

WIXAL

Pathways to Peace

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A Broadcast given by
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THE BANNER OF PEACE

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Good Evening Friends: -

I have good news for you - news that is full of promise: The Banner of Peace which has three red circles on a field of white, will fly on all Museums, Universities, and other places of culture, in many countries.

What is this banner? What is it for? Who thought of it?

Those are the questions that you are asking; and they are the questions that I'm going to answer.

The Banner is a flag, just as the Red Cross Banner is a flag. "The object of this banner (The Banner of Peace) is to protect the World's art treasure, and cultural monuments, in the same way that the Red Cross Flag protects the wounded."

But there is a far deeper meaning to the flying of this Peace Flag than just to save the outer treasures of mankind; it is, to save the inner treasures of the spirit also.

There would be no reason to save the art treasures, if humanity is to be blown to bits in War. Creating beauty is the greatest tangible achievement of mankind. The human soul blooms in creating beauty. To destroy beauty is to destroy the very flower of civilization.

This statement may seem rather too poetic and fanciful. But it isn't. One of the greatest living statesmen, working hard, day after day in the cause of peace, is our own Secretary of State, the Honorable Cordell Hull. And only recently he referred to the "precious cultural and spiritual attainments of our modern civilization," which have helped to establish the "dignity of the human soul", and have inspired a "spirit of mutual helpfulness and accomodation", for promoting the universal welfare of all nations and the "peaceful adjustment of controversies."

Man has given the very best of himself in music, in architecture, in writing and painting, in science, and in worship in his temples and churches. With his best destroyed, man's ambition would be gone. His ideals would be shattered. But with his greatest achievements protected, certain of enduring, to teach oncoming generations, man would become more and more radiant. New glories would be born in his soul with each new generation. Who could make him fight or kill with beauty, and especially the beauty of man's own making, as the reigning power?

All this seems like quite a new idea. And, as we all

know, it is difficult, it takes time, to induce the world to understand the value of new ideas. It has taken much patience and persistence on the part of people from many countries; but finally, after twenty-five years the pact for the flying of The Roerich Peace Flag was drafted, according to the Codes of International Law, by Dr. G. Chklaver, of the University of Paris.

"This Pact provides, that, in case of war, educational, artistic, and scientific institutions, artistic and scientific missions, and the personnel, the property and collections of such institutions and missions shall be deemed neutral and as such shall be protected and respected by belligerents.

.The institutions, collections, and missions thus registered display a distinctive flag which will entitle them to special protection and respect on the part of the Governments and people of all the High Contracting Parties.

The Banner of Peace stands for the accomplishments of civilization springing from the love of beauty. Therefore, when we see the Roerich Flag flying, we must realize that it symbolizes the great advancement of mankind and the high spiritual and cultural values that men have set their hearts upon.

Twenty-five years of hard, steady endeavor brought this Pact into existence. And then, in 1929, a Committee of the Roerich Banner of Peace was founded in New York. And in 1930, two committees were inaugurated in Europe; one in Bruges, and the other in Paris.

The First International Conference was held in September, 1931, it was closely followed by other meetings and finally-- the Roerich Pact--met with representatives of thirty-six nations. The Director of the Pan American Union rightly defined this as one of the most successful meetings ever held in Washington.

In 1935, in the Office of the President of the United States, at the White House, in Washington, the Treaty of the Roerich Pact was signed by all the twenty-one countries of the Pan American Union.

On that occasion, The Secretary of Agriculture, who had been officially empowered to sign the treaty on behalf of The United States, said:

"I regard the Roerich Pact as an inevitable step in international relations. At no time has such an ideal been more needed. While the individual nations are working out their separate economic and national problems, it is also necessary that they recognize their responsibility as part of the community of nations. I feel that this age owes a great debt to Nicholas Roerich in that creation of this ideal. In this we can work with faith and anticipation toward those spiritual and cultural realities of which the Roerich Pact is a Symbol."

Nicholas Roerich, then, is the creator of this ideal.
Who is he? How do you spell his name?

His name is spelled "R - o - e - r - i - c - h." He was once a professor, in Russia. But he left Russia in 1914 just before the last war and made his home high up in the Himalayas, in the north of India, in the heart of the grandest scenery that the world provides.

Up above his home are the eternal snow and ice of the loftiest mountain crests. Round about him are the tremendous forests of evergreens. Beneath him are the magnificent canyons and gorges of rivers and streams. The air is sweet and bracing. And everywhere is the sense of quiet and peace.

He and his wife and his two sons dwell there. They have made their home a center of scientific research. Professor Roerich has untiring energy. The maxim that he lives by is this - "Life is Work." His message to us all, in his own words is - "Work; which brings rhythmic harmony, which inspires mankind to live an enlightened life." Roerich's work consists in writing and in painting, as well as in research and study.

His study - long hours of thought, working untiringly to discern what there is in life that endures, leads him to this conclusion: ---

There is one influence that is universal, although it is the product of human effort. There is one thing that every nation produces. And that one thing is - ART.

Art is universal. It is not the product of any one country, or group of countries. It is not national or local; it is International. And it cannot be owned. The paintings

and writings of Nicholas Roerich belong to all the people of all the world just as all the great music of every country belongs to us all.

Beauty cannot be kept from us. Countries cannot fight for it. It comes from somewhere above and beyond us. The beauty that man can create is made for all of us. Art breathes the free air, the free air of the spirit of all mankind.

(So it is that) Roerich says: "The pledge of happiness for humanity lies in beauty. Art is the highest stimulus for the regeneration of the spirit." No wonder he considers art to be immortal and boundless. The way to the truly civilized Future, he clearly sees, is through Art.

And because of this profound understanding of the influence of Art and Beauty in human life, Roerich has founded centers of culture in nearly every country in the world.

You can see, I am sure, why Roerich thought of the Banner of Peace. One of his greatest paintings symbolizes the idea that the Banner represents. In this painting he represents some Tibetan monks standing on a ledge of the lofty mountain where they live, and casting to the four winds some little paper horses that they have made. For there is an old Tibetan fable, full of magic and spells, that these paper horses will find travelers who are lost in that great mountain wilderness. And then the paper horses turn into real horses and bring the travelers safely to one of the monasteries for food and shelter.

This story has a deep meaning, that all the world can profit by. First of all, it means that if man will only try,

he can find ways and means of bringing lost travelers home to safety and friendliness. And, in the second place, it means that the way home is through spiritual effort, by a kind of magic - the sort of magic that we find in noble buildings, rich music, fine paintings, or great poems. These little paper horses represent beauty and truth - immortal beauty, and immortal truth. In fact, these little paper horses are prayers - spiritual messages of helpfulness and peace and goodwill.

And that is why Roerich made this great painting of his. It serves him as a symbol - it tells the story - it explains the message that the way home, to peace, and to harmony, is through the devotion of humanity to art, to man's eternal love of creating beauty.

Roerich tells the same story in his writings. For, as he says, over and over again, "the evolution of a new era rests on the corner-stone of beauty and culture."

tt Thirty-four years ago Nicholas Roerich thought of the Banner of Peace. To-day thirty-six nations have already agreed to respect that banner.

The banner itself is a pure white flag which shows three magente spheres in a circle. This symbol has several inspiring meanings - to mention two of them, it stands for Religion, Art, and Science as the expression of Human Culture; and it also is an emblem of The Past, The Present, and The Future, as man's achievements protected within the circle of Eternity.

In two hours from now I shall be speaking all across the World, through Madras, in India, to my friend, and the friend of all the world, and of all the people in the World - Nicholas Roerich.

I am sure that I can give him, messages of your goodwill, and that in giving him those messages, I can give them to all the people, of India, and everywhere else, who love and strive for - Peace.

Write to me, in care of this station; I will send your letters to Professor Roerich a prophet of peace and if he has time, he will answer them; and, in any case, your words will help that great genius to carry on his mission for Peace.