

2

NICHOLAS ROERICH

Broadcast by Svetoslav Roerich
From New Delhi. -

Dec. 1947 -

Friends,

Tonight I shall speak of my father Nicholas Roerich and his life work.

It is difficult in the short space of a broadcast to give an exhaustive resume' of his work and I shall dwell only on the most important phases of his life work and achievements.

The scope of his interests and achievements was truly international and there was hardly a country which did not have some group or society dedicated and working to foster his ideals.

Born in 1874, at St. Petersburg, he was educated first in Russia and then abroad. He simultaneously attended the School of Law, the Faculty of History and Philology, the Academy of Art and the Institute of Archaeology, besides attending innumerable lectures on subjects kindred to History and Arts. His studies in Russia were followed by work abroad, particularly Paris, where he studied under Corman, and later travelled extensively throughout Europe. This wonderful background of learning was that great foundation upon which he built later his beautiful Edifice of Thought and Realisation.

His remarkable memory faithfully preserved for him everything that was once entrusted to its care.

A tireless searcher after truth he studied all philosophies and was particularly attracted to Hindu thought and Buddhism.

The scope of his learning, ^{his} so to say, living fully assimilated knowledge was enormous. Russia's great writer Gorky called him, one of the greatest intuitive minds, because whatever he studied, whatever he contemplated he could immediately reduce to its essentials. And in his Art, in his Poetry, he always tried to find the most direct, most forceful and truthful interpretation of what he felt and saw, whatever subject he was treating. A true synthesis of the inner meaning, as well as of the outward appearance.

Above all and everything he was a man of the highest ideals and principles. His life was an eternal quest after perfection, harmony, service to humanity. And his life and work reflect that wonderful quality of truth which permeated his entire being.

His life was always thoroughly organised and it could be described as a consecutive, progressive, perfectly balanced effort in a definite direction. He never wasted any time and was most economical in the means he employed to achieve a certain end. And it was because of his wonderfully organised and harmonised thought and effort that he was able to achieve so much. His life could be described as many lives concentrated within the space of one. If we look at his achievements, as an artist, he painted well over 6,000 paintings besides frescoes in Churches, in public buildings, as well as designs for mosaics and architectural motives. He painted decors for operas of Wagner, Moussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky Korsakov, Blasco Ibanez, Maeterlink and others. His settings for the Russian ballets of Prince Igor and Sacre du Printemps have become classics of the Stage, while the famous German critic Wilhelm Ritter considered him the best interpreter of Wagner. His early paintings dealt mostly with historic subjects and through a remarkable evolution and period of decorative and prophetic works he became later the great interpreter of the Himalayas; of all the multiple concepts for which they stand and this latter period earned him the name, "Master of the Mountains". In the thousands of his paintings dedicated to the Himalayas, he depicted them in their infinite variety of moods, aspects and concepts.

India was to him a multiple concept. Before his gaze India was the rich Repository of Ancient Thought, Beauty and Wisdom. He was a true friend of this country, because he knew well the values of real India. From the Himalayas where he lived across the wide world his word and creations have travelled - thousands upon thousands of people in all corners of the world looked at his paintings, listened to his message and became conscious of a New World of Beauty and Hope.

As an author he wrote numerous books dedicated to Art and Culture, his researches and his Travels. His published works comprise some 27 volumes besides innumerable essays and articles.

As an educator, his work embraced many countries. In Russia he was Director of the Society for the Encouragement of Art and he guided and inspired thousands

of students of Art, who attended the Schools of the Society. Later he founded in America and elsewhere the Master Institute of United Arts, International Arts Center, Roerich Academy and many other institutions dedicated to Art and Culture. He was President, Chairman, Honorary Member of countless Organisations and Institutions as well as learned bodies throughout the world, besides being member of half a dozen Academies. As an explorer he conducted several expeditions to Central Asia and Tibet and his researches in Archeology and History won him International recognition. He organised a survey of Western Himalays and under his guidance research was made in Ethnology, History, Philology, Botany, Zoology and Medical Lore of that region. But all these numerous activities and interests never made him deviate in any way from the central and greatest work of his life, to awaken men to a better understanding of eternal values, common to all countries and to all mankind. The great values of true culture and beauty which he believed could alone unite mankind by providing a common ground for understanding. His whole philosophy of life, his great realisation, recorded in so many of his works was his belief, his conviction that beauty, harmony in all their multiform manifestation on this earth - would lead humanity to a better world, a happier world, of mutual understanding and co-operation.

The realisation of beauty in our life was to him the best binding force for humanity and his own life was the best example of his teachings. Like in the great teachings of Confucius who defined so admirably, the superior man, his personality was complete, perfectly balanced and he believed we must achieve here on earth a better life with our own hands and effort. Volumes would not exhaust the rich heritage he left behind and there is hardly a country where his work is not revered or his message has not found a response in one way or another. When Prof. Radhakrishnan said in his message: "India and the World will not forget his services", he voiced the sentiment of countless admirers of his ideals. In every part of the world his work earned him respect and those who knew him closely, knew that he personified in every one of his thoughts and deeds - his own philosophy and teachings.

One of his greatest contributions to a better understanding among Nations was his Pact for the International Protection of Cultural Treasures, Monuments and Institutions in time of war and civil commotions. This Pact became later known as the Roerich Pact and it was accepted by 36 Nations and actually signed by 21 Nations including the United States of America. This Pact is somewhat like the International Red Cross,

but is designed to protect the great cultural treasures of humanity and to draw the attention of men to those values which are a common heritage of all the civilised world. A special banner or flag in the manner of the red cross would provide immunity to cultural sites, the symbol being three red spheres in a circle on a white field. The meaning may be interpreted as the past, present and future held by infinity. A Committee has been formed in this country of cultural and political leaders to foster the adaption of this Pact by India and we hope that this country with its wonderful cultural treasures will soon become not only a signatory of the Pact,* but will take a lead in this movement of cultural unity.

Before I close let me address you in father's own words:-

"There is no other way, O friends scattered!
May my call penetrate to you!
Let us join ourselves by the invisible
threads of the Beautiful. I turn to you;
I call to you; in the name of Beauty
and Wisdom, let us combine for
struggle and work. During the days
of the Armageddon let us ponder
on Eternal Values, which are the
cornerstone of Evolution.
Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram".

* India joined the pact in 48

5

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

Broadcast by Svetoslav Roerich from New Delhi

Friends,

Tonight I shall speak of my father Nicholas Roerich and his life work.

It is difficult in the short space of a broadcast to give an exhaustive resume of his work and I shall dwell only on the most important phases of his life work and achievements.

The scope of his interests and achievements was truly international and there was hardly a country which did not have some group or society dedicated and working to foster his ideals.

Born in 1874, at St. Petersburg, he was educated first in Russia and then abroad. He simultaneously attended the School of Law, the Faculty of History and Philology, the Academy of Art and the Institute of Archaeology, besides attending innumerable lectures on subjects kindred to History and Arts. His studies in Russia were followed by work abroad, particularly Paris, where he studied under Cormon, and later travelled extensively throughout Europe. This wonderful background of learning was that great foundation upon which he built later his beautiful Edifice of Thought and Realisation.

His remarkable memory faithfully preserved for him everything that was once entrusted to its care.

A tireless searcher after truth he studied all philosophies and was particularly attracted to Hindu thought and Buddhism.

The scope of his learning, so to say, living fully assimilated knowledge was enormous. Russia's great writer

Gorky called him, one of the greatest intuitive minds, because whatever he studied, whatever he contemplated he could immediately reduce to its essentials. And in his Art, in his Poetry, he always tried to find the most direct, most forceful and truthful interpretation of what he felt and saw, whatever subject he was treating. A true synthesis of the inner meaning, as well as of the outward appearance.

Above all and everything he was a man of the highest ideals and principles. His life was an eternal quest after perfection, harmony, service to humanity. And his life and work reflect that wonderful quality of truth which permeated his entire being.

His life was always thoroughly organised and it could be described as a consecutive, progressive, perfectly balanced effort in a definite direction. He never wasted any time and was most economical in the means he employed to achieve a certain end. And it was because of his wonderfully organised and harmonised thought and effort that he was able to achieve so much. His life could be described as many lives concentrated within the space of one. If we look at his achievements, as an artist, he painted well over 6,000 paintings besides frescoes in Churches, in public buildings, as well as designs for mosaics and architectural motives. He painted decors for operas of Wagner, Moussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky Korsakov, Blasco Ibanez, Maeterlink and others. His settings for the Russian ballets of Prince Igor and Sacre du Printemps have become classics of the Stage, while the famous German critic Wilhelm Ritter considered him the best interpreter of Wagner. His early paintings dealt mostly with historic subjects and through a remarkable evolution and period of decorative and prophetic works he became later the great interpreter of the Himalayas; of all the multiple concepts for which they stand and this latter period earned him the name, "Master of the Mountains". In the thousands of his paintings dedicated to the Himalayas, he depicted them in their infinite variety of moods, aspects and concepts.

India was to him a multiple concept. Before his gaze India was the rich Repository of Ancient Thought, Beauty and Wisdom. He was a true friend of this country, because he knew well the values of real India. From the Himalayas where he lived across the wide world his word and creations have travelled - thousands upon thousands of people in all corners of the world looked at his paintings, listened to his message and became conscious of a New World of Beauty and Hope.

As an author he wrote numerous books dedicated to Art and Culture, his researches and his Travels. His published works comprise some 27 volumes besides innumerable essays and articles.

As an educator, his work embraced many countries. In Russia he was Director of the Society for the Encouragement of Art and he guided and inspired thousands of students of Art, who attended the Schools of the Society. Later he founded in America and elsewhere the Master Institute of United Arts, International Arts Centre, Roerich Academy and many other institutions dedicated to Art and Culture. He was President, Chairman, Honorary Member of countless Organisations and Institutions as well as learned bodies throughout the world, besides being member of half a dozen Academies. As an explorer he conducted several expeditions to Central Asia and Tibet and his researches in Archeology and History won him International recognition. He organised a survey of Western Himalayas and under his guidance research was made in Ethnology, History, Philology, Botany, Zoology and Medical Lore of that region. But all these numerous activities and interests never made him deviate in any way from the central and greatest work of his life, to awaken men to a better understanding of eternal values, common to all countries and to all mankind. The great values of true culture and beauty which he believed could alone unite mankind by providing a common ground for understanding. His whole

philosophy of life, his great realisation, recorded in so many of his works was his belief, his conviction that beauty, harmony in all their multiform manifestation on this earth - would lead humanity to a better world, a happier world, of mutual understanding and co-operation.

The realisation of beauty in our life was to him the best binding force for humanity and his own life was the best example of his teachings. Like in the great teachings of Confucius who defined so admirably, the superior man, his personality was complete, perfectly balanced and he believed we must achieve here on earth a better life with our own hands and effort. Volumes would not exhaust the rich heritage he left behind and there is hardly a country where his work is not revered or his message has not found a response in one way or another. When Prof. Radhakrishnan said in his message: "India and the World will not forget his services", he voiced the sentiment of countless admirers of his ideals. In every part of the world his work earned him respect and those who knew him closely, knew that he personified in every one of his thoughts and deeds - his own philosophy and teachings.

One of his greatest contributions to a better understanding among Nations was his Pact for the International Protection of Cultural Treasures, Monuments and Institutions in time of war and civil commotions. This Pact became later known as the Roerich Pact and it was accepted by 36 Nations and actually signed by 21 Nations including the United States of America. This Pact is somewhat like the International Red Cross, but is designed to protect the great cultural treasures of humanity and to draw the attention of men to those values which are a common heritage of all the civilised world. A special banner or flag in the manner of the red cross symbol being three red spheres in a circle on a white field. The meaning may be interpreted as the past, present and future held by infinity.

A Committee has been formed in this country of cultural and political leaders to foster the adaption of this Pact by India and we hope that this country with its wonderful cultural treasures will soon become not only a signatory of the Pact, but will take a lead in this movement of cultural unity.

Before I close let me adress you in father's own words:

"There is no other way, O friends scattered!
May my call penetrate to you!
Let us join ourselves by the invisible
threads of the Beautiful. I turn to you;
I call to you; in the name of Beauty
and Wisdom, let us combine for
Struggle and Work. During the days
of the Armageddon let us ponder
on Eternal Values, which are the
cornerstone of Evolution.
Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram".