OLUN SUME
(Diary Leaves).
BY NICHOLAS ROERICH.

Olun Sume means in Mongolian—many temples. And this is the name of a place of an ancient ruined city, situated in the domain of Prince Yun-Wang, the ruler of the Darkhan Beile Khoshun. Not far away from here is the place of the future capital of Inner Mongolia and this place has been selected by the Panchen Rimpoche himself.

It is not customary to excavate in Mongolia ancient sacred sites. Only from outside can one study such significant remnants of the past, which evoke deep thoughts.

There are certain wiseacres, who think that at present there may not again occur such destructions, as they happened in the past. For such shortsighted people the past is the synonym of barbarism and cruelty. And they think that to-day such bestial customs are quite impossible. Yet, if you remind them of the deplorable ruins of the Cathedral of Ypres in Belgium and bring them to Spain to the charred ruins of the Cathedral of Oviedo, or if you show them the cuts on Millet’s painting “Angelus” in the Louvre, then perhaps they would think somehow differently.

Or one may take such people into any of the numerous ruined cities in Central Asia, to prove to them what minute chips and fragments the once beautiful cities and strongholds have now been reduced to.

We walk amidst the ruins of an ancient city, the name of which has already long been forgotten, but which the Mongols of to-day call the city of many temples—Olun Sume. On a vast square, surrounded by the remnants of a wall, are huge mounds of stones, bricks and multicoloured tiles of buildings
of several ages. Around is the endless plain of Mongolia. Along the wall runs what is now but a shallow stream.

Studying these ruins one sees how Nestorian tombs, decorated with Byzantine ornaments, were used for the foundation of later buildings. It is strange to see how a huge marble turtle—a beautiful carving of the Ming period, which once served as the pedestal of a stella, now remains lonely on a deserted place. No doubt the people many times used the excellently burnt bricks for their newer constructions. It is stated that the entire palace of the local prince is built with these ancient stones.

It is even stated that some golden images had been discovered in the ruins. People mention the discovery of a statue of Avalokiteshvara in this place and many other holy Buddhist images.

On the scattered slabs and stellas one can see Chinese and Mongolian inscriptions concerning the chronology of the history of the ancient rulers of the place; one can see the carving of the wheel of life and sacred foot and hand-imprints on stones. Not far away, in the rocks, are caves of a destroyed Buddhist monastery. Even now one can chance to find clay images and offerings. Nearby you may find remains of ancient prayers in Tibetan and Mongolian. One of our co-workers insisted that he had heard in the depth of the cave as if the subterranean sounding of monastery drums. So deep is the impression received in these ancient sacred places.

On the large slanting hillside there are widely scattered innumerable fragments of various kinds of household vessels, as if the whole hill consists of many strata of such broken china and ceramics. Many thoughts cross the brain when one picks up these broken chips. From every broken bit seems to come the wailing of the housewife, in the presence of whom her household had been destroyed. The owners of these fragments of pottery belonged to various centuries, from the XIIth and mayhap even earlier, up to the XVIIIth. It is evident that we are in the presence of many strata of life.
and that repeated destructions have taken place and accumulated in one spot the proof of an awful annihilation of peaceful households.

Amongst the most ancient primitive ceramics one can discern almost neolithic ornaments—imprints of string and fingernails. Next to them there may be lying barbarically broken chips of most beautiful porcelain of the best Chinese periods. The durability of this porcelain is such that one can hardly break these fragments. What expense of evil efforts must have been applied in order to destroy into such small fragments big vessels, pots, cups, of all sizes and shapes.

Realize! One such hill—what a rare treasure this could have been for the future generations, if it were not for an evil will, long since dead, which has reduced to fragments the priceless creations of human genius. Amongst these remnants one can find fragments of most beautiful Chinese craftsmanship which is so highly valued in Museums nowadays. For museums of ceramics or for ceramic workshops even such small fragments would represent fine specimen of the technique of many centuries. It is quite inexplicable how such a mixture of different periods could have occurred in one place. It means, that at these places there must have raged repeated destructions.

The wiseacres sit in their studies and probably have never seen ancient ruins in their entire awful nudity. The touristified towers of castles on the Rheine and in Tirol, with their cosy Bierhalles, will not convey the same impression as these ruins in deserted vastnesses, full of fragments and chips, as if a fiendish hand has only yesterday cruelly devastated them. Such material cemeteries are the best proof, how human hatred can ravage. And who will dare to assert that malice of the XIIIth century was viler than it may be now. Hatred is hatred. Treason is treason. Anger is anger—above ages and nations. However mercy and untiring creativeness should also be above time.
To speak of the advantages of travel seems already a truism. For much evidence of the epochs will never be adequately recorded either in books or in selected museums. Only on the spot, amidst all natural conditions one can realize with special convincingness the particles of truth. Thus people themselves, of different nationalities render an entirely different impression when at home or when under alien circumstances. At present there appears already an interest to acquaint oneself with songs, music and other expressions of foreign folklore. This is imperative. On this basis the best friendship and mutual understanding are woven. One should in every way welcome friendly intercourse. But let us not forget that even a song will resound differently in a concert hall in a foreign country or amidst the hills and waterfalls of the motherland. Nature itself as if accompanies such creative manifestations. And the bards and minstrels themselves sing differently in foreign surroundings. Therefore the more human relationship will be conducted under natural conditions the deeper and the more real will be the impressions and the more valuable will be the consequences.

A single desert hill, filled with remnants of many ages can stimulate many creative impressions and conclusions. The most inspired lecture illustrated by fragments of pottery will never give such tremendous impressions as those obtained on the very spot, where human hatred ravaged. One must evoke the most convincing testimonies, which would compel humanity to ponder once more that hatred and malice as such must be condemned. Malice, enraged by the scarlet arrows of destructive anger will always be the abominable shame of mankind.

Those who tried to prove that the saturation of humanity with hatred is already a matter of the past, only show their own sheer ignorance. For do not at this very moment people somewhere kill each other? The daily newspaper will prove this. Darkness is still prevailing, if it has not even become denser in many places. The lamentations of peaceful housewives deprived of their last household treasures, still sound in
the tinkling of broken vessels. And these vessels were acquired with great difficulty. Perhaps they served as a true adornment of the entire hearth. And suddenly, owing to somebody's hatred, this treasure is broken and leaves in the hearts of the owners who managed to save themselves, an ineradicable feeling of the loss of something near and precious. If to-day in every home there would be kept as a terrible memento at least one old fragment of some maliciously destroyed beautiful object, then it may perhaps remind humanity how carefully should human creativeness be guarded as a sign of culture.

I wanted to collect as many fragments as possible and to send them all over the world to all good people as mementoes in order that even in their everyday life they should be reminded what to guard in best goodwill. Tunes of sorrow still live in the sad sounds of fragments, of what was once beautiful craftsmanship. If people would hear the sorrowful lamentations from the depths of the past they would more clearly think of the reconstruction of life in order to escape in the future tears of unhappiness. Every wailing is an outcome of violence. For it was not predestined for humanity to moan and sigh. It was ordained to create and rejoice, to raise above signs of sorrow. Therefore let the hills of sad wailing, through the realization from the experience of the past be transfigured into heights of joy for the future.

Again, across the Mongolian steppes, we return to our yurta's. Wayside grasses are nodding to us. In the evening the lama from the neighbouring monastery will come to our bonfire. Again there will be narratives about Shambhala, of its Ruler Rigden-Djapo, of the miraculous treasure Chintamani—in Mongolian called Erdeni-Dzo and of the wondrous migrating stone! Even about the appearing of the Chalice of the Blessed One there will be a message at the bonfire! These sacred words raise above all human failing—they invoke a beautiful radiant future!
(2)

The title of future chapters. Any future chapters may
have to be reined to a new.

And thus, to have
something to say in a chapter.

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