

SYNOPSIS.

"MASTER OF THE MOUNTAINS". or "SAGE OF THE HIMALAYAS".

PROF.

EXPLORER,

Dr. Nicolas Roerich, the great Russian painter, philosopher and traveller, settled down in the beautiful Western Himalayan Valley of Kulu in 1928. He had travelled and trekked intensively in the Eastern Himalayan territories of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, as well as in Ladakh, Lahoul and in Tibet and the Altai-Himalayas. And ultimately, selected the Kulu Valley as his permanent home. He selected this spot because he loved the Himalayas and drew his inspiration for his paintings from the grand and majestic scenery of these the world's highest mountains, from whence the great and sacred Indian rivers take their sources and which possess some of the most beautiful and fertile valleys noted for their rare flora and fauna.

Amidst these inspiring surroundings and in the intense silence of the mountains, Dr. Roerich's spiritual philosophies found fullest expression.

(Believing in the Hindu and Buddhist theory that the Himalayas are the abode of the great religious Masters and Sages, and that through meditation and psychic powers he could contact their spirits, he spent his days here

in quiet concentration, painting his masterpieces with highly philosophical themes and set against the Himalayas. Through these works, he has shown not only his matchless feeling for colour and Nature's many moods, but

has put into them a spiritual meaning that illuminates each subject with a rare and glorious beauty.

Kulu Valley, also known as the Valley of the Beas River, is adjacent to the territories of Lahoul, Spiti and Ladakh, the people of which are

of Tibetan origin and speak the Tibetan language. So one finds in the valley, the influences of both the Hindu and the Buddhist philosophies and cultures.

Therefore Dr. Roerich could study both these aspects of spiritual thought and ideals. He also found the inhabitants of this region to be very simple, friendly, and though illiterate, possessing quaint customs, and an innate culture and artistic sense.

He bought a beautiful house situated ideally on the slopes of a mountain at Naggar, 6000 feet above sea level, not far from the village and overlooking a splendid vista of the valley and its snow ranges.

Behind the house, Dr. Roerich had a pine and rhododendron forest attached to his property, as well as a fruit orchard of cherries, pears, apples and peaches. In his garden he grew several varieties of Himalayan and Alpine flowers, many of them quite rare.

In the village at the foot of his home, there is an ancient Hindu temple with an Oracle. To the temple and the priests he gave his patronage and encouraged fairs and festivals and handicrafts, particularly to the revival of the old art of shawl weaving.

In addition to these many cultural activities, Dr. Roerich started a Herbarium, where rare Himalayan medicinal plants and herbs were collected and catalogued under the supervision of a Russian Scientist. Indian botanists were encouraged to come and study these rare specimens and to go into the mountains on scientific trips to explore the flora and fauna of the area.

Prof.

~~Mr.~~ Indian leaders including Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru came to visit ~~Dr.~~ ^{Prof.} Roerich at his home in Kulu to discuss with him cultural and philosophical problems, and he helped the leaders in their struggle for freedom by his advice and sympathetic understanding. Working ceaselessly at his painting and creating new masterpieces, he was recognised as ^{one of} the most prolific painters of all time, who painted the largest number of paintings in his lifetime, having completed ^{more than} ~~some~~ 5000 paintings ^{in his lifetime} during his stay in the Kulu valley, and making his own colours from the indigenous ^{materials} ~~stones~~ found in the area. ~~Also~~ distinguished writer of travel and philosophical treatises, which had gained world renown, the Roerich books have been published abroad ^{well in India} ~~for many years and by the Roerich Foundation Trust in Trivandrum, Kerala, who published the Indian editions,~~

When he settled in the Kulu Valley, ^{Prof.} Dr. Roerich built a studio far up in the Lahoul Valley where he used to go during summer into the solitude of the mountains to paint and write. Here, he produced some of his greatest masterpieces. In all his work he had the co-operation and loving collaboration of his wife Madame ^{Helen} Roerich and his two sons Dr. George Roerich and Svetoslav Roerich, Madame Roerich being herself a ^{distinguished} ~~serious~~ writer ~~on~~ ^{of} Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, had many of her books translated and published in several European languages, and writing to the end of her life, she left many valuable unpublished manuscripts that are ^{now} awaiting publication.

Dr. George Roerich, the elder son ^{is the founder} ~~is~~ a Sanskrit and Tibetan scholar ^{and a specialist of} ~~and~~ ^{ecclesiastical history} ~~at~~ several years ago published the first English-Sanskrit Tibetan dictionary, ^{and the author of many monumental works.} ~~an exhaustive and invaluable work. In addition he has translated many rare and valuable Sanskrit and Tibetan manuscripts. Svetoslav Roerich, studied painting with his father and specialised in portrait studies and paintings of the Himalayas. He is one of the foremost painters of today. His wife, beautiful and talented Madame Devika Rani Roerich, whom he married in 1945, is the grand-niece of the late Poet Rabindranath Tagore, and was at one time India's top film star and first lady Film Producer, who gave great dignity and prestige to the Indian Film Industry. Today, she is one of the Directors of the Sangeet Natak Akadami, the National Cultural Academy of Arts, sponsored by the Government of India, besides ~~the Cultural Bodies.~~~~

^{Prof.} Dr. Nicolas Roerich died in 1949, much mourned by the people of the Kulu Valley whom he had served in many ways, and he has left an impact of his personality, his philosophy of life and his art not only on them but on India. The house where he lived is to be turned into a Museum, together with his paintings and ^{art and other collections} ~~art~~ treasures and his Herbarium. There is also a move to start a cultural centre there to further serious study and the development of the Arts and ^{ancient culture} ~~Philosophy~~. After his death, the family moved to Kalimpong in the Eastern Himalayas, where Dr. George Roerich carried on his research work and translations of Sanskrit and Tibetan literature. Madame Roerich also continued with her philosophical writings till her death in 1955, ~~when she was cremated on the top of a high hill overlooking the valleys of Sikkim and Nepal.~~ A Stupa has been erected ^{on top} ~~at~~ ^{where she was cremated.} ~~in the valley.~~

~~to her memory on that spot.~~

Svetoslav Roerich and his wife Devika Rani Roerich have established their home in Bangalore, Mysore State, South India, where he is painting and creating a Cultural Centre *Carrying on his Cultural Work.* (as well as organising exhibitions of his father's paintings). *A Cultural Centre is now planned by them in Bangalore.* The masterpieces of Dr. Nicolas Roerich can be seen in most of the leading Museums of the world today, as well as in the Art Galleries of Triyandrum, Kerela; Benares, ~~Uttar Pradesh~~ *Allahabad*; Delhi Museum, and in Baroda, ~~Bombay State~~ *and other states*. The ~~Roerich Foundation Trust in Kerala~~ works continually on the publication of his writings. Though the great master is dead, his spirit lives on through his noble philosophies and his artistic genius. *works*

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