

# EXCERPTS FROM *SHAMBHALA, THE RESPLENDENT*

Nicholas Roerich, FRC

*Born in 1874 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Nicholas Roerich was a painter, author, humanitarian, philosopher, and well-known public figure. His writings have appeared in the Rosicrucian Digest since the 1930s, and at the request of former Emperor H. Spencer Lewis, Roerich served as AMORC's legate for the Himalayas. It was there that Roerich began a several-years-long expedition in 1924 in search of Shambhala, the mythical spiritual kingdom of certain Buddhist traditions and inspiration for the idea of Shangri-La, where all inhabitants are said to be enlightened. Roerich said that a path to Shambhala is a path of consciousness, and it can only be obtained through an open mind. In addition to his speeches, esoteric writings, and dispatches from Asia, he was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize after more than 20 nations signed the Roerich Pact in 1935, pledging protection of cultural and scientific institutions over military goals.*

“Lama, tell me of Shambhala!”

“But you Westerners know nothing about Shambhala – you wish to know nothing. Probably you ask only out of curiosity; and you pronounce this sacred word in vain.”

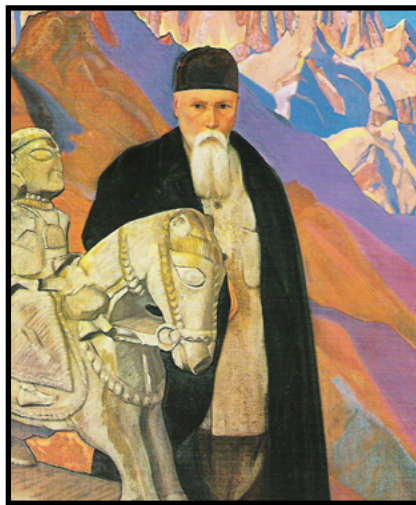
“Lama, I do not ask about Shambhala aimlessly. Everywhere, people know of this great symbol under different names. Our scientists seek each spark concerning this remarkable realm. Csoma de Koros knew of Shambhala, when he made his prolonged visit to the Buddhist monasteries. Grunwedel translated the book of the famous Tashi Lama, Pal-den ye-she, about ‘The Way to Shambhala.’ We sense how, under secret symbols, a great truth is concealed. Truly, the ardent scientist desires to know all about Kalachakra....”

The Lama studies us with his piercing glance. Then he says:

“Great Shambhala is far beyond the ocean. It is the mighty heavenly domain. It has nothing to do with our earth. How and why do you earthly people take interest in it? Only in some places, in the Far North, can you discern the resplendent rays of Shambhala.”

“Lama, we know the greatness of Shambhala. We know the reality of this indescribable realm. But we also know about the reality of the earthly Shambhala. We know

how some high lamas went to Shambhala, how along their way they saw the customary physical things. We know the stories of the Buryat lama, of how he was accompanied through a very narrow secret passage. We know how another visitor saw a caravan of



*Portrait of Nicholas Roerich with Guga Chohan, by Svetoslav Roerich.*



Path to Shambhala, by *Nicholas Roerich* (1933).

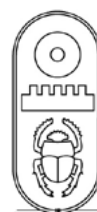
hill-people with salt from the lakes, on the very borders of Shambhala. Moreover, we ourselves have seen a white frontier post of one of the three outposts of Shambhala. So, do not speak to me about the heavenly Shambhala only, but also about the one on earth; because you know as well as I, that on earth Shambhala is connected with the heavenly one. And in this link, the two worlds are unified.”

The Lama becomes silent. With eyes half concealed by the lids, he examines our faces. And in the evening dusk, he commences his tale: “Verily, the time is coming when the Teaching of the Blessed One will once again come from the North to the South. The word of Truth, which started its great path from Bodhigaya, again shall return to the same sites. We must accept it simply, as it is: the fact that the true teaching shall leave Tibet, and shall again appear in the South. And in all countries, the covenants of Buddha shall be manifested. Really, great things are coming. You come from the West, yet you are bringing news of Shambhala. We must take it verily so. Probably the ray from the tower of Rigden-*iyepo* has reached all countries.

“Like a diamond glows the light on the Tower of Shambhala. He is there—Rigden-*iyepo*, indefatigable, ever vigilant in the cause of mankind. His eyes never close. And in his magic mirror he sees all events of earth. And the might of his thought penetrates into far-off lands. Distance does not exist for him; he can instantaneously bring assistance to worthy ones. His powerful light can destroy all darkness. His immeasurable riches are ready to aid all needy ones who offer to serve the cause of righteousness. He may even change the karma of human beings...”

“Lama, it seems to me that you speak of Maitreya; is it not so?”

“We must not pronounce this mystery! There is much which may not be revealed. There is much which may not be crystallized into sound. In sound we reveal our thought. In sound we project our thought into space and the greatest harm may follow. Because everything divulged before the destined date, results in untold harm. Even the greatest catastrophies may be provoked by such light-minded acts. If Rigden-*iyepo* and



the Blessed Maitreya are one and the same for you—let it be so. I have not so stated!

“Uncountable are the inhabitants of Shambhala. Numerous are the splendid new forces and achievements which are being prepared there for humanity...”

“Lama, not far from Ulan-Davan we saw a huge black vulture which flew low, close to our camp. He crossed the direction of something shining and beautiful, which was flying south over our camp, and which glistened in the rays of the sun.”

The eyes of the Lama sparkled. Eagerly he asked:

“Did you also feel the perfumes of the temple-incenses in the desert?”

“Lama, you are quite right – in the stony desert, several days from any habitation, many of us became simultaneously aware of an exquisite breath of perfume. This happened several times. We never smelt such lovely perfume. It reminded me of certain incense which a friend of mine once gave me in India – from where he obtained it, I do not know.”

“Ah – you are guarded by Shambhala. The huge black vulture is your enemy, who is eager to destroy your work, but the protecting force from Shambhala follows you in this Radiant form of Matter. This force is always near to you but you cannot always perceive it. Sometimes only, it is

manifested for strengthening and directing you. Did you notice the direction in which this sphere moved? You must follow the same direction. You mentioned to me the sacred call – Kalagiya! When someone hears this imperative call, he must know that the way to Shambhala is open to him. He must remember the year when he was called,

because from that time evermore, he is closely assisted by the Blessed Rigden-jyepo. Only you must know and realize the manner in which people are helped, because often people repel the help which is sent...”

“Shambhala knows all. But the secrets of Shambhala are well guarded...”

“Lama, how does it happen that Shambhala on earth is still undiscovered by travelers? On maps you may see so many routes of expeditions. It appears that all heights are already marked and all valleys and rivers explored.”

“Verily, there is much gold in the earth, and many diamonds

and rubies in the mountains, and everyone is so eager to possess them! And so many people try to find them! But as yet these people have not found all things – so, let someone try to reach Shambhala without a call! You have heard about the poisonous streams which encircle the uplands. Perhaps you have even seen people dying from these gases when they come near them. Perhaps you have seen how animals and people



*In Madonna Oriflamma, by Nicholas Roerich, the subject is seen holding the painter's self-designed Banner of Peace.*





*A small Tibetan reliquary box sent from Nicholas Roerich to H. Spencer Lewis.*

begin to tremble when they approach certain localities. Many people try to reach Shambhala, uncalled. Some of them have disappeared forever. Only few of them reach the holy place, and only if their karma is ready.”

“Lama, you speak of a holy place on earth. Is there a rich vegetation there? The mountains seem barren and the hurricanes and all-devastating frosts seem unusually severe.”

“In the midst of high mountains there are unsuspected enclosed valleys. Many hot springs nourish the rich vegetation. Many rare plants and medicinal herbs are able to flourish on this unusual volcanic soil. Perhaps you have noticed hot geysers on the uplands. Perhaps you have heard that only two days away from Nagchu where there is not a tree or plant to be seen, there

is one valley with trees and grass and warm water. But who may know the labyrinths of these mountains? Upon stony surfaces it is impossible to distinguish human traces. One cannot understand the thoughts of people – and he who can, is silent! Perhaps you have met numerous travelers during your wanderings—strangers, simply attired, walking silently through the desert, in heat or cold, toward their unknown goals. Do not believe, because the garment is simple, that the stranger is insignificant! If his eyes are half closed, do not presume that his glance is not keen. It is impossible to discern from which direction power approaches. In vain are all warnings, in vain are all prophecies – but only by the one path of Shambhala can you attain achievement. By addressing yourself directly to the Blessed Rigden-jyepo you can succeed.”

