THE MISSION OF WOMANHOOD

By Nicholas Roerich

War is difficult, but still more difficult is post-war reconstruction. When the fundamentals of culture are exposed to danger, when the body and spirit of man is alarmed and suffering from bloody wounds, then above the elements there is again uplifted some calm miraculous force, the purpose of which is to heal man, harassed in dissonances and unreason, and to lead him to the heart's reason by the gentle contacts of spirituality. This force is the Eternal Feminine. When things are difficult in the home we turn to woman, who herself has been baptized by the fire of suffering. When it is difficult for the world we turn to woman whose heart aches at the wounds to culture and to the spirit.

When we speak about culture, surely we have in mind primarily woman who widely and irresistibly bears the Banner of refined and exalted Culture at all points, from the cradle to the throne.

Indeed from the fireside to the government, woman implants the fundamental of Culture. In one form or another the child hears the first word about Culture from its mother...With the utmost selfishness and with no personal egotistical principle, woman introduces cultural bases in the structure, whether in her own small family or of nations.

From the most ancient days, woman has worn a wreath upon her head. With this wreath she is said to have pronounced the most sacred incantations. Is it not the wreath of Unity? And is not this blessed unity the highest responsibility and beautiful mission of womanhood? From woman, one may learn that we must seek disarmament not in warships and guns but in our spirits. And from where can the young generation hear its first caress of unification? Only from the mother.

To both East and West, the image of the Great Mother—womanhood—is the bridge of ultimate unification. To Raj-Rajeswari, the all-powerful Mother, the Hindu of yesterday and today sings his song. To her the women bring their golden flowers and at her feet they lay the fruits for benediction, carrying them back to their hearths. After glorifying her image, they immerse it in the water, lest an impure breath should touch the Beauty of the World. To the Mother is dedicated the site on the Great White Mountain which has never been climbed. Because when the hour of extreme need strikes, it is said that there
She will stand and will lift up Her Hand for the salvation of the world. And encircled by all whirl-winds and all light, She will rise like a pillar of space, summoning all the forces of the far-off worlds.

In this way it happens that when the West speaks of the “Hundred-Armed One” of the Orthodox church, it is but another facet of the images of the many-armed all benevolent Kwan Yin. When the West exalts with reverence the gold embroidered garment of the Italian Madonna, and feels the deep penetration of the paintings of Duccio and Fra Angelico, we are reminded of the symbols of the many-eyed Omin­scient Dukkar. We remember the All-Compassionate. We remember the multitudinous aspects of the All-Bestowing and All-Merciful. We remem­ber how correctly the psychology of the people has conceived the icono­graphy of symbols and what an enormous knowledge lies hidden at present under the dead lines. There, where the conceptions disappear and prejudice is forgotten, appears a smile!

The images of the Mother of the World, of the Madonna, the Mother Kali, the benevolent Dukkar, Ishtar, Kwan-Yin, Miriam, the White Tara, Raj-Rajeswari, Nyuka—all these great images, all these Great Self-Sacrific­ing Beings merge together in one conception, as one Benevolent Unity. And each of these, in spite of the differences of language, comprehensible to all, ordains that there should be, not division, but construction. They say that the day of the Mother of the World has come. In the smile of Unity all becomes simple. The Aureole of the Madonna becomes a scientific physical radiation—the aura long since known to humanity.

The symbols of today, so poorly interpreted by rationalists, instead of being regarded as supernatural, suddenly become subjects for investiga­tion to the sincere research worker. And in this miracle of simplicity and understanding, one distinguishes the breath of the evolution of Truth. A Hindu of today who has graduated from many universities adresses the Great Mother, Raj-Rajeswari Herself, in full reverence.

At the same time, at the other end of the world, people sing, : “Let us glorify Thee, Mother of Light!”

And the old libraries of China and the ancient Central-Asiatic centres preserve, since the most ancient days, many hymns to the same Mother of the World.

Throughout the entire East and in the entire West there lives the Image of the Mother of the World, and deeply significant salutations are dedicated to this High symbol.
Treasures of the human spirit are so often endangered by destruction, not only during war, but also during all kinds of inner unrest. The mission of the womanhood is great. When there are difficulties in the home, we turn to the woman. When accounts and calculations are no longer of aid; when enmity and mutual destruction reach their limits, we turn to the woman. When evil forces overcome one, then woman is invoked. When the mechanical mind becomes helpless, then one remembers the woman. Verily, when wrath obscures the judgement of the mind, only the heart finds saving solutions. And where is the heart which can replace the Woman's? And where is the courage of the heartfire, which can be compared with the courage of woman at the brink of the insoluble? What hand can replace the calming touch of conviction of a woman's heart? And what eye, having endured the pain of suffering, will respond so self-sacrificingly, in the name of Bliss?

Among these great missions of guidance of Womanhood, adamant-like is the Cultural Mission to affirm and propagate the creativeness of mankind. Sponsoring creative thoughts, the consciousness strives towards true progress.

It is you, daughters of the Great Mother of the World, whose hands wave the Banner of Peace, unfurled in the name of the most Beautiful.

Who then if not woman must now rise up and be unified in the name of Culture and the Beautiful? Precisely was it ordained to a woman first to announce the good tidings of the Resurrection........

Under diverse veils human wisdom nevertheless assumes one face of Beauty, Self-sacrifice and Endurance. And again on a new mountain must woman go, interpreting the eternal paths to those near her.

Sisters! Fearlessly you shall stand on guard for the improvement of life. You kindle at each hearth a beautiful fire, creative and inspiring. You speak the first word about beauty to the children. You teach them about the blessed hierarchy of knowledge. You relate to the little ones thought about creativeness. You can guard them from dissolution, and from their first days of life instill the concepts of heroism and achievement. You first tell the little ones about the primacy of cultural values. You pronounce the sacred word Culture.

Great and beautiful is the work ordained to you women.

Dear sisters, Carry on and fear not. Tagore said: "Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it. Let me not look for allies in life's arena, but to my own strength."