

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF NICHOLAS ROERICH'S CREATIVE LIFE.

By Svetoslav Roerich.

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Corrected from the original
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on the occasion of the
90th Birth Anniversary
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October 9th 1964 -

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Association, New York, U.S.A.
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and many others.

We hope that the few facts given above will serve
as a landmark for the students of Nicholas Roerich's vast
field of creative activity and will guide them to the
central thread of his entire life - The Quest of the
Higher Self - The Quest of Service.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS | OF NICHOLAS ROERICH'S CREATIVE LIFE
BY
SVETOSLAV ROERICH

Though there already exists a very vast International Bibliography dealing with the various aspects of Prof. Roerich's creative genius, a complete unifying work is yet to be written.

It will take some years to classify properly all the enormous cultural heritage he left to Posterity, and in this short resume we shall enumerate only a few highlights of his life which may be of help to a student of his work.

HE WAS BORN IN 1874 in St. Petersburg and his early, as well as higher education he received in that city.

AS A STUDENT he simultaneously attended the Academy of Art, the Historic and Philological courses of the University of St. Petersburg, the Faculty of Law and the Institute of Archeology, later he went to study abroad. This wonderful training was the foundation which gave him that marvellous breadth of vision and understanding to build his beautiful edifice of Achievement.

His heart and thoughts belonged to all humanity, to all peoples.

AS AN ARTIST he painted over 7,000 paintings dealing with a wide range of subjects from Historic large compositions painted in the academic and more realistic style influenced by the late 19th century, to his later highly decorative colourful and unique paintings - depicting Man's higher aspirations and strivings. He took his themes from the Great Book of Life, The Quest of Man, Philosophic Doctrines and Religions, and in the later years along with his imaginative paintings he also painted the sublime landscapes of the Himalayas which he loved so much and which made him known as "Master of the Mountains". His paintings hang in the leading museums as well as in the most

important private galleries of the world, here in India they form part of many State collections and Travancore has a separate building dedicated to them, while separate halls have been set aside at Allahabad and Benares.

HE WAS AN OUTSTANDING MURAL PAINTER and his monumental murals for the Kazan Railway in Moscow and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Talashkino, near Smolensk, are the better known among his murals. He also designed many mosaics.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STAGE was likewise very important. He painted settings for practically all the Operas of Wagner, and for many Operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Moussorgsky as well as for Maeterlink and others.

HIS WORK FOR THE BALLET was no less significant, his *Danse Polovtsienne* and *Sacre du Printemps* have become classics of the stage.

AS AN AUTHOR AND SCHOLAR his published works include some 27 volumes mostly dealing with Cultural and Philosophic and Pan-Human subjects.

The better known are:-

1.	Complete Works	1914
2.	Flowers of Morya	1921
3.	Adamant	1925
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7.	Flame in the Chalice	1929
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10.	Fiery Stronghold	1933
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12.	Beautiful Unity	1946
13.	Himalayas - The abode of Light	1947

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Besides these he wrote innumerable articles for the leading periodicals of India and abroad. His Poems were published both in Russian, in which language they were written by him and other languages. The English translation was in the rendering of Mary Siegrist. Several unpublished manuscripts were left by him.

AS AN EXPLORER AND SCIENTIST he carried out extensive Archeological research and excavations in Russia and later organised an expedition to Central Asia which took the better part of five years. Starting from India in 1924 he came back across Tibet in 1928. He settled in the Himalayas from 1928 onwards, and except for a few trips abroad and in India, and one major expedition to Mongolia and China in 1935 he remained in the Himalayas.

HE ORGANIZED THE ETHNOLOGICAL, Linguistic as well as the Botanical and Zoological survey of Western Himalayas, in which work he was mainly assisted by his son George Roerich, himself an Eminent Scholar, and other visiting scholars.

AS A CULTURAL LEADER he was associated with numerous cultural and scientific organisations throughout the world. He was the head of the Imperial Society for the Encouragement of Arts in Russia, with its extensive ramifications. He was First President of the famous society "The World of Art" and Chairman of the first Architectural courses for Women, besides taking a leading part in many others.

IN AMERICA HE FOUNDED THE MASTER INSTITUTE of United Arts, the International Art Centre, and was Honorary Chairman of the Roerich Museum with its branches in Europe, America and the East. His belief that Peace can only come through Culture made him propose an International Pact for the protection of Cultural Treasures, which Pact became known as the "ROERICH PACT AND BANNER OF PEACE". This Pact was ratified by 21 countries and approved by 36 countries including India.

HE WAS HONOURED BY MANY COUNTRIES, their Governments, their learned bodies and organizations. He was Commander of the Russian Orders of St. Stanislaus, St. Anna and St. Vladimir. He was Commander I Cl. of the Yugoslavian Order of St. Savva and the Legion of Honour of France. He was Commander I Cl. of the Royal Swedish Order of the Polar Star. He was made a fellow and member of several Academies and many learned bodies throughout the world. A few of these memberships are given here to show the scope of his Associations.

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