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The Archive of Nicholas Roerich Museum

BANNER OF PEACE
Roerich—The Peace-Bearer

By M. M. Meru

There was never in the history of humanity a time such as this, when the whole world finds itself helplessly drifting upon the sea of life, like a derelict ship without sails or a helmsman to guide it into a safe harbour. The peoples of the world are now going through what is probably the darkest period in the history of mankind. Representatives of nations gather continuously to solve the difficulties of to-day, but they do not succeed in bringing about a much desired and needed peace amongst the warring nations of the earth. Universal bankruptcy of out-lived methods and standards is imminently pending to undermine the existing order and to throw the whole world into a chaos of self-annihilation. The leaders of men are facing a leaderless humanity, which has lost its faith in those whom they have chosen to guide them upon the path of life.

And yet it is not the destiny of mankind thus to perish. There is a Divine Force, which has never as yet failed to send the light into the world in its moment of extreme danger and darkness. Such a time has come. A man has been sent by this ever-protecting Power to light the darkness which prevails in our days with the resplendent glow of peace and culture. This man is proclaiming to the world a new conception of peace and culture, to be built from the priceless stones of mankind's past achievements and to be cemented by a new understanding amongst nations. Especially precious is a call in such times as these—a call, which is full of hope for a new and resplendent to-morrow, a call, which summons the dismembered branches
of the human tree to unite into a formidable union, based upon the imperishable results of mankind’s greatest treasure—culture!

Nicholas Roerich is the name of this messenger of peace. It is not accidental that Professor Nicholas Roerich, who sounded this historical call, is the greatest artist of our century. There are only a few names in the history of art which can be placed next to this true leader of culture. Only a man who created masterpieces of indescribable beauty, such as Roerich did, could create a cultural movement of peace of the same quality. It is verily not accidental that the Divine Force which has sent Roerich as a messenger of peace, has endowed him with such rare mastership in art, because only one who creates in beauty can give to the world the message of beauty and can save the world to-day.

The seed of beauty, planted by Roerich over two scores of years ago, grew into a mighty tree, the roots of which are imbedded deeply in the heavens and the branches spread all over the face of the earth. Varied seem these branches to be, yet all are one, of the same tree, from the same roots and of the same seed.

The first achievements of Nicholas Roerich in the quest of culture were marked with the unrepeatable beauty of that of a Knight of the Holy Grail. But since then Roerich has found the sacred source. From his boyhood Roerich has been fighting for the preservation of the results of creative human achievements, in order to build from the wondrous stones of the past “the steps of the future.” Already, when a young man, Roerich walked the difficult path of a true builder of the future. His artistic achievements had even then attracted the
attention of the whole world of art. And the creative constructiveness of the master branched out gradually into every field of culture. America is indeed privileged that Nicholas Roerich came to this country ten years ago in order to establish a group of cultural institutions, which marked the beginning of a new era in the evolution of mankind. The cultural work of these institutions took deep roots not only in America, but throughout the world. The name “Roerich” became a sterling mark for true and unselfish service to humanity in the name of peace and culture. And it is only natural that, when in 1929 Roerich’s call for peace and culture sounded its glad tidings, that more than seventy countries responded to the master’s call, as to an inspired solution of the unrest of nations. Thousands of letters from the representatives of the world of culture expressed not only their admiration for Roerich’s peace project but offered their support as well. Resolutions were passed by outstanding artistic and scientific organizations to support Roerich’s ideas of peace. One of the last resolutions passed by a woman’s organization in America which counts among its members over three million women approved of the Roerich Peace Pact as a world peace movement. The recognition of this Pact by the entire world of culture is about to come. And mankind shall witness before long the Roerich Peace Banner wave its protection over all the houses of learning, religion and beauty, as well as over cities which may claim as a whole the right of protection against ruthless ignorance of men who insist upon practising destructive dissension and deadly prejudice.

This significant movement is but the beginning of a new enlightened conception of an everlasting peace on earth. The Roerich
Peace Banner shall be soon unfurled from one end of the earth to the other, like a resplendent rainbow, calling mankind to cross the bridge of beauty to a new imperishable Valhalla. The international Conference called to assemble this year in Bruges for the Roerich Peace Pact shall gather cultural leaders from the whole world, who shall take further steps to bring this pan-human project into the very heart of life.

It is as if Nicholas Roerich is a direct instrument of some Divine Force, which acts through him in order to give to humanity a new understanding and a new consciousness. The realm of Roerich is that of Light. It is, therefore, that he is like a beacon, which guides to safety the ships caught upon the stormy sea of life.

Roerich is a builder. Even darkness he does not destroy. He only brings light into darkness, and darkness disappears like a non-existent mirage. Roerich builds a new Jerusalem from the indestructable stones of men’s past achievements. He does not deny anything. And he praises even his enemies. Over forty years he has laboured untiringly for peace and culture. And how many hearts has he guided to the sacred source! The heroic achievements of Roerich read like an apocrypha. It is no wonder that around his name are woven beautiful heroic legends.

Verily, the voice of the people is the voice of God!