

SHANTI

(DIARY LEAVES)

By *Prof: Nicholas Roerich*

ORION shines in full radiance. We remember how before the bow of our steamer this same constellation was shining. We remember in what mountains and from behind what peaks was shining Orion—the Magnificent. And now we know precisely to whom it is shining and who is looking at it. The same heavenly Signs!

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In the Temple of Heaven we also found the sign of the Banner of Peace. The tagma of Tamarlan has the same sign. The sign of the three treasures is widely known in many countries of the East. On the chest of a Tibetan woman one can see the large fibula representing this sign. The same fibula we see in Caucasian archaeological finds and in Scandinavia. The Madonna of Strassbourg has this sign, just as the Saints of Spain. Upon the icon of Saint Sergius and Saint Nicholas is the same sign. Upon the chest of Christ in the famous painting of Memling the sign is immortalized as a large fibula clasp. When we look over the sacred images of Byzantia and Rome, the same signs unite the Holy Images throughout the world. India also knows this great triune sign.

The consciousness of people, in their multiform striving towards the Highest, was united upon the same steps. In the desire to express the Highest precisely the multiformity of approaches is such a precious sign.

On mountain passes inviolably stands this sign. To convey the concept of speed, hurriedness and necessity, the Sign is carried by a White Steed. And haven't you seen this same sign in the Roman catacombs?

And yet there are people, who will not wish to think of the Highest, but will try to attach to this sign some of

their personal bemeaning considerations. But then, one could equally say about many other great signs that they were used as if in a different meaning and for seemingly different purposes. In such expressions man will all the sooner manifest his own self.

When taking a stranger into your home, you can at once discern his nature by the degree of his attention shown towards the surrounding objects. There are people who, standing before a beautiful picture, will pay attention to the gilded frame. Others, looking at *Venus de Milo*, will find no better question to ask than: "But where are her arms?" Another approaching a miraculous icon will mention the unattractiveness of the Image, because of the austerity of its expression. There will be found people who, finding themselves amidst beautiful objects, will pay attention to the most insignificant.

Ex ungue leonem—by the claws one knows the lion. Likewise one can say; by the dirt you shall know the mice. It is sometimes even said to listen to people judging that which they do not know and to which they even did not give thought. Besides, they judge only according to their desire to praise or condemn. Not knowing how to argue, such condemners will put forth simply their "yes" or "no." They will not try, not even for their own sake, nor out of mere decency, to provide themselves with some arguments: for them the only thing worthy of consideration would be either the place, the personality or time in relation to which they affirm or deny. In their denials they are ready to pronounce any slander, they will never stop before blasphemy if only to carry out their evil prejudice. The great seer, Gogol, expressed the same thought in these sad words :-

"We have the remarkable gift of making everything insignificant"

Precisely great creators always felt acutely the entire horror, when under their very eyes something great was made insignificant. At the same time, the methods of such belittlement were the coarsest and most ignorant. If a mere constable would have ordered these ignoramusses to state the opposite, they would not have hesitated to do so for a minute, because their judgment had no foundation whatever. They merely thought that their ruler—vulgarity—would be pleased with it. And this command of course fully corresponds to their own selves.

Anyhow in all malicious violations the great basis—goodwill—is first of all absent. What a beautiful word—Goodwill! It is in the same rank where the other precious concept—Compassion—stands.

The malicious ignoramusses know neither one nor the other. Moreover, Goodwill and Compassion will disturb the vile mind as something reminding of the great and rejected by them. The evil gift of making everything insignificant must be emphasized and brandmarked as the most shameful. What is hidden behind this evil gift? Treason is already nested there. If an evil-doer did not succeed falsifying something, he will continue his treacherous actions in order to bring his offering in one way or another to the abyss of darkness. Even upon the simplest commonplace objects you can notice, to what man pays his foremost attention. In the same way, you may judge people according to their attitude to the great Signs.

From behind the Si-Shan sparkles the magnificent Venus. We know that you in the Himalayas are also admiring it. We know from where, across what valley and above what snowy peaks, you look in the evening hours at it. We look at the star and we hear the murmur of the deodars and all the twilight voices and all the sounds of the mountains. How many calls and how much know-

ledge has been gathered around this one star. The heavenly Signs make attentive and unite the hearts.

The same stars, the same heavenly Signs fill the hearts with Goodwill beyond space and time. Where is true vision—there is peace!
