




Vol.2 No.2 February 1985

# Faír

Rs.4

The image is a horizontal rectangular photograph with a monochromatic blue color scheme. The upper portion of the image is a clear, uniform blue sky. The lower portion features the dark silhouettes of various plants, including tall, thin stalks and clusters of small, round flowers or seed pods. The text is printed in white, serif, all-caps font on the right side of the image.

THE NAME IS THE LEGEND  
OWNERSHIP A PRIVILEGE



profile

# SVETOSLAV ROERICH

By CHAMPAKA BASU

Svetoslav Roerich's works of art are powerful and realistic. They reveal a mastery of technique, imagination and spiritual insight, a combination which has a lasting effect on those who see them.

Svetoslav Roerich, scion of an illustrious family, is a remarkable personality in his own right. Erudite and extensively travelled, deep thinking and religious, he is an artist, a botanist, a scientist and an archeologist, and a man of peace and enlightenment, the core of whose existence is humanism.



Photographs: Abhijit Basu



side of the story in this letter.

I've never really been a great one for pets. I'm simply not the sort of girl whom dogs and cats turn to in joyful recognition while one scratches their ears (or whatever it is one scratches) murmuring coochie-coos the while. No, animals and I had this wary coexistence at a respectful distance, something like Britain and Argentina, a mutual "hands-off" policy.

Until my own version of the Falklands occurred, and my territorial integrity was definitely and unmistakably violated; and that's the time I started loathing pets. Let

me tell you about it in a few words. There I was, outside this great big mansion from where I had to pick up an aunt. Somehow in the confusion of finding a parking place, dropping the car keys in, would you believe, a grating, and nearly losing them in the process, I must have walked through the wrong gate. Not only was I on the side of the road opposite to where I should have been, I missed the main entrance over which, I later learned, a sign saying "Beware of Dogs" was hung.

Well, I walked to the verandah in search of the door, and there, my dear, were these four dirty great Alsatians. Magnificent animals, I must admit, draped over rugs and mats, basking in the winter sunshine. The moment they saw me advancing across the lawn, they leapt to their collective feet, and started padding towards me. A friendly doggy greeting, I thought to myself, but was I wrong! Before I knew what was what, they had broken out into an assortment of loud barks (a distinctly hostile sound, let me add) and the next moment, they were all over me. There were ripping sounds as paws shredded my sari, shrieks (which could only have been mine) and I felt red-hot tracks open up on the backs of my calves. There was a shout from behind: "Get down! Down, I say!" and suddenly there were no more slavering tongues and bared fangs, no more claws scraping across me, and the beasts fell away. The same voice continued: "You dreadful

brute! What do you mean by doing a stupid thing like that?!"

Reason at last, I said to myself as I turned gratefully to my rescuer. But no. This last remark was addressed to *me*, and the person was a female whose formidable proportions were clothed in loudly-checked trousers. "How dare you come in like this! Didn't you read the sign outside? My dogs are so highly strung, you've shattered their nerves and put them off their food." She turned to her beasts and spoke to them tenderly. "My poor darlings, come to Mamma! Did the big nasty brute hurt you then?"

Well, darling, I ask you. There was poor little five-foot-nothing me practically clawed asunder by these monstrous hulks, and this woman had the nerve to ask if *they* were hurt! I left her and her beasts to slaver over each other as I retreated, weeping with shock, pain and fright, clutching the remains of my sari to me.

Can one ever forget something like that? Is it any wonder that I used to quiver with apprehension when I was alone in a room with someone's dog or cat? Even the sight of some little pussy cat yawning and showing all those sharp teeth would make me shudder with fear. And when I encountered distinctly unfriendly types, the kinds who hiss, yowl, spit or snap at you, I'd run a mile. It took a long, long time to recover, and I'm not sure that I've completely got over it even now.

But along the way I started noticing certain things. Such as some pet owners seem to care more for animals than for human beings, and they'd spend small fortunes on food or whatever for their little darlings, but wouldn't pay a bean to charity to help a starving man. And some adopt an unabashed "Love me, love my dog," principle, like the lady who smiled unblushingly and indulgently while her parrot spewed the most dreadful obscenities at me, and even nipped my finger with his curved beak, the little devil. Or a friend who came to visit with her two-week-old puppy. "Isn't he the cutest darling!" she exclaimed enthusiastically as the wretch performed an unmentionable act on the sofa, and I watched a yellow stain settle indelibly into my best brocade upholstery.

No, pets are not for me. Noisy, unrestrained, hostile, always drooling at one end and leaking at the other. That's why when your little Siamese cat leapt on my shoulder the other day I reacted so violently. Now you know I didn't mean to, darling, but when I felt those claws digging into my skin, and those whiskers and sharp teeth just millimetres away from my face, I felt the old fear all over again. That's why I shrieked and flung little Frou-frou to the ground. I didn't mean to hurt her, honest, and I'm sorry about her headache, but really darling, you must understand. Don't be in a pet, pet!

All my love, A.

SCORPIO





# What's in a handshake?

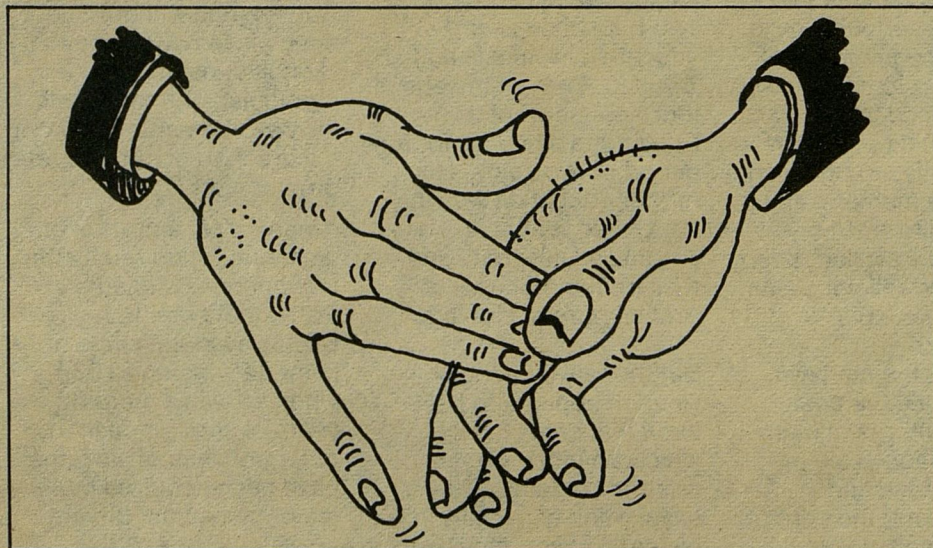
By JANE SHERROD SINGER Illustrated by Veera Rattanakaosal

"I love a hand that meets my own with a grasp that causes some sensation of warmth and friendship."

*F.S. Osgood (an obscure American poet).*

## The Finger-Duster

The person who brushes your hand with his fingertips, never really shaking hands at all, is very often introverted and ill at ease. Women tend to use this gesture more than men, often because they feel that it is dainty, especially when they are meeting a man for the first time. Studies have produced another interesting fact about many finger-dusters, both men and women, going back to their earliest upbringing. They are often the products of homes which constantly preached the dangers of dirt, germs and the necessity to wash hands frequently. In this regard, some have also been led to speculate as to whether certain forms of respectful greetings in the East, such as the Indian namaste, the Thai wai or Japanese bow may, apart from their cultural origins, also have more practical, hygiene-related ramifications in their emphasis on non-contact.



The Western custom of handshaking goes back to the ancient Romans, who used to grasp the wrists of those they met in order to detect whether or not daggers strapped to forearms were hidden beneath their togas. Today, we extend our hands in a gesture of friendship rather than fear.

At the turn of the century, women seldom extended their hands except to receive a delicate kiss on the fingertips. Not so today—women shake hands with men and women alike.

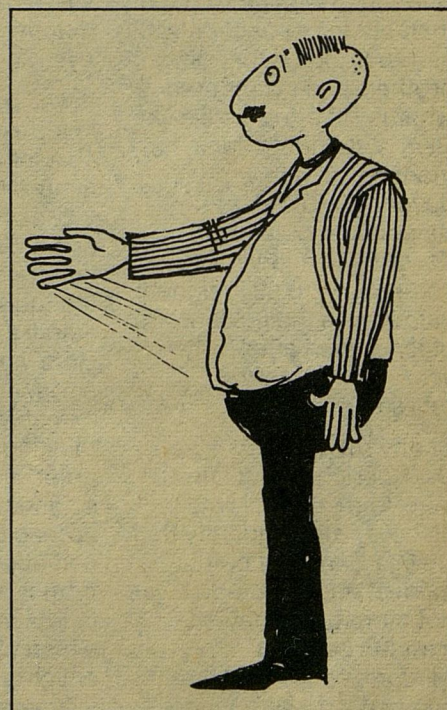
Moreover, both sexes reveal some distinct personality trait in the way they perform this aspect of social and business etiquette.

The illustrations in this text depict men but the characteristics are equally true for women as well. Think carefully about how you, your friends and associates shake hands. Then select the picture below that best describes the person you have in mind.

## The Eager-Handed

This is the person who thrusts his hand out at you first. Usually very friendly, dependable and self-assured, the overt handshake is common among people who are successful in business and politics. The only danger is that sometimes they prove over-

confident or too ambitious. They are usually highly active and, if not careful, can quickly exhaust some of their less outgoing friends.



ho

Re  
Ta

By M.  
Presiden



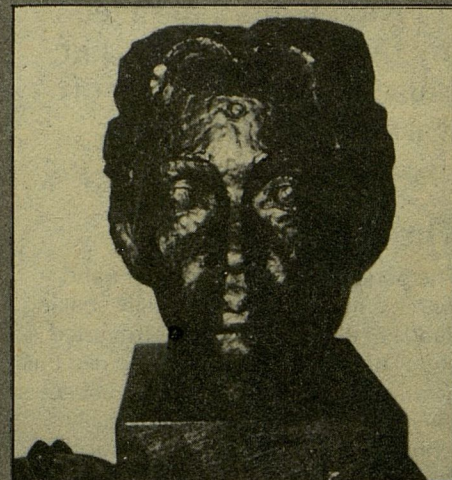
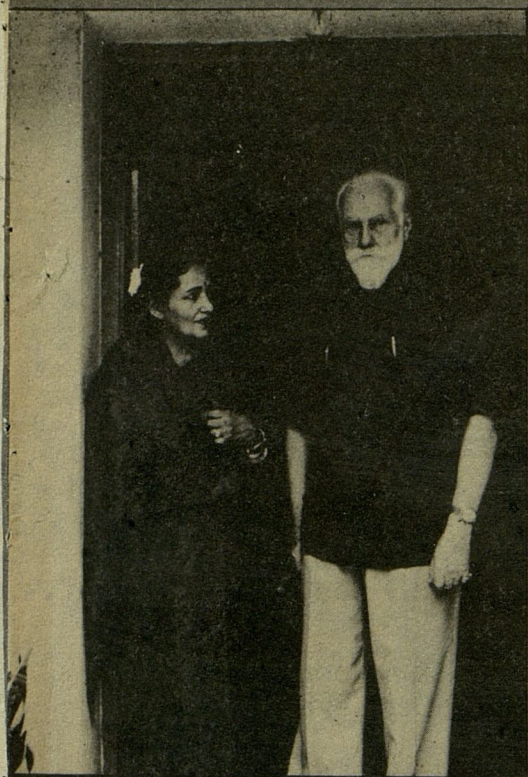
Q. How  
burden?  
A. One  
by evad  
Evasion  
come is  
or later,

Q. Is th  
heavy t  
concea  
A. The i  
mittedly  
was ask  
he was  
honest  
the hig  
may hav  
cent to  
govern  
surchar

Q. But i  
regular  
A. No. V  
sion an  
taxes is  
the bur  
when th  
eroding  
earnere  
vantage  
imum n  
which t  
all, a ru

Q. I ful  
A. You  
The In  
under  
one su





The greatest impact of Roerich's works of art is the use of colour. Used at its most vivid, it dazzles the beholder, "But," says Svetoslav Roerich, "there is no colour bright enough to paint life."

When I first approached Devika Rani, queen of the silver screen, for an interview, she was very insistent that it would be more worth my while to meet her husband rather than her. Though one had heard of Svetoslav Roerich, it was more often than not in connection with his illustrious father or brother, and I wondered whether to attribute Devika Rani's attitude to false modesty or wifely devotion. How else, I reasoned, could one describe this feeling in someone who still reigned supreme in the fickle world of films even after forty years of voluntary retirement?

At any rate, it was Dr. Roerich whom I first met. And though I was to discover subsequently that Devika Rani was both modest and devoted, it was not more than a few minutes before I recognised the fact that she had spoken no more

than the absolute truth when she described her husband as 'a remarkable man'. As Svetoslav Roerich walked into the room, one could not fail to be impressed by his personality. Here was a presence, tall, well-built, silver-haired, with a gentle manner and a twinkle in his eye.

It was perhaps the twinkle in his eye that revealed him as a man who did not take himself too seriously. And yet, as he began to speak, and a picture of him slowly emerged, it became clear that he would have been amply justified in doing so. Here was a man of many parts, erudite and extensively travelled, deep thinking and religious—an artist, a botanist, a scientist and an archeologist, a man who had absorbed the best from the cultures of many lands, and above all, a man of peace and enlightenment, the core of whose existence was

humanism.

"We must be interested in everything and everyone," he himself says, as if in explanation of his credo, "We must not shut our minds to anything."

Clearly, the sort of education that Svetoslav Roerich received had a considerable effect in shaping him into the man he is today. Born in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) in Russia in 1904, he had his early education in Russia and Sweden. Then at the age of fourteen, he went to England to study art for a period of two years. His further education was in the United States at Columbia University and the Graduate School of Architecture at Harvard.

But the real influence on Roerich appears to have been that of his family. "I was born into a very remarkable family," he says, "and especially in my early years, they were

a source of great support and encouragement to me." His mother, Elena, he describes as a gracious and beautiful woman, deeply religious and philosophical. His brother, George, who died in 1961, was a Tibetan scholar and linguist, whose Russian-English-Tibetan dictionary has just been published in eleven volumes. But the greatest single influence on the life of Svetoslav Roerich has without doubt been his famous father Nicholas, painter, writer, Indologist, and to put it in his devoted son's words, "a great artist but an even greater man."

It was in fact a portrait of his father, acquired by the Luxembourg Museum in Paris, that admitted Svetoslav to the circle of immortals in June 1936, when he was a mere 32 years of age. Since then, other portraits of his father have been acquired by major museums, private (contd. on pg. 54)



(Contd. from page 45)

collections and galleries all over the world. Svetoslav Roerich describes himself as his father's principal pupil. He was also his constant collaborator in numerous cultural organisations, and today, after his father's death, he is a trustee of the Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York.

But Svetoslav Roerich is also very much his own man. And though he may have been cast in his father's mould, he has 'made it' in his own right. Awards and commendations, have been plentiful and have included the Padma Bhushan, and various honours from Bulgaria and the USSR. The Heritage Museum in Leningrad has further honoured him by bringing out a folder containing twenty reproductions of his paintings. Recently, to commemorate his 80th birthday, an impressive exhibition of his work was mounted, to travel extensively and be brought back to Moscow this year. In addition, in a signal honour, a Soviet Czechoslovak group of climbers accomplished last year the ascent of a peak in the Altai Mountains in the USSR which they named the Svetoslav Roerich Peak, leaving at the summit a reproduction of one of his paintings that signified through his art, the triumph of humanism, peace and beauty on earth. Interestingly, and appropriately, since the ties of the family were so strong, this peak is one of a complex of summits that have already been named

after Elena, Nicholas and George Roerich.

What are Svetoslav Roerich's paintings like? To see them in Bangalore, one has to travel 18 km. to the 143-year old farmhouse where he and Devika Rani live when they are in the city. And there, in a bright, sun-lit studio that has specially been built off the farmhouse, Roerich will set up painting after painting on a large easel. The paintings are powerful and realistic. They reveal a mastery of technique, imagination and spiritual insight, a combination which, as Jawaharlal Nehru put it when he inaugurated an exhibition of Roerich's paintings in New Delhi in 1960, has a lasting effect on the minds of those who see them. The portraits are true to life, evidence of the artist's own view that "a portrait *must* look like the person." But the greatest impact is Roerich's use of colour. Used at its most vivid, it dazzles the beholder, particularly as one landscape is replaced by another on the giant easel. "But," says Svetoslav Roerich, "there is no colour bright enough to paint life."

A great deal of the inspiration for his work comes from his all-abiding love of nature. Certainly one notices the sylvan beauty of the Roerich's estate near Bangalore where a feeling of peace and timelessness pervades. Standing sentinel over the creeper-clad quaint old cottage is an ancient banyan tree, the deity Muneshwara enshrined beneath its great canopy. As one

walks down the euphoria edged path to a lake at the bottom of the farm, Dr. Roerich tells you about the gnarled old trees around. They are lineloe, he says, brought in originally from Mexico. On their branches are figures; workers who pick the berries and sell them to the Roerichs. These are then processed for their essential oils and sold to soap manufacturers to be used as a fixative.

But Dr. Roerich's keen botanical interest is really fulfilled in Naggar, Kulu, where his wife and he spend several months each year. Says his proud wife, "He is the only living person who knows all about the Himalayan herbs and medicinal plants." Be that as it may, there is little doubt that Svetoslav Roerich is an authority on these plants. "Herbs here," he explains, "are traditionally important but not scientifically studied." He himself is now engaged in growing the ginseng plant, considered a universal panacea. While ginseng is used extensively in China and made scientifically into tablets and so on, no work has been done on it in the Himalayas. Arabian Pseudoginseng, however, Roerich continues, grows on the eastern Himalayas, and since it is the same basic plant, he is trying to grow it in Kulu.

Kulu, for the Roerichs also means the Research Centre for Indology, yet another interest, if not a passion. It is this deep interest in Indian culture and art that has prompted him to participate in the newly set up Chitra

Parishad Complex in Bangalore, of which he is now a trustee, and in various other cultural pursuits. That he is totally involved with the country of his adoption is very obvious. This involvement perhaps started when he read Ramakrishna's writings as a boy of nine to have them stay with him all his life. At any rate, he first came to India in 1923, and when he returned in 1928, it was to a great feeling of homecoming. "As I came off the boat in Bombay," he reminisces, "I was filled with a feeling of having come back to something so familiar and near to me, as if I had returned to the soil I knew so well." The ties with India are now so strong that they cannot be broken. Apart from his very happy marriage to Devika Rani in 1945, his mother's grave is in Kalimpong. But he puts it differently. "I love India," he says, "because of the infinite variety of various aspects of the country."

In the mean time, in his calm and gentle manner, he proceeds with the multifaceted fabric of his life. Devika Rani and he are always together, bound by the common interests that drew them together in the first place, each famous in his or her own right, both untouched by it. He remembers his father's words that "art will unify humanity" and on art he concentrates. But whether through painting, writing, growing herbs or just speaking, the main force in Svetoslav Roerich's life continues to be a love of humanity, and the desire to bring peace and understanding.

Marrying a rich man. The law says you have to prove a need to protect you, the prospective wife, from a contract of divorce.

'The rich man's mate was equal to him there and there'

Also, it means a rich man's mate. Ask any man, he would accept and you get the response. David D. of rich women accept that. Mmmm... mean, that joy together.

There are judges who begin with the owner of the house where lush and luscious people don't dinner any of them, from our state marry a woman who says it to get over another to ahead and

Won't

Not if you from you

It's true. P. vian, a N. himself, a few weeks women to widow, ve thing she find out w

A rich lady just anyone not only girlfriends lady who she so ch



Although the white frames along the walls of the sitting room appear to be of structural significance, they are purely decorative details which give some distinction to the pared-down simplicity of the room.

*In contrast to the classic lines of the dining and morning rooms, the den is designed on thoroughly modern lines.*

The den is a minor version of a split level which adds interest to an otherwise thoroughly modern room. The raised sitting area and the sharp shades of the patterned carpet provide a sense of separation from the study a few steps below.

