

He shared with us some of his thoughts about the Himalayas and how they have been a source of inspiration to him in his life and work.

* From your paintings it appears that the Himalayas have been a major source of inspiration to you. What is so unique about these mountains? How are they different from other mountain ranges of the world? How have they inspired you?

When you think of these mighty ranges you are moved by the Beauty they evoke, ever-changing and ever-new in their infinite moods. Is it not here that great Teachings were born? Is it not here that great art was conceived and the beautiful images enriched the world and inspired men?

How to describe the Himalayas? How to find adequate words to convey their innermost beauty and significance? The very subject is so vast that one cannot do justice in a few sentences. No matter from what angle you view these great summits, no matter which particular aspect you want to describe and evaluate, you will always find something new, something infinitely important and significant.

If you approach these great Ranges with the thought that great Teachings and Systems of Thought were conceived and developed here, you will undoubtedly feel the rays of these thoughts.

The Himalayas are the greatest mountain range in the world. The very fact that it is the greatest mountain range makes it unique. Geographically it is so situated that it partakes from the Arctic to the Tropical and Sub-Tropical climates, which immensely enriches all its wonderful valleys, peaks and meadows. Extremely rich in flora and fauna these mountains contain an unlimited wealth of minerals. Much remains to be discovered.

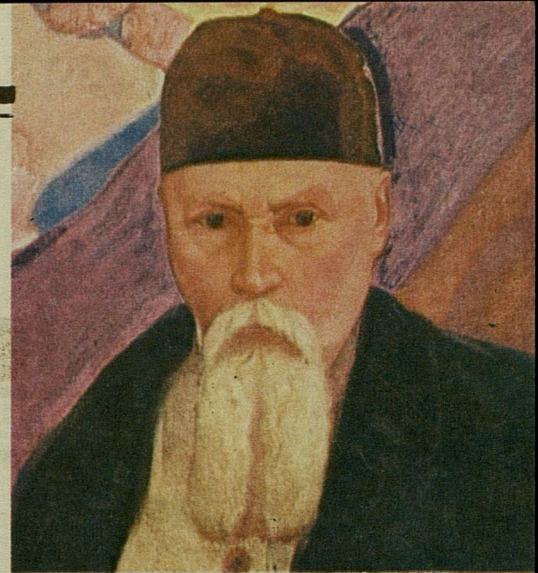
There is another aspect, the aspect of 'Thought'. What truly

makes a place important is its spiritual message which it contains and conveys. The Himalayas carry a wonderful imprint of the thought that was generated for thousands of years by the greatest men, the Rishis of ancient India. We know that thought lives. Here we come directly under the radiation of that Eternal Thought which these heights reflect back to us in a wonderful way. Hence the Himalayas contain a treasure of great ideas and energy imprinted upon their slopes and sacred peaks. Only those who are truly sensitive can feel and receive these vibrations. I have travelled widely and seen several other mountain ranges in the world which are also beautiful, but they haven't got all that concentrated wealth of the Himalayas. They haven't got the Spiritual Presence of the Himalayas and that makes all the difference.

* When did you first see the Himalayas?

That was in 1924, sixty-two years ago. We saw the Eastern mountains as we came through Darjeeling and Sikkim. Pandim, Kanchenjunga, Kabru and Janu—they are most beautiful at all time of the year, at all time of the day. Later we travelled throughout the Himalayas and I have not found in my life any place that could compare to the beauty of these glorious mountains. Not only the transcendental aspect, but even the physical aspect makes you feel elevated. Contemplating those peaks your thoughts purify.

When we go to a place, we should prepare ourselves to see what that place can give us. It is through appreciation coming through knowledge that we really imbibe all that is best about a place and we leave that place enriched. Anyone who is searching after the true meaning of life, will find in the Himalayas all the answers to his questions. When you go to the Himalayas, prepare yourself, open your heart and consciousness to them, rise higher.




Nicholas Roerich—
Portrait by Dr. Svetoslav Roerich

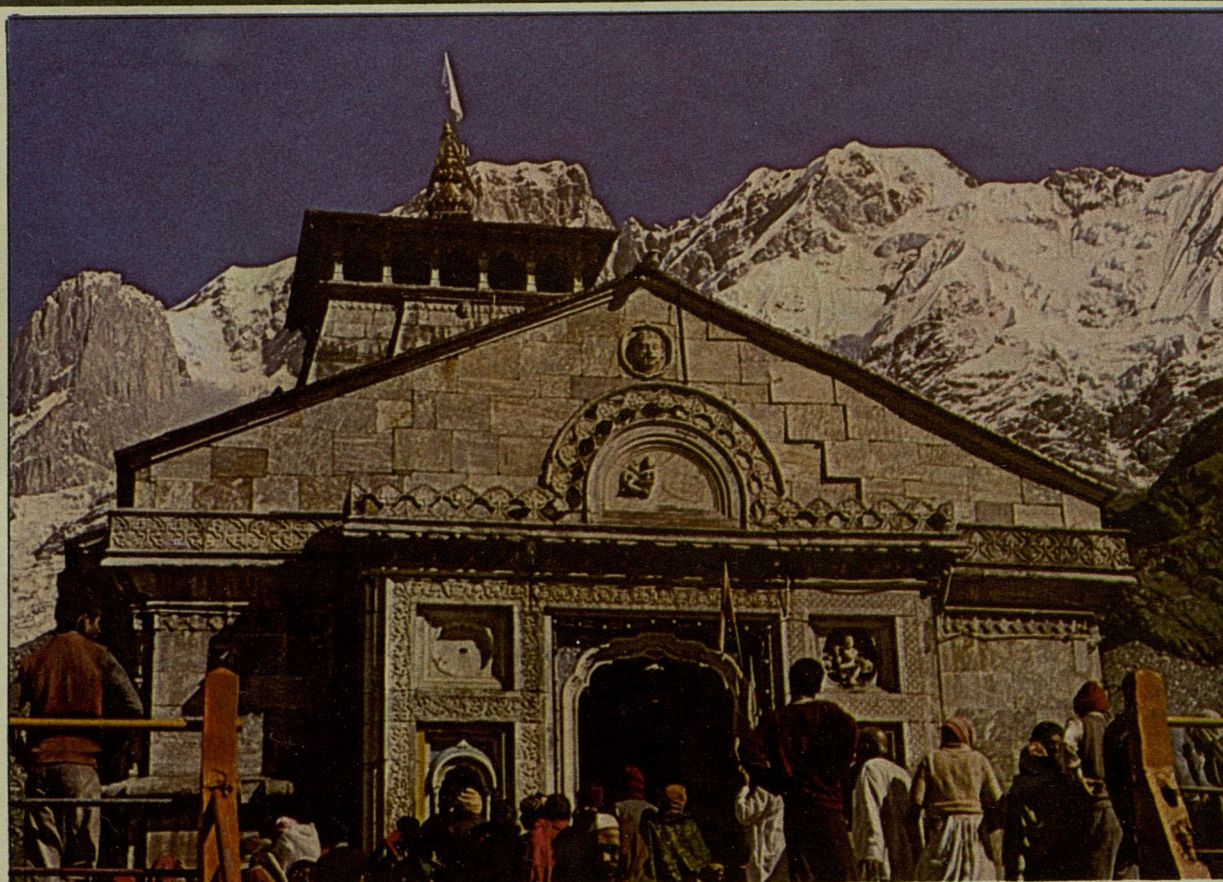
* The Himalayas occupy a very significant place in your and your father's works. You have painted hundreds of paintings of these mountains in their infinite splendour—always glowing with a celestial Beauty. Did your approach differ from your father's and if so, in what way?

No, basically our approach was identical because we were both interested in the inner meaning of the Himalayas, the Teachings that were born in and around the Himalayas. Our receiving the Beauty of the Himalayas was common to my father and I, except one thing, perhaps. Since I was always interested in portraits I have painted more of the inhabitants of these mountains. Somebody writing of my art, comparing me to my father, said that I move man to the centre of my cosmos, which is true. Father's was a vast panorama of what the Himalayas, the mountains, the Teachings, stood for.

* In your early days did you know that you would one day be so deeply associated with the Himalayas?

Both my mother and father were greatly interested in Indian philosophy. So when I was quite small, about eight years, I was already reading the books of Ramakrishna which were translated into Russian. That was at the beginning of the century. Hence there was in us always a great striving towards Indian thought and philosophy.

Truly, the Himalayas are the abode of Spiritual Light. 



AT THE FOOT OF KEDAR PEAK

Text and Pictures by JOHN TATE

SHIVA! The Lord of the Himalayas, the ascetic and lover, the intoxicated Lord of Dance, is no-where as close to man as at Kedarnath, at the foot of the Kedar peak, high in the Himalayas.

The silence was heavy in our ears, like the roar of the rain-swollen river below, as we crouched in the low smoky tea-shop under a slate roof in the rain. For twelve hours the bus had raced into the mountains, and now, dizzy with movement, we watched the mountain people blow the damp wood into smoky flame, and thankfully sipped warm tea, as an endless stream of pilgrims, blanketed against the rain, passed up and down the muddy stones of the narrow path outside. Already, here at Gauri-

kund was a new excitement, a new wonder!

Gaurikund lies at the beginning of the modern pilgrimage to Kedarnath, but until the bus road reached it some years ago it was just one of the many shrines along the pilgrim tracks of the Himalayas. According to legend, Gauri, the consort of Lord Shiva, was sitting in the pool of piping hot mineral water when the five Pandava brothers, stumbled through the forest. She fled, but the bath is still hot, a tank of grey stone slabs set out in the open, with boiling water steaming from the mineral-encrusted bronze bull's mouth. A wonderful place to relax, the aches and pains of the journey are drained from the body. A contemplative place where the mind floats like the steam across the hypnotic ripples

of the water's smooth surface.

The Pandava brothers are very much a part of the Kedarnath legend. They were looking for Shiva when they came to Gaurikund. Shiva appeared only momentarily before them and freed from the burden of their sins, they continued in their ascent to heaven. Purified and lightened by our hot bath at Gaurikund, we set out in bright sunshine the next morning, a welcome surprise after a week of rain. The sky was deep blue, and the forest on the steep slopes of the narrow valley was a dense green, fresh with recent rain. Below us on the right, the Mandakini river leaped over its rocky bed, beating white foam around its boulders, and filling the air with its roar. All along the way we saw our fellow pilgrims, peo-



The intellectuals ought to reflect on the manifold attack by decadent, reactionary and outright deceptive values on the minds of the masses. Has any group of sociologists studied the impact of the aggressive, western-style advertisement given out by our TV on its newly cultivated suburban and rural audience—its contribution in breeding false needs among the already needy and at least some of them shifting the burden of satisfying their newly stimulated needs to their prospective brides' parents? Has anybody observed the impact of the couples of ad-starlets hugging each other in cosy beds on the minds of rural audience constituted of grandpa, grandma, father, mother and all the kids?

The TV may signify technological progress, but it is not *progress* proper. It is only a *means* of satisfaction. It can be used to satisfy false, lower and base needs, it can also be used to satisfy intellectual, aesthetic and higher needs. Will the intellectuals gird up their loins to protect the *means* from its misuse by decadent minds?

THE HERITAGE IN 1987

Many readers have suggested, directly or indirectly, that THE HERITAGE should stick to its present format. They are satisfied with its content-pattern and they will not like any major departure from it.

We have no reason to make any departure either. We, however, propose to strive for making the magazine more purposeful and bringing in greater variety.

We propose to present stories or novelettes by India's foremost writers, with reminiscences on them written by their sons or daughters or the nearest ones. This had been launched with Tagore's *Last Word* and reminiscences by his son, Rathindranath, published in our July '86 issue. This issue carries a major story, as our book feature, by Munshi Premchand, rendered into English by the veteran translator, Shri Jai Ratan. Reminiscences of Premchand are written by his son, Shri Amrit Rai, the renowned litterateur. We are most thankful to Shri Amrit Rai and Shri Jai Ratan for complying with our request and completing their works on time for this issue.

With this issue we launch a new feature: THE WAY OF NATURE—month by month. Which are the flowers through which Nature smiles at us in January? Which are the creatures to attract our attention during the month? To know them is to know our natural environment better. Richard Pearson has promised to guide us in this through the months to come.

In our section on NATURE in general too, we will be more purposeful. With pleasure we announce that we have enrolled the co-operation of one of the country's foremost naturalists and the most outstanding columnist on the subject, Shri M. Krishnan. His first feature appears in this issue.

We have focused on various forms of art over the last two years. We will continue to do so. But we will like to make a systematic review of any one branch of the art over some issues. We begin with the Theatre tradition of India, a series by Jiwan Pani. The introductory article appears in this issue. Subsequent issues will carry one complete article each on one of the theatre forms, with pictures.

The last issue (December 1986) had some speciality. Several thinkers had let us know their observations on aspects of religion as it prevails today. We propose to lay emphasis on certain other important issues of our time during this year, at intervals.

THE HERITAGE is grateful to its readers for the steady support they have extended to it. We hope, they will introduce the publication to more and more of their friends.

THE GOD-SOULED HIMALAYA

.....Northwards soared

*The stainless ramp of huge Himala's wall
Ranged in white ranks against the blue—untrod
Infinite, wonderful—whose uplands vast,
And lifted universe of crest and crag,
Shoulder and shelf, green slope and icy horn,
Riven ravine, and splintered precipice
Led climbing thought higher and higher, until
It seemed to stand in heaven and speak with Gods*

* * * * *

*Beneath the snows dark forests spread, sharp-laced
With leaping cataracts and veiled with clouds:
Lower grew rose-oaks, and the great fir groves
Where echoed pheasants's call and panther's cry,
Clatter of wild sheep on the stones, and scream
Of circling eagles:—Under these the plain
Gleamed like a praying-carpet at the foot
Of those divinest altars.*

Edwin Arnold: *The Light of Asia*

This awe-inspiring and sublime vision of the Himalayas could be repeated or magnified as many times as you please, still the grandeur of the Himalayas will evade our narrative competence.

In the life of no other nation has a range of mountain played a role similar to the one played by the Himalayas in the Indian life.

"To the peoples of the south, a thousand and five hundred miles away, to the men of the sea coast, to the dwellers of the desert land of Rajputana no less than to the inhabitants of the Gangetic Valley the Himalayas have been the symbol of India. The majesty of the snowclad peaks, visible from afar, the inaccessibility of even the lesser ranges, the mysteries of the gigantic glaciers and the magnificence of the great rivers that emerge from its gorges have combined to give to the Hima-

layas a majesty which no other mountain range anywhere can claim."

K.M. Panikkar: *The Himalayas in Indian Life.*

The foremost quality of the Himalayas that struck Dr. Svetoslav Roerich (an interview with him appears in this issue) in the consciousness these lofty peaks exude. Indeed, it is difficult to say when in the remote past the Rishi began exploring this mysterious region and, with their asceticism, added to its mystery further. The epics and the Puranas tell us of numerous seers who had their abodes in the Himalaya. Among them were Narada, Markandeya and Vyasa. Among those who carried on their *tapas* there was Bhagiratha, the bringer of the Ganga from heaven to earth. Garuda, the Vahana of Vishnu, lived in the Himalayas

While Brahma, the Creator had performed a Yajna there at the beginning of time, illustrious kings of yore like Marutta too did the same. Prior to the Pandava brothers, Sanjaya had departed to the Himalaya.

What made the Himalaya most dear to the Indian is the belief that it is the home of the Divine Mother. "The extent of the sanctification of the Himalayas may be inferred from the fact that on the fifty-six mile route from Kalika (Kalika) to Simla (Shyamala) every important point is named after a temple dedicated to the Devi." (**Panikkar**)

India's history, civilisation, culture and literature—all bear the distinct impact of the Himalaya. The Himalaya is the Guardian of India, the repository of this ancient nation's spiritual treasures, the destination of pil-



Dussera in Kulu (Painting by Roerich)

grims, the source of its vitality through the great rivers originating from it, the sphere of its dreams and experiences through its institutions which are at once physical and symbolic, such as the Manasarovar, Kailash, and the Gouri Shikhar.

"In the Himalayas so far surveyed there are, we are told—

74 peaks over	24,000 feet
48	25,000 ..
16	26,000 ..
5	27,000 ..
and 3	28,000 ..

in all 146 peaks which are among the highest in the World. 'This vast 2,000 miles of mountain sprawl,' says M'cintyre, 'would stretch from Calais to the Caspian sea; valley, plateau pinnacle, nature in her most savage and gentle moods, hot hells of steaming jungle lands, cold hells

of the high reaches: lovely flower-carpeted valley, bleak wind-swept plateau, deep gorge where glaciers 1,000 feet thick have cut the mountain side like a *bruin*, ice ledges overhanging frightful precipices from which they crash with cataclysmic force, incalculable variations of weather and climate. This is the Himalaya." (Panikkar)

The appeal of the Himalayas is irresistible for anybody, for one reason or the other. Here speaks a Russian under the spell of one of the many moods of the Himalaya: "I shall never forget those Himalayan dawns—like the approach of triumphant avalanches, a dazzling array of the subtlest tones and hues, overwhelming in their regal generosity and range of colour combinations.

"How bravely the heavenly legions clashed above Annapur-

na! How boldly the celestial elements locked forces in the chill blue haze! The mother-of-pearl turned to ice, the brass froze. Peeping through the ragged confusion of clouds, the wheel of world harmony gathered momentum." (New Times, No. 18, 1977).

Here is another Himalayan mood:

"The elements are in a fury and the heavens are rent assunder. The monsoon hurtles its millions of large raindrops from the sky with speed of a flying machine and amid the roaring noise of a gunfire attack. It avenges its long absence with incredible ferocity.

"The terrific downpour which now gushes out of the skies in such quantities possess no parallel in temperate Europe." (Paul Brunton: *Hermit in the Himalayas*).





THE HIMALAYAS

God of the distant north, the Snowy Range
O'er other mountains towers imperially;
Earth's measuring-rod, being great and free from
change,
Sinks to the eastern and the western sea.

Whose countless wealth of natural gems is not
Too deeply blemished by the cruel snow;
One fault for many virtues is forgot,
The moon's one stain for beams that endless flow.

Where demigods enjoy the shade of clouds
Girding his lower crests, but often seek,
When startled by the sudden rain that shrouds,
His waist, some loftier, ever sunlit peak.

Where bark of birch-trees makes, when torn in strips
And streaked with mountain minerals that blend
To written words 'neath daintly finger-tips,
Such dear love-letters as the fairies send.



White citadel (Painting by Roerich)

Whose organ-pipes are stems of bamboo, which
Are filled from cavern-winds that know no rest,
As if the mountain strove to set the pitch
For songs that angels sing upon his crest.

Where magic herbs that glitter in the night
Are lamps that need no oil within them, when
They fill cave-dwellings with their shimmering light
And shine upon the loves of mountain men.

Who offers roof and refuge in his caves
To timid darkness shrinking from the day;
A lofty soul is generous; he saves
Such honest cowards as for protection pray.

Who brings to birth the plants of sacrifice;
Who steadies earth, so strong is he and broad.
The great Creator, for this service' price,
Made him the king of mountains, and a god.

Kalidasa
The Birth of the War-God
translated by A.W. Ryder



On behalf of THE HERITAGE ADITI VASISHTHA interviewed the legendary painter of the Himalayas, Dr. SVETOSLAV ROERICH, whose works reveal the inner splendours of the Himalayas through their outer contours.



THE PEAKS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

ROERICH—the very name evokes in one's mind an immediate association with the grandeur and beauty of the Himalayas. Dr. Svetoslav Roerich first came to India with his family: his father Prof. Nicholas Roerich,

his mother Mme Helena Ivanovna, and his brother Dr. Georges Roerich in the year 1923. He travelled extensively, and deeply loved and revered the rich cultural heritage of this ancient land. The Himalayan peaks of gold and crimson in the changing light

of the sun made a deep impression upon him. These majestic mountains seemed charged with a spiritual Presence. In his diary he recorded how he experienced this marvellous presence in each curve and line of Nature, in every tremor of the leaf, in every ripple of the water. The Roerichs with their origin in Russia, their wide contacts the world over, now chose for their home the Himalayas, the beautiful Kulu Valley. 'Urusvati'—a Research Institute grew around them. Thousands of paintings of the innumerable facets of the Himalayas were painted here by both father and son. Of this illustrious family, Dr. Svetoslav Roerich, now 82 years of age, the only surviving member, lives amidst the sylvan surroundings of Bangalore with his beautiful and talented wife, Mme. Devika Rani, grand-niece of Rabindranath Tagore. Recipient of the Padmabhushan and numerous national and international awards, Dr. Roerich is a rare embodiment of charm, sagacity and wisdom. Admirers from all parts of the world come to meet him and a spirit of goodwill and inspiration fill the atmosphere of his house. Once an eminent scientist from Russia said, "Every Russian loves him and whoever visits India, must visit him."

