

1

N I C H O L A S R O E R I C H .

by Percival Stone .

"He is a veritable ploughman. His field is immortality" - such is the definition of a great Teacher in ancient scriptures. And this aspect of an eternal ploughman would seem truly meaningful in the vision of all spirits of universal ministry.

Those who know Roerich and are aware of his work, will understand why, when contemplating Roerich, we say that it is a ploughman, who comes to one's thought.

Before fields whose limits go out even to invisible horizons, Roerich furrows the soil and lays his seed. Like the true ploughman, who labours in his field before the break of dawn, through the noon-day heat and until the hour when heaven's vault is star-strewn, so Nicholas Roerich, through endless expanses tirelessly pursues his course, ploughing his furrows from East to West, from South to North, laying his seed. And as is the way of the universal spirit, he has left the harvest for whosoever may gather.

Hence, to follow the career of Roerich, which has already passed two score years of endless creative activity, one must follow broad fields. Let us seek this plougher in the fields of his sowing! As we pass the furrows, long since ploughed, we find in part the harvest gathered or glowing ripe ready for the reaping. Here, where he passed, a while later, the grain is ready to burst in its fullness. And still further, where we come upon his footsteps recently traced, the ~~xxx~~ seedlings have burst their irresistible way through the soil. We have traveled long and far to follow his course, and now that our way is close to him in America and Asia, his footsteps have freshly impressed the soil. Unnoticeably, we have been climbing the slope of a mountain as we discern his figure ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ - and even as we reach him and receive that welcoming smile of his - we must mark that our way has led us even to the Himalayan heights.

So multiform has been the expression of Nicholas Roerich's creative genius that one may in this brief outline but glimpse a few milestones upon his long road.

For instance, one may remember him first as the boy impelled by an incessant urge for knowledge, excavating the tumuli upon the family estate of Isvara in the North of Russia. And the earth - that beloved earth to which primitive man confided his immortality - yields to the boy examples of the art of our progenitors. That love for the fire of beauty, which marks the spirit's evolution through the ages, makes swift communion between man of the past and Roerich: Forever after he lovingly translates the spirit of ancient man. As he says in "Adamant" : " It may be foretold that, seeking for a more perfect existence, humanity will think more than once of the Free Man of ancient times.... It is curious that the aspirations of the Stone Age seem to be the nearest to our modern searching of beauty. The cycle of culture is but leading us back to what the ancient man realized in his time: I mean the longing for harmony".

Thus begins Roerich's archaeological and scientific work, which sends him wide over the face of the earth. Through Europe, in America and then throughout the reaches of Asia, he beholds the spiritual yields of the centuries and marks the great kinship, the interweaving of the threads of man, the Unity of the Fundamental Fires of all creation.

Another of these beautiful threads of Roerich's work: One recalls his studies with the famous Russian painter Kuindjy. Those who have read Roerich's "Guru, the Teacher", may comprehend the relationship of this leonine artist and the boy, in whom he was quick to discern the swift response of genius. A rugged and tenacious spirit, who proved irresistible against the mountainous obstacles of his early days. Kuindjy rose from a shepherd boy of the Crimea to one of Russia's formidable artists. But it is of the soul of the man, of the Franciscan tenderness which dwelt behind his ~~musical~~

exterior austere ascetic exterior, that Roerich speaks in his beautiful recollections of his teacher.

And in Roerich himself it is precisely that quality, that Light of the true teacher, - his "Guruship", as the East terms it - which has brought around him such a legion of youth! In the course of the years, since his great Directorship of the Society of the Encouragement of Arts, since his Presidency of the "Mir Iskusstva" ("World of Art") since his founding and leadership of the Master Institute of United Arts, Corona Mundi, International Art Center and numerous other institutions, his pupils have numbered thousands, all bound to him by an unbreakable link, the evocation to a supreme ideal. Again and again, writers have called attention to Roerich's disciples and followers, calling them Roerichides. Why? Because withal his personal affection for each of them, Roerich has demanded uncompromisingly and austere an impersonal accomplishment, a constant creative aspiration which would strive toward the universal and infinite.

Of Roerich's art, his three thousand paintings, spread by destiny through some thirty-five countries, are more adequate and more age-defying testimony than any word. Ever since his first painting, so prophetically called "The Messenger", was purchased as soon as it was shown for the Tretyakoff Gallery in Moscow, his art has enjoyed a way of triumph until at the present time, in addition to the thousand paintings in the Roerich Museum, two thousand remain in the galleries of the Louvre, the Luxembourg, the Victoria & Albert Museum and other eminent Museums and collections. Recently a series of Roerich Halls in many centers of the world have been dedicated to the Master, amongst them also in India being fortunate to have a Roerich Hall at Allahabad and one at Benares, not to mention ^e many Roerich paintings in private collections. Roerich's special style, which has become a by-word as well as a symbol of an entire school of art, has its source in the unrepeatable individual character of the Master.

As with his writings, Roerich's paintings resound a Parsifalian quest, a re-stating, in the terms of Infinite Beauty, of the unquenchable Urge which has the finding of the Chalice for its goal. It is the Way translated, not in the light of an individual, but in the aspect of entire humanity: the quest, beginning in the dawn of time, when man first stirred towards the Benign Infinite, on through the corridorred Centuries, as the quest shifts its setting across the spans of world or heaven. One remembers his heroic Paintings, of the dawn of earth, still fresh with the feats of titans; his Sacred Paintings of the lives of Saints, when men stood among the ruined structure of their own building.

But in the paintings following the war, that fiery branding of our Century, comes Roerich's declaration of the ultimate victory. In the paintings of America and Asia, we face the heights. Every painting resounds a stanza in his epic of achievement, which pronounces that the ~~the~~ finding of the Chalice is the becoming of It.

And, if we discern, we will perceive that the reason why Roerich's pronouncement is so convincing, so absolutely unanswerable, is that he creates as he has lived, a spirit to whom creation has been a need inseparable from life, ~~celebration~~, and to whom service for men has been the bread of existence.

If ~~xxx~~ as scientists are beginning to affirm, the Supreme manifests itself in Thought, - then in the eternal hierarchy of evolution, are not the universal creators and teachers closest to That Supremacy? Only those ages acquit themselves before posterity, which render tribute to their true Leaders.

As the Hon. George Gordon Battle, eminent jurist of the United States of America says: "Nicholas Roerich is unquestionably one of the greatest leaders of history. Along with this wonderful breadth of mind there goes a sublime sympathy with the opinions and tolerance for the prejudices of others. He has a marvelous equipment to be the Leader of an international movement. He has the power not only to plan, but to act. He can translate his dreams into action".

And in this enlightened action, it befits all disciples and admirers to bring their offerings to Roerich - to Roerich, the Creator and the Teacher, the tireless ploughman in infinite fields.

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