

CENTENARY OF PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH

1874 - 1974

Editor

I am sending herewith material for the Centenary of Prof. Nicholas Roerich which falls on October 9th this year. Kindly make use of all or any of this material from the 6th of October and throughout October in phases, including Sunday issues.

With compliments from:

Devi Rani Roerich

(Mme. DEVIKA RANI ROERICH)
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Kindly send me 2 copies by V.P.P.

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SYMPOSIUM IN ENGLISH ON THE BIRTH CENTENARY OF
PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH.

9.15 p.m. on 9.10.74 Duration : 30 mts

to 45 mts

Subject

"My father and his paintings" -
Talk in English

"As the daughter-in-law saw
the great man" - Interview

To interview Mme. Devinaka Rani
Roerich

"Roerich and Russia" - Talk

"Prof. Nicholas Roerich and his
poetry" - Talk.

Participants

Dr. Sveteslav Roerich

Mme. Devika Rani Roerich

Smt. Sudha V. Reddy.

Sri K.P.S. Menon

Sri L.S. Seshagiri Rao.

1. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S TRIBUTE TO ROERICH.
2. MY FATHER by SVETOSLAV ROERICH.
3. LEONID ANDREYEFF SPEAKS OF ROERICH.
4. RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON NICHOLAS ROERICH.
5. FOREWORD TO BEAUTIFUL UNITY by
ABANINDRANATH TAGORE.
6. DR. KALIDAS NAG ON NICHOLAS ROERICH.
7. PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH'S CENTENARY
CELEBRATIONS IN THE U.S.S.R.

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S TRIBUTE TO ROERICH

Nicholas Roerich Memorial Exhibition,
December, 1947 - New Delhi.

EXCERPT.

..... "Paying a tribute to Roerich, Pandit Nehru said:
"When I think of Nicholas Roerich I am astounded at the scope and abundance of his activities and creative genius. A great artist, a great scholar and writer, archaeologist and explorer, he touched and lighted up so many aspects of human endeavour. The very quantity is stupendous - thousands of paintings and each one of them a great work of art. When you look at these paintings, so many of them of the Himalayas, you seem to catch the spirit of those great mountains which have towered over the Indian plain and been our sentinels for ages past. They remind us of so much in our history, our cultural and spiritual heritage so much not merely of the India of the past but of something that is permanent and eternal about India, that we cannot help feeling a great sense of indebtedness to Nicholas Roerich who has enshrined that spirit in these magnificent canvases.".....

MY FATHER

by

SVETOSLAV ROERICH

(Published by the Roerich Museum, New York 1974
Nicholas Roerich 1874-1974)

How to describe in mere words, how to define and how to pay tribute to a truly extraordinary Life. When I think of my Father, when I recall my long intimate association with him outside of and above all his remarkable achievements and contributions to our cultural life, stands out his own unique personality. Kind and patient, never wasting even a moment of his time, perfectly balanced in stress and felicity, always helpful and always mindful of the welfare of his associates, his personality stands out as a complete example of the "Superior Man" for whom life has assumed the sublime aspect of greater service.

All his life he gave out freely of his prodigious gifts and it will indeed take a long time to fully appreciate and evaluate the great contributions made by him. When I think of my Father, I am filled with the inexpressible riches of love and regard, for all he gave and continues to give me in an infinite way.

He was a great patriot and he loved his Mother-land, yet he belonged to the entire world and the whole world was his field of activity. Every race of men was to him a brotherly race, every country a place of special interest and of special significance. Every religion was a path to the Ultimate and to him life meant the great gates leading into the Future.

His beautiful painting the "Hidden Treasure" is perhaps a profound symbol of his own great contributions and his own unusual life. Every effort of his was directed towards the realisation of the Beautiful and his thoughts found a masterful embodiment in his paintings, writings and public life. The subject matter of his paintings reveals a wonderful pageant of transcendental thought cast in sublime colours and compositions.

Contd.... 2

The latter half of his life was closely associated with the greatest range of this, our world, the Himalayas. Against this wondrous background he revealed to us the legends and the spiritual aspirations of the countless searchers after Truth who came to these mighty ranges in search of wisdom.

The Himalayas were a source of constant creative joy to him and in thousands of studies he revealed to us a matchless, breathtaking panorama of the infinite moods which are such an integral part of these lofty peaks.

No one has ever portrayed mountains like my Father. From his canvasses the Himalayas radiate upon us all their unbelievable wealth of colour, beauty and the inexpressible majesty of the great concept for which the very word Himalayas stands. Truly he earned the name given to him "THE MASTER OF THE MOUNTAINS." Through all his paintings and writings runs the continuous thread of a great message, the message of the Teacher calling to the disciples to awaken and strive towards a new life, a better life, a life of Beauty and Fulfillment. He fully exemplified the words of Plato:

"From Beautiful images we shall go to Beautiful
thoughts,
from Beautiful thoughts to a Beautiful life
and from a Beautiful life to absolute Beauty."

Both in my Father and Mother there was the unique balance and harmony of two perfectly synchronised beings who realised the great ideal of life and lived the chosen path as a perfect example of dedication and fulfillment.

It is rare for an artist to achieve greatness, but for a great artist to be an even greater Man is indeed something which can be found only with the greatest of difficulty. Fortunate indeed I was to have the living example and guidance of my Father and Mother and their radiant image always remains my greatest inspiration, my great source of happiness.

Though we are now celebrating my Father's first Birth Centenary I know that in the vista of time every Centenary will be marked by ever greater awareness and appreciation. Today we are only kindling the first flame of our tribute to a great life to be followed by ever brighter flames of gratitude and recognition leading into the distant beckoning future.

LEONID ANDREYEFF SPEAKS OF ROERICH

The world of Roerich is a world of Truth. - Any attempt at transmitting its enchanting beauty through words must be fruitless. That which has been thus expressed in color will not tolerate the rivalry of words and stands in no need of them. Here (in Roerich's realm) is the cradle of wisdom where the heavenly words about God and Man came forth speaking eternal love and eternal struggle.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE
ON NICHOLAS ROERICH

(Letter of Rabindranath Tagore to
Nicholas Roerich, London, 1920.)

EXCERPT:

"Your pictures profoundly moved me. They made me realise one thing which is obvious and yet which one needs to discover for oneself over and over again: it is that Truth is infinite. When I tried to find words to describe to myself what were the ideas which your pictures suggested, I failed. It was because the language of words can only express a particular aspect of Truth, and the language of pictures finds its domain in Truth where words have no access. Each art achieves its perfection when it opens for our mind the special gate whose key is in its exclusive possession. When a picture is great we should not be able to say what it is, and yet we should see it and know. It is the same with music. When one art can fully be expressed by another then it is a failure. Your pictures are distinct and yet are not definable by words - your art is jealous of its independence because it is great."

FOREWORD

To
BEAUTIFUL UNITY

(Beautiful Unity by Nicholas Roerich
Foreword by Abanindranath Tagore.)

Nicholas Roerich has a place all his own in the world of Art. His pen too has carved out a niche for itself in the world of letters. The brush has a wider appeal no doubt, but the pen has a distinct function of its own; and in the hands of Nicholas Roerich it has for long exerted an influence which is at once elevating and instructive. A call to Beauty implies in its essentials an appreciation of the Vision which the Artist would fain share with the world at large. That the Artist's vision even when expressed in rhetoric can be quite as sincere as when it finds expression through line and colour and form is amply evidenced by what is set forth in this volume of essays. I am happy to find that in the following pages my friend Nicholas Roerich has voiced what fundamentally every sensitive mind feels about the values of Art including what is perhaps the greatest of all Arts - the Art of Living. In this he has indeed spoken for all Artists. I am sure the book will receive the recognition which is its due.

Santiniketan, 0
15-3-1964 0

ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

DR. KALIDAS NAG
ON NICHOLAS ROERICH

(Beautiful Unity by Nicholas Roerich.)

EXCERPT:

"Our friend the great artist Nicholas Roerich is ever upholding the cause of Beauty even when the world appears to lapse to Barbarism. His thoughts on Art flow like his masterly lines depicting the Himalayas and we are grateful to him that he composed his colourful picture-epic of the Himalayan snow. Roerich is the first Russian ambassador of Beauty who has brought to India the deathless message of Art and we are ever grateful to him for his inspiring thoughts and his loyal co-operation in bringing the soul of Russia and of India closer."

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PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH'S CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS
IN THE U.S.S.R.

(From the 9th October 1974)

1. Exhibitions of Prof. Nicholas Roerich's paintings.
 2. Exhibitions of Svetoslav Roerich's paintings.
 3. Sessions at the Academy of Fine Arts and Svetoslav Roerich's lectures at the Academy.
 4. Commemoration Centenary Medal of Prof. Nicholas Roerich.
 5. Commemorative Stamp.
 6. Full length film on the life of Prof. Nicholas Roerich.
 7. PUBLICATIONS:
 - (a) One Volume - "FROM THE LITERARY HERITAGE OF PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH"
Published by: "PICTORIAL ARTS".
 - (b) Articles and Studies on Prof. Nicholas Roerich
Published by: "PICTORIAL ARTS".
 - (c) Selected articles of Prof. Nicholas Roerich
Published by: "YOUNG GUARDS".
 - (d) "ALTAI-HIMALAYA" by Prof. Nicholas Roerich
Published by: "SCIENCE".
 - (e) Poems of Prof. Nicholas Roerich
Edited by: The Eminent Poet Mr. V. M. Sidorov.
 - (f) Albums of Prof. Nicholas Roerich's paintings.
 - (g) Biography of Prof. Nicholas Roerich by Mr. P. F. Belicov and Madam V. P. Kniazeva - Two Editions in the series "THE LIVES OF REMARKABLE MEN".
Published by: "YOUNG GUARDS".
 - (h) Biography of Prof. Nicholas Roerich by Madam E. I. Polyakova - Published by: "ART".
 - (i) Monograph on Prof. Nicholas Roerich by Mr. A. D. Alekhin
Published by: "THE ARTIST RSFSR".
 - (j) Series of colour Postcards of Prof. Nicholas Roerich's paintings.
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8. The second highest Peak of the Altai Mountains in Siberia named after Prof. Nicholas Roerich. A bronze Plaque with the image of Prof. Nicholas Roerich and the Symbol of his "BANNER OF PEACE" has been placed on the summit of the mountain, by the Academy of Science Expedition.
 9. "ISWARA" the old country Residence and Park of Prof. Nicholas Roerich near Leningrad is being restored as a Memorial Museum to Prof. Nicholas Roerich to be ready by October 1974.
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NICHOLAS ROERICH

by

Dr.P.V. Rajamannar

D.Litt., L.L.D.,

Chief Justice of Madras (Retired)

and

First President of the Sangeet Natak Academy,
New Delhi.

Now and again, in the history of the world, there emerges a towering personality who by his achievements in different fields can aptly be described as a Superman. Leonardo da Vinci was one such. He was a great painter, sculptor, architect, engineer, scientist and musician. To this class of Supermen, Nicholas Roerich belongs. He was not only a great painter of the highest order, he was also an archaeologist, explorer, poet, writer, musician, scientist, philosopher, educationist and humanitarian. His contribution to the stage and ballet was considerable. He painted settings for practically all the Operas of Wagner, and for many operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Moussorgsky, as well as for the plays of Ibsen and others. His work for the ballet was no less significant, and his designs for Dance Polovtsienne and The Rite of Spring have become classics.

Roerich's life and achievements were of epic proportions. The range of his creative genius has been equalled only by a few, though he lived in an age of giants, some of whom were world-famous and with whom he formed lasting friendship. They were Tolstoy, the great writer; Nijinsky, the inspired dancer-choreographer; Stanislavsky, the eminent actor-producer and Stravinsky the original composer, besides distinguished sons of India, like Dr.S.Radhakrishna and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore and other eminent men. Nicholas Roerich's life and activities radiated from one centre and in addition to their radial lines, establish concentric relationships with a natural interchange between the main cultural expressions, the devotional, the contemplative and the creative.

Even from his childhood, Nicholas Roerich was interested in archaeology and exploration. Eventually, he became a leading archaeologist in Russia and his archaeological research extended to several countries in Asia as well. He was intensely interested in Science and many of his expeditions in Asia were for scientific purposes. In 1929, he set up the Himalayan Research Institute in Kulu for studies in Botany, indigenous medicine,

ethnology and linguistics as well as archaeology.

He was a prolific writer. Apart from his innumerable articles for leading periodicals of the world, his total output of works includes 30 volumes, dealing with cultural, philosophical and international subjects. Among his better known works are "Flame in Chalice", "Beautiful Unity", "Himalayas - The Abode of Light", "Altai-Himalayas" and "The Joy of Art", (for which Dr. Radhakrishnan wrote a foreword.)

He was a great scholar and educationist. He was made a Fellow and Member of several Academies and many learned bodies throughout the world. Several institutions were founded by Roerich, among which are "The International Society of Artists (Chicago); "The Master Institute of United Arts; International Art Centre; Roerich Museum (New York) and Himalayan Research Institute in Kulu (India). He had a very exalted view on education. According to him, education did not consist in mere technical and other information: true education should have the effect of forming a world consciousness and is attained by a synthesis of perfection and creativeness.

Nicholas Roerich will always live in and by his paintings. His paintings run into thousands (7,000) and deal with a wide range of subjects. His paintings are found in all the leading museums and art collections of the world. Every painting of his is an illustration of the famous poet's words "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever". In the words of his illustrious son, Svetoslav, himself a painter of the highest order, his paintings reveal a wonderful pageant of transcendental thought cast in sublime colours and compositions. His paintings are excellent illustrations of the Indian concept of Ananda, which is derived from aesthetic experience. This Ananda has been described as being "Lokottara" and "Alaukika". The term Lokattara embodies the idea of something transcending the world and Alaukika may be translated as non-materialistic.

The Himalayas were a source of constant inspiration to Nicholas Roerich. He revealed in his numerous paintings of Himalayan landscapes his ability to convey their variety of colours and moods, soaring heights and vast spaces of cosmic proportions. Verily, he was "Master of the Mountains".

Schopenhauer pointed out that "all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music" and one can discover the truth of this statement in the paintings of Roerich. His colour schemes and compositions are symphonies and sonatas and some of the paintings are variations on a theme.

There is a distinct architectonic quality in his paintings, like the "Island of Rest", "Great Spirit of the Himalayas" and his numerous studies of Tibetan Strongholds and Citadels. This is not surprising, because, architecture is frozen music.

Many of his paintings are symbolic but his symbols are simple and evocative rather than esoteric. They involve one of the basic concepts of Indian aesthetics, the principle of suggestion (Dhwani). When one perceives the panorama of his paintings, one is reminded of the lines of Shelly:

The One remains, the many change and pass
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

Roerich's love for India and all that she stands for is expressed in numerous tributes of ecstatic praise, such as "Bharata all beautiful; let me send thee my heartfelt admiration for all the greatness and inspiration which fill thy ancient cities and temples, thy meadows, thy deobans, thy sacred rivers and the Himalayas". It is in his beloved India that he lived in his last days.

The pledge of happiness for humanity lay in beauty according to him. As Dr. Kalidas Nag observed, that Roerich was the first Russian Ambassador of beauty and brought to India the deathless message of Art and we should be grateful to him for his loyal co-operation in bringing the soul of Russia and of India closer. It is a matter for gratification that the close bonds between the two great countries have also extended to other fields, political and economic.

Nicholas Roerich worked assiduously and continuously for peace and unity among nations. In an attempt to divert attention from competition and conflict, and direct it towards beauty, he was instrumental for the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, which became internationally famous. He fully believed that art would unify all humanity and that it was a manifestation of the

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coming synthesis.

Nicholas Roerich always strove to uphold the cause of beauty even when the world appeared to lapse to barbarism and was filled with envy and jealousy and intimidated by economic insecurity of a social order based upon competition.

Nicholas Roerich brings to my mind the famous lines of Goethe:

"For beauty they have sought in every age;

"He who perceives it is from himself set free".

Roerich attained that freedom from his ego, Mukthi, liberation, which is also self-realisation. He was a prophet in its most exalted sense, with a mystic vision.

On the memorable occasion of the celebration of his Centenary, the best tribute that we can pay to that great soul is to recall to mind his inspired words:

"In Beauty we are united

"Through Beauty we pray

"With Beauty we conquer".

It should be the endeavour of every individual and nation to carry out his ideal

Madras,
12.8.1974.

NICHOLAS ROERICH

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Since time immemorial it has been the sublime privilege of humanity that during periods of economic hardship, political unrest and spiritual unbalancedness there always appeared in the world a great positive figure, standing out unwaveringly leading and guiding humanity towards Light like a beacon rock.

There is among the few world figures one outstanding name, unifying the peaceful cultural aspirations of mankind and guiding it in all the multifaceted aspects of existence and that name is Nicholas Roerich, the true leader of World Culture.

Born in Russia in 1874 Prof. Roerich received his training, as a lawyer, historian, archaeologist and at the Academy of Arts. He studied abroad as well as in Russia and he achieved world recognition as an artist at an early age. His paintings were exhibited throughout Europe and America and he was honoured by many governments and learned bodies. While only 31 he became Director of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, a leading art organisation of that period. His scientific researches in archaeology and history made him prominent in that field and he carried out extensive excavations in Russia. He also achieved great fame in the Theatre and his stage settings have become classics of the stage. Since 1920 he had series of exhibitions throughout the world and he founded numerous societies dedicated to art and culture. Several Museums were dedicated to his art. And in spite of his enormous activities, as an organiser and educator, he painted a staggering number of paintings, well over 7000, besides large frescoes in Churches and public buildings. From India he started his famous Roerich Expedition to Central Asia, which took the best part of five years to complete - across Central Asia, Mongolia, Russia and Tibet, back again to this country in 1928. Here in India he founded a centre for the study of the Western Himalayas and the adjacent regions, while his cultural work throughout the world continued under the guidance of his countless followers. He was a member of half a dozen academies besides being President, Vice-President, Chairman and Honorary Member of a vast number of cultural Institutions and Organisations throughout the world. His works number some 30 volumes published, besides innumerable essays and articles.

Roerich's ties with India began from early childhood. His father's estate had the name Iswara and nearby was an estate which during the reign of Catherine the Great belonged to an Indian Raja and showed traces of an Indian Park.

There was in the family of Roerich an old painting showing a majestic mountain which Prof. Roerich admired since his childhood. Only afterwards did he discover from a travel-book that this was the famous Kanchenjunga Himalayan Range.

Already since 1905 many paintings and essays by Roerich were dedicated to India, for instance, the paintings - "Devasari", "Lakshmi", "Shri Krishna", "Damayanti", "Dreams of India (series)". His early essays on India include "Indian Path", "Gayatri", etc.

In 1923 Prof. Roerich, his wife Madame Helena Roerich, their sons, Svetoslav, a painter in the class of his father and George, a scientist and archaeologist, came to India. At first they lived near Darjeeling, but later they established the Urusvati Research Institute in the Kulu Valley, where they still reside. Both in the East and West Himalayas, Prof. Roerich has painted a long gallery of pictures that not only reflected the magnificent beauties of the hills but also embodied something of the spiritual history and legend with which they are associated.

In his essay "Tagore and Tolstoy", Roerich remembers with great enthusiasm his first meeting with Tagore. In the same article he recalls that Mme. Roerich's first ties with India were Ramakrishna and Vivekananda's books. In the Roerich family "The Bhagavat Gita" and Tagore's "Gitanjali" had always a place of honour and accompanied them on all journeys.

Since his coming to India Roerich has dedicated thousands of paintings to the sublime beauty of the Himalayas, to the sacred concepts of the ancient wisdom of India and his essays in the Indian magazines are well known to all. Prof. Roerich concludes the chapter on India in his inspiring book "Altai Himalaya" as follows:- "We know thy fragrant essence, India. We know the depths and finesse of thy thoughts. We know the great Aum, which leads to the inexpressible heights. India, we know thy ancient wisdom".

The Modern Review was the first channel in India through which the Art of Roerich became known to the wider public. An inspiring article from the pen of Mr. Joseph Finger appeared in 1921 unfolding before the eyes of the readers the colourful life and magnificent art of the great Russian master.

The eminent artist Bireswar Sen summarised the voice of India when he wrote in the Hindu Weekly "To most of us, Roerich is a legendary figure of romance. Against the wild glare of the flaming West, his mighty figure looms large like the motionless and benevolent Buddha in the midst of a vast cosmic cataclysm. Far above the tumultuous din of frenzied nations rings his voice - the unequivocal commandments of the Eternal, the voice of Truth, Beauty and Culture. Great is Roerich - and greater still are his works, the beautiful harbingers of Peace and Goodwill among men. Indefatigable in action, indomitable in spirit and innocent at heart, he is the new Sir Galahad, seeking after the Holy Grail.

In the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Benares and in the Municipal Museum at Allahabad, special halls have been dedicated to Prof. Roerich. Besides this, Roerich's paintings are in the Bose Institute in Calcutta, in the Adyar Museum in Madras, in the collection of Rabindranath Tagore, in Santiniketan, in the Sree Chitralayam Gallery of Travancore, where a special building is dedicated to his work, in the State Museums of Mysore, Hyderabad, Baroda, Indore, and other centers of India.

The Benares Group containing, among others, the following painting, gems so typical of the creativeness of Roerich. "Star of the Hero", "Buddha - the Giver", "Kalki Avatar", "Bhagwan Shri Rama Krishna". The Allahabad group includes - "The Arhat", "Maitreya", "She who Leads". About these paintings O.C. Gangooly in the Pioneer, naming Roerich - "The wizard of Eastern landscapes, who sublimates realistic senses to the dizzy heights of divine dreamlands". The Bose Institute is adorned by the painting "Santana", "The Source of Life"; in Madras is "The Messenger", in the Tagore collection "The Ruler".

Rabindranath Tagore wrote of the Art of Roerich that "It is jealous of its independence because it is great".

J.K. Nag in the Illustrated India of Calcutta says in his article "Roerich - a saint and an artist" - "there lives now on the roof of the world, a unique figure of charming composition - a genius that had so ardently worshipped Beauty - a genius that has so passionately loved art and culture. He is the world famous painter, the great Prof. Nicholas Roerich - a towering personality of this Century".

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Beside his genius in Art, Roerich is an untiring worker for World Peace. He dreamt of an International understanding and peace through Art and Beauty. He says - "Art is to create beauty, through beauty we gain victory, through victory we unite and through beauty we pray". He incorporated his ideal in the International Pact for the protection of Cultural Institutions, Monuments in time of war and civil commotions, which Pact became known as the "Roerich Pact" and was accepted by 35 nations and actually signed by 21 nations including the U.S.A. The emblem of the Pact is the Banner of Peace like the Red Cross but for the protection of cultural treasures of the world. Nicholas Roerich by awakening in the people the reverence and appreciation of the World's cultural treasures, creates a new understanding amongst humanity and thus the Roerich Pact is not an abstract regulation against war, but it is a method of eliminating in the very consciousness of people the possibilities of hatred and destruction. For as Roerich himself says: "When the whole Earth will be covered by the Banner of Peace, protecting cultural treasures, there will be no field for War".

It is impossible not to admire Roerich. One cannot pass by his precious canvases without expressing a deep emotion. To see a Roerich picture means to see something new, something you have never seen anywhere not even among Roerich's own works.

Nicholas Roerich has no home, no date, no nation - he belongs to no nation or epoch. So do the Persian miniatures, so do the great Chinese art works. They belong to all times and nations. For every artist, every poet, every philosopher is primarily a priest - his vocation is Holy, Holy, Holy. He leads mankind and we follow him. They are timeless, as is Beauty. They have many facets all reflecting the Supreme. Nicholas Roerich is the representative of that divine inspiration - what matters whether he is alive or dead. He is a messenger from the Hierarchy itself, revealing that in Beauty all virtues are combined, no man with an evil thought can create, not unless he is seared by the fire, unless all the selfish and ordinary has been removed from his being. When such a divine searing by the fire takes place there results a Michael Angelo, A Leonardo, a Hokusai, a Nicholas Roerich.

ROERICH MEMORIAL GALLERY

NAGGAR - KULU
9th October 1964

MASTER-PAINTER AND WORLD CITIZEN

by
G. VENKATACHALAM
Author and Critic

Mystic-dreamer, master-painter and world-citizen, Nicholas Roerich was one of the outstanding personalities of this or any other century.

Unquestionably one of the greatest and most interesting of the world's master artists, his large canvases run to several thousands, and each one a masterpiece of daring composition, pulsating colour-harmony and massive effect. "Himalayan" is the word not only for his soul but for his art as well.

He was as daring a pioneer as mystic, poet, thinker and scientist; and his output as a writer was as great as it was voluminous. From his mountain retreat in Kulu, he kept himself in touch with every progressive idea and movement in the outer world and often guided them with wisdom and practical help.

His versatility was amazing and his capacity for work was prodigious; his interest in small things was as great as in big things, and as enthusiastic. Whether he painted a gorgeous Himalayan landscape or wrote a short message to a school magazine, he gave it the same attention and care, a trait of true greatness. He resembled the late Dr. Annie Beasant in this respect.

India had a special place in his affection, and to India he looked for the spiritual regeneration of the world. Hence his home in the land of the rishis, the Himalaya.

"One of the greatest intuitive minds of the age," was the tribute paid to Roerich by Maxim Gorky, himself another immortal. The late Annie Beasant hailed him as "a painter of titanic stature and a revealer of the hidden beauty of nature." He certainly belonged to that mighty brotherhood of creative geniuses like El Greco, Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo, bringers of light to a dark world.

Not to be used before 6th October 1974.

(TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE MORNING EDITIONS OF OCTOBER 9TH 1974)

"NICHOLAS ROERICH THE ARTIST AND THE SEER"

CENTENARY OF PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH

Broadcast By: SVETOSLAV ROERICH

by

on the occasion of the

SVETOSLAV ROERICH.

90TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
(by courtesy of All India Radio)

In the Kulu Valley, the Ancient Kuluta, at Naggar, in the full view of the snowy peaks, amidst Deodars and Blue Pines stands a large rectangular stone. The inscription reads: "On December the Thirteenth 1947 here was cremated the body of Nicholas Roerich - the great Russian friend of India - Let there be peace". The stone stands like an altar fashioned by the sole hand of nature which gave it an almost perfect shape of a rectangle. It is a fragment of a rock which detached itself from a cliff nearby as if to provide a seal over the spot where the BARD of the Himalayas was cremated, to mark the place of his physical dissolution. Today the Ninth of October, falls the Hundredth Birth Anniversary of my Father Nicholas Roerich. I shall say a few words about my Father:

Our late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurating Father's Exhibition of paintings said:

"When I think of Nicholas Roerich I am astounded at the scope and abundance of his activities and creative genius. A great artist, a great scholar and writer, archaeologist and explorer, he touched and lighted up so many aspects of human endeavour. The very quantity is stupendous - thousands of paintings and each one of them a great work of art. When you look at these paintings so many of them of the Himalayas you seem to catch the spirit of those great mountains which have towered over

the Indian plain and been our sentinels for ages past. They remind us of so much in our history, our thought, our cultural and spiritual heritage so much not merely of the India of the past, but of something that is permanent and eternal about India, that we cannot help feeling a great sense of indebtedness to Nicholas Roerich who has enshrined that spirit in these magnificent canvasses."

It is difficult in the course of a short broadcast to give an adequate picture of a Man who lived such an extraordinary life and left such a vast heritage. I shall only dwell on some of the most important facets of his life.

Whenever I think of my Father, I see before me his serene and thoughtful face. His kind violet-blue eyes which at times would become quite dark. I can hear his quiet voice, he never raised his voice and all his countenance reflected that wonderful composure of mind and of self which were the very foundation of his character. It was the composure of a Superior Man, grave and yet kind, thoughtful with a remarkable and happy sense of humour.

In all his movements there was a measured harmony. He never hurried yet his output was prodigious. When he painted or when he wrote he did so with quiet deliberation. When he wrote in his large and clear handwriting he never corrected or changed his sentences or words, least of all his thoughts. It was a continuous progressive effort towards a certain definite goal and that was true of his entire life. Under all conditions of life, in the most trying circumstances he remained calm and possessed and never wavered in his determination.

From his earliest school days he held before himself the transcendental ideals of the great Italian masters of the

Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo. Already as a student he would write about these great ideals, this unique dedication in the search and service of the beautiful.

He was born in 1874 at St. Petersburg in Russia and came from an ancient family of Scandinavian extraction. He simultaneously attended the academy of art and several faculties at the University, including the faculty of law in deference to his fathers' wishes. Later he studied abroad. He was endowed with a brilliant searching mind and a most remarkable memory that never forgot anything that was once entrusted to its care.

He began his archeological researches and excavations when only eighteen years old. The forty-three years he spent in Russia were a most remarkable example of human dedication and achievement. He was at the head of leading art and educational institutions and organised and took part in scores of other organisations and activities. With all that he painted thousands of paintings, executed murals and mosaics for public buildings and churches, designed settings for Operas and Ballets, wrote his books and essays on Art and Archeology, his short stories, fairy tales and poems, and conducted researches in Archeology, History and Art. He also found time to assemble remarkable collections of Art and Archeology, which were among the best in Russia.

Some of the settings he designed for the theatre like Prince Igor and the Sacre du Printemps produced by Diaghilev in Paris have since become classics of the stage.

It is a tragedy that most of the great murals he executed have not survived the ravages of wars and now remain for us only in reproductions and in their original sketches. Recognition and fame came very early in life to my Father. When he finally embarked on his World Travels he was only 43 and was already a

World Figure with a tremendous record of achievement to his credit.

Philosophy, the Great Oriental thought attracted him from his earliest days. The books on Shri Ramakrishna, of Swami Vivekananda and others were published in Russia at the beginning of the century. The poems of Tagore were beautifully translated into Russian by the great Lithouanian Poet Baltrushaitis. At that time an exhibition of Indian Art was organised in Paris by the Russian Art Connoisseur Golubev. Father dedicated one of his articles to this exhibition and concluded it with the following significant words:

" Beauty still lives in India;

Beckons to us the Great Indian Path. "-

This "Path" was to take him later to India to discover for himself and through him for others the beauties of this land, to paint as no one has painted before him the grandeur, the sublime beauty and inner meaning of the Himalayas. His studies in Philosophy and Oriental thought were a constant background in his quest for Self-Realisation. This quest runs like a golden thread through his entire life.

The question that may naturally arise. Has he found what he was searching for? Have his expectations been fulfilled? Yes, a thousand times Yes! Out of her innermost recesses Life laid before him her transcendental gifts, she made his life infinitely rich in its scope, revelations and sublime contacts.

He travelled far and wide not only throughout Russia, Europe and the New World, but also Asia and his extensive expeditions took him across Central Asia, Mongolia, Tibet, China and Japan. Many hardships have been experienced, many difficulties had to be overcome. During one of the expeditions the caravan was held up by local officials and not allowed to proceed. It had to spend the winter, without winter equipment at an altitude of 16,000 feet. All the pack animals perished through lack of

fodder and exposure. Throughout all these trials he continued his work, carried out his researches and painted his great paintings.

My Mother was his constant companion, herself a student of Philosophy and an author of many books. She shared with Father all his aspirations and took part in all his work. Many of her thoughts are immortalised in his canvasses, many books are dedicated by him to her. So close was their creative association that at times it is very difficult to draw the line of their mutual influence and inspiration.

Father loved India, the Himalayas and dedicated to them many books, essays and thousands of his canvasses. That "GREAT INDIAN PATH" which beckoned to him from his ^{early} days became a reality when he came to India. He could contact the very sources of the great philosophies, of ancient transcendental thought. He travelled throughout India and the Himalayas and finally settled at Kulu where he lived and worked till his death in 1947. He always visualised and hoped for a closer cooperation between India and Russia. Concluding one of his article on India while on an expedition to Mongolia he wrote:

"O, Bharata all beautiful, let me send
you my heartfelt admiration for all
the greatness and inspiration which
fill thy ancient cities and temples,
thy meadows, deobans, thy sacred
rivers and the Himalayas".

As an artist he worked in an unique and very personal style, he was a brilliant colourist and had a marvellous imagination and gift of composition. Many of his paintings have proved to be prophetic. The great Russian writer Gorky called him the Greatest Intuitivist while Leonid Andreew described his art as "THE REALM OF ROERICH"

Rabindranath Tagore wrote to Father in 1920:

"Your pictures profoundly moved me. They made me realise one thing which is abvious and yet which one needs to discover for oneself over and over again: it is that Truth is infinite. ... Your pictures are distinct and yet are not definable by words, - your art is jealous of its independence because it is great."

One of his endeavours which has quite a special significance was his International Pact for the Protection of Cultural Treasures in times of war and strife. This Pact known as the ROERICH PACT became a reality yet in Fathers' life time, and has now been made the basis for the Treaty signed at the Hague Convention in 1954 by all the leading countries.

An enormous bibliography exists on Father, over a dozen important monographs and many hundreds of essays and articles by leading writers and art critics have been dedicated to his art and work. Several books are now in preparation and a new monograph on him has just come out in the Soviet Union.

Numerous countries honoured Father in his life time. He received some of the highest decorations and was Fellow of more than half a dozen academies. He was Chairman, President, Honorary Member of innumerable organisations, learned bodies and societies. But his greatest heritage left to Posterity are his paintings and writings. His writings comprise some 27 volumes besides innumerable essays and articles.

His better known books are:-

Collected Works.
Flame in Chalice.
Altai Himalaya.
Heart of Asia.
Realm of Light.

Fiery Stronghold.

Shambhala.

Paths of Blessing.

Gates into the Future.

Himalayas - Abode of Light.

His paintings number over 7,000 dispersed throughout the whole wide world in Museums and Private Collections. In India Fathers' paintings are in many public collections, separate halls are dedicated to his paintings at the Kala Bhavan, Benares; Trivandrum Museum; Allahabad Museum and a new hall will be organised at the Chandigarh Museum.

His life can be best summarised as a ceaseless Quest, a Quest after Knowledge, Self-Realisation and Synthesis through Concentrated Creative Activity and Service.

From his earliest days he intuitively felt that labour was the great purifying and elevating principle. He believed that by conscious labour man emancipates and purifies himself. That the will and effort to produce something better, something more perfect for the sole purpose of doing it better raises us to a higher state. This search after perfection, this whole conscious effort for a more perfect expression, this ceaseless rhythm of joyous work were Fathers' Credo throughout his life. "Faith without deeds is dead". The repeated blows of the hammer forge inert metals into tangible shapes. The HEART, WISDOM, LABOUR and PATIENCE were maxims Father invoked early in life. By applying them diligently to everything he did he reached his self-integration and with confidence he could affirm.

"IN BEAUTY WE ARE UNITED,

THROUGH BEAUTY WE PRAY,

WITH BEAUTY WE CONQUER."

PAX CULTURA

THE NICHOLAS ROERICH SOCIETY

Honorary President: Svetoslav Roerich

Honorary Chairman: Vladimir Shibayev

NICHOLAS ROERICH CENTENARY YEAR - 1974

Notes for Writers, Speakers and Broadcasters.

9th October, 1974, is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nicholas Roerich, and commemorative activities are being arranged in a number of countries. They are taking place, for instance, in the Soviet Union, where he was born, and in the United States, where his work was particularly active.

Nicholas Roerich lived and worked in the United Kingdom during 1919 and 1920 and, appropriately, a number of Centenary Year activities have been planned in this country.

Artist, scientist, author, explorer, poet, educator,.....
Roerich was undoubtedly one of the most interesting men of this or any other century. Maxim Gorky described him as "one of the greatest intuitive minds of the age," and Pandit Nehru said: "I am astounded at the scope and abundance of his activities and creative genius".

In these notes, Nicholas Roerich's life and work are broadly outlined and some details of his creative activities are given as a guide to writers, speakers and broadcasters.

The Nicholas Roerich Society

Not to be used before 6th October 1974.

NICHOLAS ROERICH

Nicholas Roerich was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1874 and died in Kulu, India in 1947. In the intervening years, he carried out a wide variety of creative activities, which spanned three continents - Europe, America and Asia - and earned him an international reputation in several fields.

A many-sided genius, Roerich was probably most famous as an artist - his large canvases ran into several thousands, many of them beautiful creations, rich in colour-harmony and symbolism. His output as a writer was almost as prolific and rivalled his painting in its beauty and depth. His work as a stage designer, philosopher, educator, cultural leader and worker for peace also created a wide and lasting impact.

What impresses one particularly about the life of Roerich - in addition to his creativeness, versatility and energy - is the outstanding quality of everything he did. Whether he painted a glorious Himalayan landscape or wrote a short message for a school magazine, he gave it the same attention and care.

Roerich was deeply altruistic. For much of his life, he travelled the world, working for international unity and peace - using his many talents in an attempt to build a more enlightened future. In his later years, whilst in his mountain retreat in Kulu, he kept in touch with many of the new ideas and progressive movements, often guiding the latter and giving them practical help.

An educator, scientist and cultural leader, Roerich was one of the most active forerunners of Unesco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. With the support of the various societies and committees which were set up in his name in many countries, he was active for many years in each of the fields now covered by the United Nations' cultural agency, and he helped to set in motion many of the ideas on which it was based.

His integrity and ability were widely recognized. It is reported, for instance, that in 1906 he was invited to become Chamberlain at the Imperial Court of Russia, and that in 1917 he might have become the Soviet Union's first Minister of Fine Arts. But Roerich, dedicated to his art and creativity, wanted neither office. In the later stages of his life, the people of the Himalayan regions, recognizing his profundity, addressed him as Maharshi and treated him with the respect accorded to holy men.

SOME BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Family

Nicholas Roerich was the eldest son of Konstantin Roerich, a St. Petersburg barrister and descendant of a Viking family which settled in Russia at the time of Peter the Great. On his mother's side, Roerich's ancestry can be traced back to an ancient Russian family living in Old Pskov during the 10th Century.

His wife, Helena - the daughter of an architect - was related to the composer, Moussorgsky and Field-Marshal Kutozov, the general who out-manoeuvred Napoleon. Madame Roerich was deeply interested in religion and philosophy and wrote on these subjects. The Roerichs had two sons: Dr. George Roerich, the eldest was a scientist and orientalist; and Dr. Svetoslav Roerich, the

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youngest, is a gifted painter. Both sons were active in their father's work.

Contemporaries

In the course of his work, Roerich came into contact with many famous people, and with some he developed lasting friendships. It would be impossible to list them all, but certain names stand out.

Amongst these are the writer Count Tolstoy, who was interested in Roerich's paintings; the dancer-choreographer Nijinsky, with whom Roerich worked in ballet; the actor-producer Stanislavsky, with whom Roerich worked at the Moscow Art Theatre; the composer Igor Stravinsky, with whom Roerich collaborated in the composing of The Rite of Spring; the producer Diaghilev, for whose Russian Ballet Roerich designed, as did his contemporary artists Picasso, Matisse and Braque, and the composer Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom Roerich carried out some fascinating experiments concerning music and painting.

There were also the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, for whom Roerich designed at Covent Garden; the Nobel Prize-Winning Poet Rabindranath Tagore, who was interested in Roerich's art and humanitarian work; the scientist Albert Einstein, who was an Honorary Adviser to the Roerich Museum in New York; President Roosevelt, who was interested in Roerich's work; the President's wife Eleanor Roosevelt, who lectured at the Roerich Museum; the President of India Dr. Radhakrishnan, who wrote the foreword to Roerich's book, Joy of Art; and the late Prime Minister of India Pandit Nehru, who acknowledged India's indebtedness to Roerich for enshrining the spirit of India in his paintings of the Himalayas.

***** THE MULTI-FACETED ROERICH

It is impossible to do justice to Roerich's life in the space of a few pages. And his activities were so integrated that it is difficult to truly appraise any one aspect in isolation from the others. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the following factual notes - made under a number of obvious headings - will help to give a synthesised picture of Roerich's multi-faceted nature and creativity.

Artist

Nicholas Roerich painted over 7000 paintings. They dealt with a wide range of subjects. His early works were influenced by his archaeological studies and were based on historical themes. Later paintings dealt with the higher aspirations of Man and were on a Philosophical and religious note. He also painted sublime landscapes of the Himalayan Mountains which he loved and which earned him the reputation, "Master of the Mountains". His paintings are of great beauty and are particularly noted for their composition, colour and the depth and simplicity of their symbolism. They hang in leading museums and galleries throughout the world.

Mural Painter

He was an outstanding mural painter. The monumental murals for the Kazan Railway in Moscow and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Talashkino near Smolensk are amongst his better-known works. He also designed many mosaics.

Designer

His contribution to the stage was very important. He painted settings for practically all the operas of Wagner, and for many operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Moussorgsky, as well as for the plays of Ibsen and others. His work for the ballet was no less significant, and his designs for Dance Polovtsienne and The Rite of Spring have become classics.

Poet

Roerich has been described as a poet who expressed himself through painting, but his mystical insight and innate sense of beauty expressed itself almost as readily through his pen as through his brush. At the age of 15, his poems were being published in Russian magazines under the pseudonyms of "Izgoy" and "Molodoy". Later his poetry was to be translated into other languages and circulated widely. In 1929, a collection of his poems were published under the title, Flame in Chalice.

Archaeologist

Roerich became interested in archaeology when he was a child, having noticed the Viking and Slavic burial mounds on his father's estate in Northern Russia. He excavated these and presented his findings to the Archaeological Society. His interest and knowledge developed rapidly, and he was elected to the Society even before he went to University. Eventually, he became one of the foremost archaeologists in Russia. In the early part of his life, he carried out extensive archaeological research and excavations in Russia. Later he conducted similar work in the countries of Asia.

Scientist

Prof. Roerich's work in the scientific field exceeded his archaeological researches, and his various expeditions in Asia were made for a number of scientific purposes. He was commissioned by the United States Government, for instance, to search the Gobi Desert for drought-resisting plants to help the parched land in America's Dust Bowl. In 1929, he set up the Himalayan Research Institute to serve as a base for scientific studies of the Himalayan mountain region; studies which included botany, medicine, ethnology and linguistics as well as archaeology.

Traveller and Explorer

His work led him to travel extensively in Europe, America and Asia and backwards and forwards between these continents. His Asian journeys were, perhaps, the most interesting; they were certainly the most dangerous, and on occasions Prof. Roerich and his colleagues underwent severe hardships. The 5-year expedition

through the mountain areas of Central Asia was outstanding and was the first to cross the Tibetan Highlands from North to South, from Western China to India. Roerich's expeditions sometimes encountered hostile peoples, difficult terrain and atrocious weather conditions, yet Roerich invariably continued to paint and to record his thoughts and observations in his travel diaries.

Collector

Roerich often spoke of the importance of collecting and the educational value of a carefully selected collection. He was an outstanding collector himself, and when he left Russia in 1917, his collection of Stone Age relics totalled 75,000 and his collection of master paintings exceeded 300. In the latter, his choice was based on his love for vivid expression and purity of technique, and he possessed many fine paintings of the 16th and 17th Century Flemish and Dutch Schools.

Student

Roerich, a promoter of adult education, was himself a life-long student - observant, keenly interested, always searching. When he was young, his father had wanted him to take up law, but Roerich wished to study art and archaeology which he loved. Rather than disappoint his father, Roerich decided to combine these studies - a very difficult task. Therefore, whilst attending the Faculty of Law at the University of St. Petersburg, he simultaneously attended the University's historic and philological courses, also the Institute of Archaeology and the Academy of Arts. Later he went to study abroad.

Educator

Roerich first began teaching at the age of 23, when he was appointed Professor of Archaeology at the Imperial Institute in St. Petersburg. Some years later he became Director of the School for the Encouragement of Arts in Russia. Much later, whilst in the United States, he founded the Master Institute of United Arts, at which all the arts were taught under one roof, and the Roerich Museum, the programme of which was devoted to education through beauty. Roerich had most enlightened educational ideas, and it might be said that the educational theme underlay much of his work.

Humanitarian

Roerich was a humanitarian, probably above all else, and he designed many broad plans to improve the lot of his fellow-men. His many educational and cultural activities were intended to enrich and beautify everyday life. He sought to make a direct impact on the individual - to beautify schools, factories, hospitals and prisons, to involve the general public, and to stimulate its enthusiasm for culture. Conscious of the ever-present danger of war, he worked continuously for peace and unity. In an attempt to divert attention from competition and conflict and direct it towards beauty, he started the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace campaign and went on to found the World League of Culture. He was actively associated with many progressive and idealistic causes: with cancer research, for instance, and with the women's movement, and he was always ready to speak or write or to lend his name and support.

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Lecturer

Prof. Roerich lectured extensively in Europe, America and Asia, wherever his work took him, and he often lectured in the cities where his major exhibitions were held. He spoke on a variety of subjects, ranging from art and archaeology to humanitarianism and philosophy. His listeners were attracted as much by his idealism and enlightened thinking as by his reputation as an artist and archaeologist.

Author

• He was a prolific writer and wrote innumerable articles for leading periodicals in various countries. The first volume of his collected writings was published in 1914, and his total published works include some 30 volumes, mostly dealing with cultural, philosophical and pan-human subjects. He also left a number of unpublished manuscripts when he died.

Philosopher

Much could be said about Roerich's philosophy, but above all else Roerich was a practical idealist. The basic tenets of his philosophy were, perhaps, most fully revealed in the way in which he lived his life. His was a philosophy of action, love and beauty. He worked ceaselessly; his labour being based upon selfless love and a striving towards beauty, which he knew would lead towards Divinity.

Mystic

It is readily apparent from his paintings and writings that Roerich was a deeply religious man - religious, that is, in the broadest possible sense, for he took his images from all the world's great religions and philosophies. His paintings depicted Christ and Buddha, Mahomed and Krishna, Confucius and Lao-Tze, and many other revered saints and holy men. His works show a mystic vision, which has led some to compare him with Blake, and an exalted spirituality which calls to mind Giotto and the Renaissance painters.

Prophet

Some of Roerich's paintings very interestingly showed a prophetic tendency. Like C.G. Jung, Roerich was sensitive to the dark clouds which gathered over Europe, and his paintings in the years preceeding both World Wars clearly indicated the conflicts which were to come. Other paintings indicate the coming of a more enlightened human era.

ROERICH BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES

"Your pictures profoundly moved me. They made me realise ... that Truth is infinite. When I tried to find words to describe to myself what were the ideas which your pictures suggested, I failed. It was because the language of words can only express a particular aspect of Truth ... When one art can fully be expressed by another, it is a failure. Your pictures are distinct and yet are not definable by words - your art is jealous of its independence because it is great."

Rabindranath Tagore
Letter to Nicholas Roerich 1920

"In the history of fine arts certain individuals have appeared from time to time, whose work has a unique and profound quality which differentiates them from their contemporaries, making it impossible to classify them in any known category and to ally them with any school, because they resemble themselves only - and one another, like some spaceless order of initiates. Such were Leonardo, Rembrandt, Durer, Blake and in other fields Beethoven, Balzac, Rodin ... Roerich in his character and in his art reveals himself as a member of this fraternity ...

"In Russia ... he was an important agent in organising and co-ordinating that native, new and powerful impulse which in painting, in music, in the drama and in the dance later spread throughout the civilized world.....

"Coming to America ... Roerich immediately took steps to resume and repeat the work he had inaugurated in Russia, that of uniting the arts and thus uniting men through beauty, for he believed that beauty is the universal and true solvent whereby racial and national animosities may be dissolved ...

"I mention these enterprises to show the vast sweep of Roerich's vision, to indicate his function as a prophet and a pioneer clearly focussing and quietly planning a better world order ...

"Should his prophecies come true, and should his dreams of binding humanity into a brotherhood materialise, it is for this that he will doubtless be honoured and remembered, but for us, his contemporaries, he is naturally best known as a painter of hauntingly beautiful pictures."

Claude Bragdon
Foreword to "Altai-Himalaya" 1929

"Since 1890, Nicholas Roerich through his writings, through his lectures, researches, paintings and through the many fields into which his broad personality has led him, has forceably expounded the teaching of international brotherhood ... As an artist, one of the greatest that history has produced, his paintings have illustrated the great volume of beauty and spiritual light symbolized by his teaching ... The works of Roerich have, for the last thirty years, been one of the great summons to the world for love among men."

Committee of Presentation
To Nobel Peace Prize Commission 1929

"My heartiest thanks for the magnificent work which you sent to me. I admire these creations so much that I can say without exaggeration that never have landscapes made such a great impression on me."

Albert Einstein
Letter to Roerich Museum 1931

"In this little book Professor Nicholas Roerich writes in eloquent terms about the saving power of beauty. The present condition of the world is where our cultural life is exploited by mechanical pursuits ... When it is said that beauty will save us it means that true beauty is the expression of the highest spirituality and that our lives should be lifted from a mechanical round of mere routine. I do hope this powerful book by a great seer will have the effect of rousing us to a consciousness of the vulgarity which has afflicted us and of helping us to escape from it."

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
Foreword to "Joy of Art" 1930's

"I am delighted to receive your letter and to know that your cultural colony in Naggar, Kulu, is thriving as it should. I have keenly followed your most remarkable achievements in the realm of Arts and also your great humanitarian work for the welfare of the nations of which your Peace Pact idea with a special Banner for protection of cultural treasure is a singularly effective symbol. I am very glad indeed that this Pact has been accepted at the League of Nations and I feel sure that it will have far-reaching effects on the cultural harmony of nations."

Rabindranath Tagore
Letter to Nicholas Roerich 1931

"For me a constant witness of his art, it is a source of endless amazement - this inexhaustible thought combined with daring and unexpected colour combinations! Just as remarkable is the ease and certainty with which he calls forth his images. They truly speak, live on his canvases, and very seldom has he had to change something or to abandon the first sketch. Verily, in watching the process of his work one does not know which is more amazing - the beauty of the painting or the virtuosity of its execution."

Helena Roerich
"Letters of Helena Roerich" Vol.1
1933

"In opening this pact to the adherence of the nations of the world we are endeavouring to make of universal application one of the principles vital to the preservation of modern civilization. This treaty possesses a spiritual significance far deeper than the text of the instrument itself."

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Address at Signing of "Roerich Pact"
1935

"If Pheidias was the creator of divine form, and Giotto the painter of the Soul, then Roerich may be said to reveal the spirit of Cosmos."

Barnett D. Conlan
"A Master of the Mountains" 1938

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"Nicholas Roerich has a place all his own in the world of Art. His pen too has carved out a niche for itself in the world of letters. The brush has a wider appeal no doubt, but the pen has a distinct function of its own; and in the hands of Nicholas Roerich it has for long exerted an influence which is at once elevating and instructive. A call to Beauty implies in its essentials an appreciation of the Vision which the Artist would fain share with the world at large. That the Artist's vision even when expressed in rhetoric can be quite as sincere as when it finds expression through line and colour and form is amply evidenced by what is set forth in this volume of essays. I am happy to find that in the following pages my friend Nicholas Roerich has voiced what fundamentally every sensitive mind feels about the values of Art including what is perhaps the greatest of all Arts - the Art of Living. In this he has indeed spoken for all Artists."

Abanindranath Tagore
Foreword to "Beautiful Unity" 1946

"When I think of Nicholas Roerich, I am astounded at the scope and abundance of his activities and creative genius. A great artist, a great scholar and writer, archaeologist and explorer, he touched and lighted up so many aspects of human endeavour. The very quantity is stupendous - thousands of paintings and each one of them a great work of art. When you look at these paintings, so many of the Himalayas, you seem to catch the spirit of those great mountains which have towered over the Indian plain and been our sentinels for ages past. They remind us of so much in our history, our thought, our cultural and spiritual heritage so much not merely of the India of the past but of something that is permanent and eternal about India, that we cannot help feeling a great sense of indebtedness to Nicholas Roerich who has enshrined that spirit in these magnificent canvases."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Address at Commemorative
Exhibition 1947

"Father was a great Philosopher, a constant seeker after Truth. These aspects of his life were the paramount beacons of all his creative activities. Whatever he did, whatever he has accomplished, has always been closely interlinked with his own inner attitude. His writing, like his paintings, reflect that constant inner search and realisation."

Svetoslav Roerich
"Nicholas Roerich" 1964

"It is very seldom indeed that one comes across people of the magnitude of my Father of his knowledge, vision and accomplishments. As I have often said it will take a long time before he is fully appreciated for all that he has done and for all that he intended to do. The world is in great need of his ideals ..."

Svetoslav Roerich
Letter to Nicholas Roerich Society
1973

SOME INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

Wherever Roerich went, a variety of humanitarian and cultural activities started under his stimulation. They were all of practical use and helped to spread his basic cultural message. The following were amongst them.

The International Society of Artists was founded in Chicago in April 1921, and Prof. Roerich took an active part in its founding. It was a practical movement to unite artists throughout the world - an affiliation of the creators of beauty everywhere. Roerich's stated conviction was that "art will unify humanity," and he saw the uniting of the world's artists as a positive step in that direction.

The Master Institute of United Arts, founded on 17th November, 1922, embodied Roerich's firm belief that "all arts should be united under one roof". The Institute's syllabus included classes on music, painting, sculpture, opera, ballet, and drama, and had lectures on a variety of other subjects. Students were encouraged to understand and respect crafts other than their own and to become devoted to the highest ideals in art. A group of well-known artists, musicians, and teachers joined Roerich in this enterprise.

The International Art Centre was established on 11th July, 1922, and again Roerich was the moving spirit in its founding. It was set up for the care and distribution of works of art, and its wider, educational aim was to promote the love of beauty. Its activities included arranging exhibitions, buying and selling art, assisting museums, organising expeditions and cataloguing and restoring collections. It aimed to help to establish art internationally as a common language of understanding, and to create friends of art amongst all peoples and classes. Among its many activities, it set up the Roerich Museum.

The Roerich Museum was opened in New York on 17th November, 1923. Initially it exhibited some 300 of Nicholas Roerich's paintings; later it acquired many more. The activities of the Museum developed quite rapidly, and it established a number of activities in addition to its galleries. There were, for example; a Tibetan Library; a centre for cultural activities; the Roerich Museum Press, which published Roerich's own and related books; and a programme of adult education.

The Roerich American Central Asian Expedition began in 1923 and lasted for 5 years. Led by Prof. Roerich, the expedition explored the "Heart of Asia," which included the mountain areas of India, Tibet, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Altai. The American-sponsored expedition had three objectives: firstly, to create a pictorial record - in Roerich's paintings - of the lands and peoples of Central Asia; secondly, to survey the possibilities for further archaeological explorations; and thirdly, to seek artistic and ethnographical data relating to the culture of Asiatic peoples.

The Himalayan Research Institute was set up by Prof. Roerich in Kulu, India, in 1928, after his return from the Central Asian Expedition. Built at an altitude of 6,500 feet, it acted as a base for scientific expeditions into the Himalayan mountain regions. The Institute's work included: archaeological surveys; linguistic studies; and ethnographical, botanical, and medical researches. It also had plans for the study of cosmic rays. Scientists of several nationalities went to work with Prof. Roerich, and the results of the Institute's researches were made available to universities and to institutes in a number of countries.

The Roerich Pact was an international agreement for the protection of cultural works and institutions. Believing that peace could only come through culture, Roerich proposed the Pact in order to make the peoples of the world more aware of the value of their cultural heritage and more concerned for its protection. The Pact provided that educational, artistic, religious, and scientific institutions, and all sites of cultural significance, should be respected and protected by all nations in both war and peace. On 15th April, 1935, representatives of 21 nations met with President Roosevelt in the White House to sign the Pact; it was eventually approved by 36 countries.

The Banner of Peace was a special banner designed by Roerich for the use of nations entering into the Roerich Pact. It was intended to fly over all buildings and sites to be protected. The Banner was comprised of three magenta spheres within a magenta circle, the whole on a white background - an ancient design used in a variety of cultures and therefore most appropriate. Some people interpret its symbolism as representing the past, present and future cultural achievements of humanity enclosed in the ring of eternity. Others consider that it refers to science, art, and religion held together within the circle of culture. Obviously the design may have several meanings.

SELECTIONS FROM ROERICH'S WRITINGS

On Art

"Art will unify all humanity, art is one - indivisible. Art has its many branches, yet all are one. Art is the manifestation of the coming synthesis. Art is for all. Everyone will enjoy art. The gates of the "sacred source" must be wide open for everybody, and the light of art will influence numerous hearts with a new love. At first this feeling will be unconscious, but after all it will purify human consciousness, and how many young hearts are searching for something real and beautiful! So, give it to them. Bring art to the people - where it belongs. We should have not only museums, theatres, universities, public libraries, railway stations and hospitals, but even prisons decorated and beautified. Then we shall have no more prisons."

"Paths of Blessings" 1921

Adopted as Motto of Master Institute of United Arts

On Beauty

"Humanity is facing coming events of cosmic greatness. Humanity already realises, that all occurrences are not accidental. The time for the construction of future culture is at hand. Before our eyes the revaluation of values is being witnessed. Amidst ruins of valueless banknotes, mankind has found the real value of the world's significance. The values of great art are victoriously traversing all storms of earthly commotions."

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Even the "earthly" people already understand the vital importance of active beauty. And when we proclaim: Love, Beauty and Action, we know verily that we pronounce the formula of the international language. And this formula, which now belongs to the museum and stage must enter everyday life. The sign of beauty will open all sacred gates. Beneath the sign of beauty we walk joyfully. With beauty we conquer. Through beauty we pray. In beauty we are united. And now we affirm these words - not on the snowy heights, but amidst the turmoil of the city. And realizing the path of true reality, we greet with a happy smile the future."

"Beauty and Wisdom" 1922
Adopted as Motto of the International Art
Centre

On the Protection of Art

"Art should be protected by all means. Armageddon is roaring. Art and knowledge are the corner-stones of evolution. Art and science are needed always, but in our Armageddonial days they must be especially guarded by all the power of our hearts. It is a great mistake to think that during troubled times culture can be disregarded. On the contrary the need of culture is especially felt in times of war and human misunderstandings. Outside of Art, Religion is inaccessible. Outside of Art, the spirit of Nationality is lost. Outside of Art, Science is dark. This is not an utopia. The History of Humanity gives innumerable examples of Art being the great Beacon Light in times of calamity."

"Adamant" 1924

On the Protection of Beauty

"Beauty cannot be guarded by orders and laws alone. Only when human consciousness realizes the inestimable value of beauty, creating, ennobling and refining, only then will the real treasures of humanity be safe. And one should not think that vandalisms, obvious or tacit, belong but to past ages, to some fabulous invaders and conquerors. We see vandalism of many kinds taking place even today. Therefore the endeavour to protect and save beauty is not an abstract nebulous move, but is imperative, real and undeferrable."

"The Beautiful" 1942

On the Banner of Peace

"At this time especially, humanity should concentrate all its efforts for the protection of the treasures of creative power. If the Banner of the Red Cross has not always served as a guarantee of complete security, nevertheless it has introduced into human consciousness a most powerful stimulant. Similarly true with the Banner which we propose for the protection of the treasures of culture; for although it may not always succeed in safeguarding these precious monuments, at least it will always and everywhere call to mind our indispensable duty of caring for the fruits of creative genius. It will give to the human spirit another stimulant - the stimulation of culture, the inspiration of esteem for all that concerns the evolution of humanity."

"Realm of Light" 1931

On the Central Asian Expedition

"Roerich American Expedition after many hardships has reached Himalayas. Thus ended big Central Asiatic Expedition. Many artistic and scientific results. Already sent several series of paintings to New York. Hope last sending from Mongolia safely reached you. Many observations regarding Buddhism.

"Expedition started in 1924 from Sikkim through Punjab, Kashmir, Ladak, Karakorum, Khotan, Kashgar, Karashahr, Urumchi, Irtys, Altai Mountains, Oyrot Region, Mongolia, Central Gobi, Kansu, Tsaidam, Tibet.

"Peaceful American flag encircled Central Asia. Everywhere warmly greeted except Khotan and Lhasa Governments. Further movement Expedition from Khotan assisted by British Consul at Kashgar. On Tibetan territory have been attacked by armed robbers. Superiority of our firearms prevented bloodshed. In spite of Tibetan passports Expedition forcibly stopped by Tibetan authorities on Oct. 6, two days north of Nagchu. With inhuman cruelty Expedition has been detained for five months at altitude of 15,000 feet in summer tents amidst severe cold about 40 degrees below Centigrade.

"Expedition suffered from want of fuel and fodder. During stay in Tibet five men, Mongols, Buriats and Tibetans died and ninety caravan animals perished. By order of authorities all letters and wires addressed to Lhasa Government and Calcutta British authorities seized. Forbidden to buy foodstuffs from population. Money and medicines came to an end. The presence of three women in caravan and medical certificate about heart weakness not taken into consideration. With great difficulties on March 4, Expedition started southward. All nine European members of Expedition safe. Courageously bore hardships of exceptionally severe Winter. Greetings."

Telegram from Prof. Roerich
On completion of Expedition 1928

On the Himalayan Research Institute

"... the Kulu Valley ... is an exceptional locality of which the scientific significance only now begins to make itself felt in the richest of material. This is true in its historic, archaeological and philological aspects, as also in its botanical, geological and physical character ...

"... we must again stress the special fitness of the place chosen for the Himalayan Research Institute, because the scourge of humanity, cancer, is almost unknown here in the Himalayas and besides Tibetan medicine from time immemorial has in its keeping remedies against cancer and tuberculosis which have been used with success. Of course such remedies must be investigated in the most careful and impartial way.

"The soil of the Himalayan valleys is distinguished by an unusual fertility, which permits a great variety of vegetation all the way from Alpine flora to almost tropical vegetation. As was shown by our early collections of local vegetation, there are many new species.

"Before us is the task of setting up an electrical plant and the equipment of a bio-chemical laboratory with a department for cancer research. Where is there a better place to study cancer than in a locality where it is altogether unknown, as it is here in the Himalayas."

"Fiery Stronghold" 1931

On "The Rite of Spring" and Stravinsky

"In my Diary, I have found a page dedicated to the production of Le Sacre du Printemps: 'Eighteen years have elapsed since with Stravinsky we sat in the colourful fairy-house, Talashkino in Smolensk, the estate of Princess Tenisheff, working on the Schema of Sacre du Printemps.' And Princess Tenisheff asked us to write on the beams of this multi-coloured house some excerpts from Sacre as a memento. Probably even now some fragments of our inscriptions remain there. But who knows if the present inhabitants of this house realize what is written there upon the beams?

" '... Princess Tenisheff ... has already passed away. Nijinsky is no longer with us and already Diaghileff rejoices in higher spheres.

" ' And still Sacre is new and the young ones are accepting Sacre as a new conception, and perhaps the eternal novelty of the Sacre is because spring is eternal, and love is eternal, and sacrifice is eternal. Thus in this new conception, Stravinsky touches the eternal in music. He was modern because he evoked the future, it is the great serpent ring touching the great past.' "

"The Eternal Garment" 1940's

FRAGMENTS OF INFORMATION

Roerich's Books

The following are amongst Roerich's published volumes:

- ** Art - A Predominant Factor in Archaeology St.Petersburg, 1898.
Lectures at the Archaeological Institute.
- ** Old Treasures St.Petersburg, 1898.
Journal of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts.
- ** Sacred Signs St.Petersburg, 1904.
A collection of Roerich's poems.
- ** Russian Art London, 1920.
Proceedings of the Anglo-Russian Society.
- ** Adamant. New York, 1924.
A collection of artistic and philosophical essays.
- ** Altai-Himalaya New York, 1929.
A travel diary - record of the Central Asian Expedition.
- ** Shambhala - The Resplendant New York, 1930
A subjective record of the Central Asian Expedition.
- ** Beautiful Unity Bombay, 1946
A collection of cultural essays.

Related Books

There is a vast international bibliography relating to Nicholas Roerich and his work. It includes the following titles:

- ** The World of Roerich by Nina Selivanova
Biographical details 1874 to 1923. New York, 1924.

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- ** Trails to Inmost Asia by Dr. George N. Roerich
A record of the Central Asian Expedition. Yale, 1931.
- ** Journal of Urusvati by Himalayan Research Institute
Details of activities. New York, 1931 to 1933.
- ** Nicholas Roerich - A Master of the Mountains by Barnett D. Conlan
An appraisal of Nicholas Roerich and his art. Indiana, 1938.
- ** The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace by Roerich Pact Committee
An historical record of the Pact. New York, 1947.
- ** Nicholas Roerich by Sina Fosdick
A short biography. New York, 1964.

Series of Paintings

Roerich produced many separate series of paintings. Each series comprised pictures painted during the same period and focusing on a unifying theme. The following are examples:

- 1903 - Architectural Studies
75 sketches from journeys through Russia.
- 1906 - Sketches from Trips
12 sketches made in Italy and Switzerland.
- 1917 - Karelia Series
8 pictures in oil painted in Europe.
- 1922 - Sancta Series
7 pictures in tempera painted in America.
- 1922 - Ocean Series
15 pictures in tempera painted in America.
- 1924 - His Country
12 pictures in tempera painted in Central Asia.
- 1924 - Himalaya Series
41 pictures in tempera painted in Central Asia.
- 1925 - Maitreya Series
7 pictures in tempera painted in Central Asia.

Galleries and Museums

It is said that there is hardly a major art gallery in the Soviet Union or a major city in the world that does not possess at least one Roerich painting. The largest collections of all are in the Soviet Union, the United States and India. The following museums are amongst those possessing substantial collections:

- ** Allahabad Museum, Allahabad, India.
- ** Benares Museum, Benares, India. *TRIVANDRUM MUSEUM - KERALA*
- ** Gorky State Art Museum, Gorky, U.S.S.R.
- ** Nicholas Roerich Museum, New York, U.S.A.
- ** Novosibirsk Regional Gallery, Novosibirsk, U.S.S.R.
- ** Oakland Art Museum, California, U.S.A.
- ** Roerich Museum, Naggar, Kulu, India.
- ** State Russian Museum, Leningrad, U.S.S.R.
- ** State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Roerich's Stage Designs

The following are among the various productions for which Roerich designed:

- | | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------|---|
| 1907 | - | <u>The Valkyrie</u> | (Wagner) The Imperial Opera, Moscow. |
| 1908 | - | <u>Snow Maiden</u> | (Rimsky-Korsakov) The Opera Comique, Paris. |
| 1909 | - | <u>Prince Igor</u> | (Borodin) The Diaghilev Theatre, Paris. |
| 1911 | - | <u>Peer Gynt</u> | (Ibsen) The Art Theatre, Moscow. |
| 1912 | - | <u>Tristan and Isolde</u> | (Wagner) The Zimine Theatre, Moscow. |
| 1913 | - | <u>The Rite of Spring</u> | (Stravinsky and Roerich) The Diaghilev Theatre, Paris. |
| 1913 | - | <u>Princess Maleine</u> | (Maeterlink) The Liberal Theatre, Moscow. |
| 1914 | - | <u>Sister Beatrice</u> | (Maeterlink) The Art Theatre, Moscow. |
| 1920 | - | <u>Snow Maiden</u> | (Rimsky-Korsakov) The Royal Opera, London. |
| 1930 | - | <u>The Rite of Spring</u> | (Stravinsky and Roerich) The Metropolitan Opera, New York. |

Tribute to Roerich's Work

Roerich was honoured by many countries, their Governments, their learned bodies and societies. The breadth of his activities led to an interesting variety.

He was, for instance, made a Commander 1st Class of both the Yugoslavian Order of St. Sava and the Swedish Order of the Polar Star; a fellow of both the Russian Academy of Art and the Italian Academy of Science and Literature; a member of the Autumn Salon, the Legion of Honour and the Red Cross in France; and a Vice-President of both the Institute of Archaeology and the Mark Twain Society in the United States.

It would take several pages to list them all.

SOME CHRONOLOGICAL DETAILS

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1874 | - | Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, on 9th October |
| 1896 | - | Graduated from University of St. Petersburg |
| 1897 | - | First major painting, <u>The Messenger</u> , won public acclaim |
| 1898 | - | Became Professor of Archaeology and Editor of <u>Art</u> magazine |
| 1899 | - | Organised first exhibition of American art in Russia |
| 1901 | - | Married Helena Shaposhnikoff Elected Secretary of Society for the Encouragement of Arts |
| 1904 | - | Led campaign for preservation of ancient Russian cities |

- 1906 - Completed mosaics in Golubieff Chapel in Kieff
- 1909 - Began collection of master paintings
- 1910 - Elected President of Mir Isskussta (World of Art)
Conducted excavations of Novgorod Kremlin
- 1912 - Collaborated with Stravinsky in composing
The Rite of Spring
- 1914 - First volume of collected writings published
- 1915 - Completed murals for Moscow Kazan Railway Station
- 1916 - Prepared for extensive world tour of exhibitions and lectures
- 1920 - Designed settings for Snow Maiden at Covent Garden in London
- 1921 - Founded Master Institute of United Arts in New York
- 1922 - Founded International Art Centre in New York
- 1923 - Roerich Museum opened in New York
- 1924 - Led the 5-year Roerich American Central Asian Expedition
- 1929 - Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace campaign launched
Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize
Set up the Himalayan Research Institute
Book of poems, Flame in Chalice, published
- 1930 - Roerich Pact endorsed at League of Nations
- 1931 - First International Convention on Roerich Pact
held in Belgium
Founded World League of Culture
- 1932 - Roerich Foundation for Peace, Art, Science and Labour founded
- 1934 - Led scientific expedition into Mongolia
- 1935 - 21 nations sign the Roerich Pact in the White House
- 1947 - Died in Naggar, Kulu, India on 13th December

ROERICH IN ENGLAND

Roerich visited England for the first time in 1906, and the first British exhibition of his paintings was held in London in 1909. There was another London exhibition in 1912.

He came to London again in 1919 and this time stayed for almost a year. Roerich, his wife and their two sons lived at 25, Queen's Gate Terrace in Kensington, quite close to the Albert Hall. His sons continued their studies at London University.

Whilst in England, he carried out commissions for several people, including Sir Thomas Beecham. At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, he restored the stage settings for Prince Igor - having been used by Diaghilev in 500 performances they were in need of renovation. He also designed the sketches for Snow Maiden, Czar Saltan and Sadko.

In May 1920, an exhibition of Roerich's paintings entitled Spells of Russia was held at the Gupil Gallery in London. H.G. Wells was a member of the Honorary Committee sponsoring it. The exhibition was well received and one critic, Herbert Root, Director of the London Public Library, described Roerich as "the strongest personality in modern art".

Spells of Russia was also shown in Worthing and Leeds. There were invitations from other British cities - Liverpool, Edinburgh and Sheffield - but these could not be accepted as Roerich had made plans to go to America.

Whilst he was in England, Roerich's paintings were acquired by one or two public galleries and a number of private collectors. Today, his paintings, Northern Landscape and Polovetsky Stan may be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; The Dragon and the Crown may be seen at the Worthing Museum; and Human Forefathers may be seen at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

Further information may be obtained from:

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