs Cousins greeted me first and the tea and breakfast was sent from the Roerich's house. Next morning was fixed for our first meeting.

The Cousins were staying in another bungalow and we were to meet at the gate of the Roerich's house at 9.a.m. exactly. I prepared early I had with me a decorated Khadi bag filled with prints of Gujarati Artists and a small brass image Garuda kneeling and bowing. It was a fine summer morning and I could see all the plains of the valley below. Farms and cottages on the steps of the hill reminded me of a Kangda picture. I could see the yard of every cottage. Happy Mothers and girls were singing, and beyond, in the depths of the valley, a streak of water sparkled in a brilliant line. It was the River Beas, guarded by high peaked mountains hiding distant snow summits of the Himalayas.

Some 200 feet above my abode was the Roerich house quite visible from my balcony, yet I had to walk for 10 minutes before I reached it.

I was earlier by a few minutes and so I waited for Prof. Cousins and Mrs Cousins at the gates. It was a quiet and peaceful abode. Just above it the hill path went up through orchards of apple trees, for which the valley is famous, I was looking around for my cousins friends



and was enjoying when , all of a sudden, came from the bungalow a neatly dressed Chaprassi. He approached me with Indian Namaskars and said in Hindi. " Your Honour, you are our guest , come in, the Master sends greetings. I explained I was waiting for Prof. Cousins. He said " It does not matter, please come inside." I went with him and reached the Cottage door of the house where the long desired figure of the Great Master, without any ceremony , but with indescribable sincerity, hailed me with his right hand raised in blessing, "welcome friend, we know each other since long, and he took me by the hand and led me to the verandah. I was impressed by his benign looks and the way in which he made me feel at home. It was all beyond anticipation. I felt a favoured being. All of a sudden the joyful voice of Prof. Cousins who remarked. " A bit in a hurry, I wanted specially to make a romance of the introduction." But I said" nothing better nor more romantic could there be than this simple and direct meeting."

Mr Stetoslaw appeared in the doorway and very politely asked us to come inside and meet Mother, Madame Helene Roerich. A grand Lady born to bless and rule, with a happy smile acknowledged my greetings. I asked Prof. Cousins to present to her the picture bag with Khadi decorations, and the Garuda Image to Prof. Roerich on my behalf.

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facing the Valley and asked the servants to arrange some seats for us. In a few minutes he appeared and said, "Father, everything is ready" It was very beautifully decorated by colourful tapestries from India and Tibet. We could see the snow summits of the Himalayas of which many pictures were painted from this very place.

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Capt Mahon was a friend of the family and was staying at Manali, the last village in the Kulu Valley. Mr George was versatile in his talks. Mr Statislav was known to me for the first time but I was interested in his art and art studies. We could not get much time together then, but our mutual attachment increased as time progressed. I loved Mr George Roerich more after I read his diary of travels " Trails to Inmost Asia".

It was meal time. Father Roerich was addressed by a charming young girl who invited, in Russian, all the guests to table.

The Inner Hall was very cosy and inspiring. Every wall and corner was an example of high taste and classical setting. There was no electricity but the flickering lights of candles gave it an old time romance and happiness which is absent today in our city illuminations. I was seated on the right of Prof. Roerich and he very lovingly remarked. "everything is vegetarian, we know and appreciate your high principles".



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The meal continued for an hour and Prof. Cousins kept up an interesting conversation and we all contributed to it. I too recounted some of my narratives about my subtle and phenomenal experiences, which they listened to with very great seriousness. In a short time I felt I was introduced to a family who lived in my ideals only and I was much aggrieved when I had to say goodbye to them all. I spent the evening with the Cousins and that was again a memorable occasion that I remember until today with the happiest feelings.

I was to leave the next day because clouds were gathering and if torrential rain started the mountain roads might become blocked at any time. The journey itself was through most picturesque country with people in novel and quaint costumes. I happened to see a Kulu procession which Mr Stanislav had painted. The Kulu trip has been one of my life's rare experience and contact. My great ambition of showing Roerich's pictures in Gujarat was soon fructified. Prof. Cousins, after reaching Trivandrum made plans for the pictures to be sent down to the plains. My friends at Ahmedabad encouraged my idea and we did everything we could for these paintings to reach us.

Prof. Cousins was invited to celebrate the occasion on behalf of Bharat Kala Mandal at Ahmedabad on the 30th of September 1939. Prof. Roerich wrote, "Although I have had no occasion to visit Ahmedabad up to now, there have been ties for many years there and I am happy now that my paintings, like messengers of good will, are visiting your City."



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Kulu, Punjab, Br. India

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In spirit with you,

N. Roerich

He used to reply to all my letters with similar spirit and each letter gave me a lift in new spiritual delight. He often grouped my name in his articles about the renaissance of India and mentioned me to other friends in a way I felt shy. But it all confirmed me of his great benevolent attitude towards me. I felt I could not properly express my deepest feelings for all that.

On Dec. 2nd 1940 we had another Roerich exhibition when Mr Stavitsla Roerich himself attended the function and the same enthusiasm was shown by the public. This time Mr Stetislav Roerich also contributed to the show many of his best compositions of Indian Life. People could see how he inherited the motives of his great Father with his own distinct technique. We all felt that here was a great friend of India who can help a great movement in the study of Art in India. Mr Svetislav was no longer a stranger to us. He lived and moved with us as an old comrade and made himself quite at home.. This again brought me closer to the house. The exhibition was later sent to



Travancore when Mr Svetislav painted some portraits for the palace and the Roerich room was created.

In the meanwhile the Bombay Art Society was moved to hold a Roerich exhibition, it being the year of its Silver Jubilee. The Society invited me to supervise the hanging of the paintings. Prof. Roerich rejoiced to know that I was to be there and, at my request sent a message to the Society, which was published in that years catalogue. He even sent the big monographs of Roerich Art to be presented to the then Excellencies the Viceroy and the Governor. It was a significant gesture of courtesy and nobility. Bombay could appreciate the great Art. Mr Langhammer helped me to set up the Roerich Room and when I asked him what was his candid opinion about the exhibition he exclaimed, after a deep breath, " He is a Great Composer". It was a tribute worth noting..

In the following years I often had news cheering me up for fresh adventures and attempts on behalf of Art.

In April 1942 he wrote @ My dear friend, I rejoiced heartily in receiving the Brochures about the First Bombay Provincial Art Conference..

Your address is so timely. Just now during the sinister days of Armageddon the voice of the Great Artist, that you are, is specially needed. Carry on..

Swami Vinekmanda's saying " The Artist is the witness who testifies of the beautiful. Art is the most unselfish form of happiness in the world. Indeed, this is a splendid pronouncement. Greetings from all.

Nicholas Roerich"

His Friend



His brief letters were always like definite messages for me and they,,ever and ever, reverberate in my heart with his sacred memory.

His Banner of Love, Beauty, and Art be ever flowing.

Ravi Shankar Raval.



my reminiscences with Maharsi A. N. Rerich

~~my August~~  
In ~~the year~~ 1927 I happened to visit Adyar in company of the family party of Sir Chinulchani of Ahmedabad ~~while returning from Cozy~~ while returning from Cozy. His cousins escorted us through various quarters. At perhaps <sup>Colocoll</sup> Cellcot hall we were shown one large painting in the center of the principal wall. I had of course seen <sup>large European</sup> ~~European~~ paintings at <sup>at galleries of</sup> Baroda, Calcutta, and Jamnagar but never was so much attracted by the mysterious ~~the~~ harmony and brilliancy of color. <sup>In this picture</sup> His cousins at once introduced us with the name of the artist and the title of the picture. It was painted in tempera colors by a great Russian artist named V. Rerich who had now made Himalayas his permanent home and was painting the eternal <sup>snow peaks</sup> of greatest heights in a unique manner. This particular picture was painted earlier and it was named 'The Gate opens'. A youthful angel like maiden ~~had just opened~~ was holding the big door ~~opened~~ of the monastery just opened and bright <sup>expansive</sup> ~~land~~ landscape greets us. Anti simple but full of emotional throbs. The darkness of the night is gone and beautiful morn smiles to the soul who has opened ~~the door~~ <sup>the</sup> doors of his conscience. A happy vision. a message potent with flights of thoughts.

It really opened my way to the great Rerich. I could not shake off ~~the~~ the charm it passed on me. The same evening I was presented two small books ~~that Rerich had written~~ on Rerich Art by my great <sup>short</sup> ~~friend~~ <sup>late</sup> noble friend ~~Dr. M. Ramasami mudaliar~~. I digested the spirit and message of the little books and the same year I started communications for more publications of Rerich. My friend Sir C. ordered out the big publications Alty Himalayas and few others. In the mean while I prepared some small monographs <sup>in Gujarati</sup> about the great ~~subject~~ and offered my humble tribute to the new message <sup>of beauty</sup> he was thus giving the world. ~~My first monograph was on his birth and death which was an event about 1880 and was published~~

~~by society~~  
I felt I was now in the folds of large weathered created by a <sup>leader</sup> ~~benign~~ for beauty love & art. I used to get replies of all my letters directly from the pen of the beloved personality and each one was always accompanied



by a beautiful picture or an out print of some inspiring  
monograph generally <sup>suited</sup> to my mood at the time.

It was a telepathic operation on my inner self and it  
gave me a lift to higher consciousness and courage to  
go head in the service of Art and mankind.

(2)

7th Dec  
In 1936 ~~Prof.~~ Kulpati Dr. F. M. Cousins visited Ahmednagar  
after many years and he was received by the citizens as  
one of the pioneer benefactors of Indian art & culture in  
modern India. A public reception was given to him by  
the members of the Bharat Kala Mandal of which I  
was the then secretary. We talked about the great Himalayan  
Artist and I asked him to bring me in to a closer contact  
with his personality and Art. Prof. Cousins encouraged the  
idea and wrote to Maharshi Rerich about my ~~own~~ wishes.  
This ~~again~~ Again I was assured through his <sup>spiritual</sup> letters that already he had accepted me as a soldier  
under the banner of Beauty Love Beauty & Art.

On Octo 1937 First Baltic Congress of Rerich Societies  
met to celebrate the great event of completion of 50 years of his  
extraordinary artistic scientific and literary achievements  
no <sup>was</sup> named in their scope that legends were woven out about  
him; Artist Archaeologist Academician Thinker writer  
humanitarian. I sent my humble tribute and congratulations  
to this ~~great~~ congress and they were accepted, acknowledged  
and published in the beautiful brochure of the event.

I felt now fully inculcated in his cult, the army of beauty  
& love to conquer ignorance and hatred and help peace & culture.

In summer of 1939 Prof. Cousins and Mrs Cousins wrote to me  
that he was to be the guest of Prof ~~Cousins~~ Rerich at Kulu  
his abode in Himalayas for a couple of months and that was  
the occasion for me to see the great artist personally. I at once  
agreed and soon I got a cordial invitation from Rerich House  
to be their guest so long I chose to stay there. Dr Cousins and  
wrote to me ~~with~~ detailed instructions as to the journey from  
Amritsar via Plethamkot, Mandi, and Kulu. I took <sup>the</sup> ~~my~~ the  
adventure and went alone in that beautiful Himalayan valley.  
It was a novel experience and I have ~~with~~ <sup>the</sup> narrated it  
fully in Human <sup>my</sup> giganti journal I owned and edited  
at the time. I was expected very kindly and proper  
proper accommodations for my stay was made at the lake  
Bungalow ~~at the~~ (really an old palace) at Waggar.

Professor Cousins and Mrs Cousins greeted me first at my lodge  
brought tea & breakfast from Rerichs. Next morning was  
fixed for our first meeting. Cousins were put up in the another  
bungalow. and we were to meet at the gate of Rerich house  
at 9 A.M exactly.



5163 I prepared early. I had with me a decorated khadi bag filled with prints of Gypsiat Artists and a small brass image of Garuda leaving ~~area~~ kneeling and bowing. It was a fine summer morning and I could see all the planes of the valley below. Farms and cottages on steps of the hill created a living scene picture I could see the jobs of every cottage and the village people active in their morning engagements. Corn was heaped up in ~~each~~ front of every cottage. Happy mothers and girls were rinsing and beyond in the depths a streak of water in long meandre sparkled. It was river Bias, and was guarded by high peaked mountains hiding distant snow summits of high Himalayas, just ~~at~~ 200 feet above my abode was the Pochiah house quite visible from my ~~back~~ balcony. Yet I had to climb and walk for ten minutes to reach there. I was earlier by few minutes so I waited for Pro Cousins and Mrs Cousins at the gates. It was all very <sup>small</sup> quiet and happy abode. Just about ~~the~~ the hill path went up covered by orchards of apple large apples for which the valley is famous. I stretched my eyes for my Cousins friends and was enjoying the scene when all of a sudden came out of the Bungalow a neatly dressed Chaprasi, <sup>he</sup> approached me with Indian Namaskars and ~~said~~ said <sup>in</sup> <sup>himself</sup> "you are ~~our~~ <sup>come in</sup> ~~guest~~ <sup>Master in</sup> your honor you are our guest ~~only~~ <sup>Master in</sup> ~~visit~~ <sup>reads</sup> ~~the~~ greeting. I explained I was waiting for Pro Cousins. "Doesn't matter ~~please~~ please come in side. Let I went with him and ~~reached~~ reached the cottage door where the long desired figure ~~form~~ of the Great master with out much ceremony but with indiscrutable sincerity hailed me with right hand lifted in blessing "Welcome friend! we know each other since long." and he took me by hand made me sit in the Veranda. ~~We had tea and~~ I was impressed by his <sup>high</sup> ~~beaming~~ looks and ~~from~~ the way in which he made me at home ~~was all~~ it was all beyond anticipation. I felt a <sup>avaired</sup> ~~favoured~~ being. I immediately came ~~to the~~ <sup>the</sup> joyful voice of Pro Cousins and remarked "A bit hurried." I wanted <sup>to</sup> make a romance of the introduction for you. But I said "nothing better would make it more romantic than this simple and direct happening."

~~I first <sup>asked</sup> Pro Cousins to present the picture bag~~  
~~made him~~ Mr. Sobolevitch tall young ~~man~~ appeared in the door and very politely asked us to come in side the hall and meet mother ~~the~~ madam Helena Sobolevitch



(4)

A grand lady born to bless and rule with happy smile  
acknowledged my greetings ~~and~~ I asked Prof Cousins  
to present her the picture bag with Kathi decorations to her  
and the Garuda image to Pro Roerich on my behalf.  
Now pro. Cousins took up the thread. opened the bag and <sup>lights</sup>  
brought out the picture prints mounted on uniform <sup>linen</sup>  
and titles written with <sup>manila</sup> mention of each artist. I was  
asked to describe the subject of each picture and few  
words about the artists. Pro. Roerich ~~seemed~~ seemed very  
much pleased and satisfied by the treatment and sentiments  
of the pictures and said "all speak of your  
achievements and struggles for the glory of art"

Pro. Cousins proposed I should be shown all the Roerich  
canvases. The great sage looked at Mr. Svetoslav who  
was all the while waiting and standing with the courtesy of  
an Indian disciple. He at once went to <sup>the</sup> balcony facing  
the valley and asked the servants to arrange some seats  
for us. In a few minutes he appeared and said "Father  
everything is ready. It was very small space but very  
beautifully decorated by colorful tapestries from India  
and Tibet. We could see the snow summits of Himalayas  
~~and I could see that~~ <sup>of which</sup> many pictures were painted  
from this very place.

Mr. Svetoslav started to show the canvases and  
I forgot my self and time as these vistas of <sup>inspiring</sup> ~~super~~ vision  
opened ~~peraded~~ <sup>about</sup> before my eyes. ~~About~~ an hour & half  
I was spell-bound and thought and thought how  
this pleasure be given to many of my country men  
who had no idea of the power of great art.

We ~~were~~ had just finished when new <sup>people</sup> ~~guests~~ arrived  
Capt. Mahan and Mr. George Roerich. another ~~rose~~ <sup>people</sup> of  
the Great artist. He as I knew was a great scholar  
traveller and linguist and a writer. Capt Mahan was  
the friend of the family and was camped at Manali  
a nearby military out ~~post~~ <sup>post</sup> of India. Mr. George was  
versatile in his talks Mr. Svetoslav <sup>was</sup> known to me <sup>for</sup> the  
first time but I was interested in his art and art studies.  
we could not get much time to gether then but our mutual  
attachment increased as the time progressed.

I loved Mr. G. Roerich more when I read his diary  
of travels the book Heart of Asia, <sup>India</sup> later on.

It was now and meal time. Father Roerich  
was addressed by a charming young maid who  
saw invited in Russian language all the guests to  
the table.



26

The dinner hall though small was very <sup>comfy</sup> and <sup>imposing</sup>. Every wall and corner ~~was~~ was an example of high taste and classical setting. There was no electricity but the flickering lights of candles gave it an old time romance and happiness which is absent in our city illuminations. I was seated on the right hand of Prof. Rorick and he very lovingly said "Every thing is vegetarian. We know you and appreciate your high principles." He was brief but sincere and significant. About him he said 'We' as some of our <sup>Indians</sup> ~~Gurus~~ talk with their pupils. But it all fitted his dignified attitude.

(5)

The meals continued for an hour and <sup>Prof</sup> Cousins kept on the interest of conversations and we all contributed to it. I too had some of my <sup>subtle</sup> ~~subtle~~ experiences and <sup>phenomenal</sup> ~~phenomenal~~ <sup>real</sup> ~~real~~ <sup>experiences</sup> which they attended with seriousness.

aggravated

In such a short time I felt I was introduced to a family who lived <sup>in</sup> my ideals only and was much ~~aggravated~~ when I said good by to them all. I spent the evening with Cousins and that was again a memorable occasion I have remembered up to-day with happiest feelings.

I was to leave next day because clouds were gathering in the sky and if the currents started the mountain roads might be blocked up any time. The journey ~~was~~ it self was through most picturesque sights and novel <sup>costumes</sup> ~~costumes~~ <sup>people</sup> ~~people~~. I happened to see a Hindu <sup>procession</sup> ~~procession~~ which the sweetstave had painted. The Hindu trip has been one of my life's rare experience and contact.

My great ambition of showing Rorick pictures in Gujarat room <sup>frustrated</sup> ~~frustrated~~. Prof Cousins after reaching Trivandrum made up plans ~~that~~ that it became easier to get the pictures down on plains. My friends at Ahmedabad encouraged my idea and we risked all the costs and expenses of for the packages of pictures to reach us. The rest of the journey to Trivandrum was promised by the ~~state~~ ~~travelling~~ Travelling Govt..

30th Sept 1939

Prof Cousins was invited to celebrate the occasion on behalf of Bharatkala Mandal at Ahmedabad. Prof Rorick wrote "Although I have had no occasion to visit Ahmedabad up to now, there have been ties for many years and I am happy now that my paintings now like messengers of goodwill are visiting your city." "



(6)

The exhibition was considered a great event in the local history of Shimla when people of all grades partook and enjoyed an Art Festival. We had risked great expenses of railway <sup>and other</sup> transportation of pictures from Mountbatten and traveling costs of the worthy lecturer but it was liberally met with by the constant flow from the public by gate money only. <sup>6</sup> Children, young and aged hill agents and laborers all felt a new joy before these Himalayan vistas and they ~~many~~ were moved by religious feelings of a pilgrimage before the pictures. The local press took notice of it under great headings and the organizers felt justified and in their attempts to honor Art and the artist. When the exhibition was closed many people were disappointed to have missed it. It seemed as if we had come over the city. Real art requires no arguments.

In the meanwhile I received a very touching and inspiring letter from Naggar.

Naggar  
Kulu. Punjab B. India

27-Sept-1937

Our very dear friend

In your lines of Sept 21st I felt such sincerity of the heart that it moved greatly as artist and as man. Above all earthly values there remains Art and Religion and if human beings reveal exalted feelings they come through these two channels. At the moment there are few joys on the earthly plane and the human heart is very much in need of rejoicing. We artist should be grateful to fate for having been given one of the nearest channels to bring people happiness of the heart. For some one else these words may appear as nebulous abstractions but for you as for an artist they represent reality. Already from 1923 we are bound with India. Even earlier we admired the lofty thoughts of your motherland and since we are here this admiration has become more deeply <sup>unrooted</sup> ~~unrooted~~. ~~When you came~~ when you entered under our roof here, we all felt a true friend had come. And we were glad to see you also reciprocated with similar emotions. How precious it is when human hearts can be opened to each other. We shall be most happy to receive from you and from Dr. Cousins particulars about the exhibition. Perhaps you will also send some <sup>maps</sup> ~~maps~~. I was very glad to hear from you about Sir Chinulhari's cordial attitude and request you to transmit to him our warm greetings.



(7)

The reaction of your artist friends whose paintings we liked so much will also be most interesting to hear. Gujarat is especially significant in Indian Art. May all your endeavours be blessed.

In <sup>spirit</sup> with you  
N. Roerich.

He used to reply all my letters with similar spirit and each letter gave me a lift in new spiritual delight. He often grouped my name in all his articles about renaissance of India and mentioned to other friends in a way I felt shy to assume. But it all confirmed me of his great benevolent attitude to me and I only could not properly express my deepest feelings for all that.

In 1940 Dec <sup>and</sup> We had another Roerich exhibition when Mr. Svetoslav Roerich himself attended the function and the same enthusiasm was shown by the public. This time Mr. S. Roerich also contributed to the show many of his best compositions of Indian life. People could see how he had inherited the lofty motives of his great Father ~~as also~~ with his own definite technique. We all felt that there was a great friend of India who can help a true movement and study of Art in India. Mr. Svetoslav was no longer a stranger to us. He lived and moved with us as an old comrade and made himself quite at home. This again brought me closer to the house. The exhibition was transhipped to Thiruvanchur where Mr. Svetoslav had executed some portraits of the father palace and a Roerich Room also was projected.

In the meanwhile the Bombay Art Society - was moved to hold a Roerich exhibition it being the year of its silver jubilee. The society invited me to supervise the hanging of the pictures. Mr. Roerich rejoiced at knowing that I was to be there and sent a message <sup>at my request</sup> to the society and it was published in the year's catalogue. He even sent big brochures on Roerich art to be presented to the <sup>excellencies</sup> other ~~sublimities~~ The Viceroy and the Governor. It was significant gesture of courtesy and nobility.



(8)

Bombay ~~could~~ could appreciate the great art  
Mr. Langhamer had helped me to set up the  
Roerich room and when I asked him what was  
his candid opinion ~~of~~ about the show. He exclaimed  
after some deep breath "He is a great composer."  
It was a tribute worth noting.

I could not stay in Bombay when the exhibition  
was closed and the pictures were packed off by the  
jobbers of the exhibition and when they reached India  
it must have been a great pain to the creator of them  
to see that they were badly packed and damaged.  
As a result I received this letter.

Naggar.

20th March 1960

my dear friend

your fraternal letter of the 16th Inst has been just  
received and I am forwarding it to Svetoslav who is  
still in Tirunelveli where he is completing a huge  
portrait (10 FT x 6 FT) of the Maharaja for the Durbar Hall.  
We were touched by your insight provision as to what  
had occurred to the paintings. The enclosed copy of  
my letter to Mr. Oak will give you an idea of what  
has happened to them. It is really tragic that the  
society has such inefficient packers.

We like very much your noble endeavours in  
the field of rural art. In Russia I have patronized this  
art and therefore am able to state that the rural  
population is very receptive to all kinds of applied arts.  
We introduced folklore and home artisanship. I enclose  
my article on "Talantkino" (This was the name of  
the estate of our late Princess Mary Tenisheva).  
After perusal, please publish it in one of the magazines  
or return to me.

In spirit with you

N. Roerich

Should I reproduce a few lines from the letter  
addressed to Mr. Oak? ~~See~~ Here they are



(9) Does it bring any credit to Bombay? How this old sage is roused to pious anger at the treatment of his beloved creations and he is perfectly right. That we possess exhibition spirit but not the Art spirit.

Yet in the following years I often had news cheering me up for fresh adventures and attempts for Art he wrote

Hall estates  
April 28, 1942

My dear friend

I rejoiced heartily in receiving the ~~beverage~~ brochure about 1st Bombay Provincial Art conference. Your address is so timely. Just now during sinister days of ~~Armageddon~~ <sup>arua</sup> the voice of the great artist, as you are, is specially needed. Carry on. Swami Vivekananda's saying "The Artist is the witness who testifies of the beautiful. Art is the most unselfish form of happiness in the world."

Indeed this is a splendid pronouncement  
Best wishes from us all

Greeting & and blessing

N. Ravi

His ~~most~~ brief letters were always like definite messages for me and they ever ever reverberate in my heart with his pious memory.

His banner of love beauty and art be ever flowing.

Ravisankar. C.  
Ravi



Handwritten notes in the upper right section, including a large '5' and some illegible cursive text.

Handwritten notes in the middle section, including a large '5' and some illegible cursive text.

Handwritten notes in the lower section, including a large '5' and some illegible cursive text.