

Altar Magazine Review (Summer 2006)

Nicholas & Helena Roerich
The Spiritual Journey of Two Great Artists and Peacemakers
Ruth A Drayer

Normally, judging a book by its cover is frowned upon the book review business, but the images of Nicholas and Helena Roerich on this book's cover sucked me in straight away. Nicholas stares, his gaze is penetrating and unrelenting, while Helena looks uncompromising and beautiful. These two images provide such an insight into the world of Nicholas and Helena Roerich that it is almost impossible to not pick up the book and read on.

Artists and spiritualists who traveled the world to chase their dream of world peace, the Roerich's packed a lot into their lives. From painting over 3,000 works of art, publishing the Agni Yoga books, starting art schools, and creating the Roerich Peace Pact, the Roerich's were indeed a force of nature. Attempting to sum up their lives is quite a task, but Drayer proves herself more than up to it. This book is written from a spiritualist point of view, something pointed out in the introduction. Don't expect a strict, warts and all biography; this work was written from a place of love and adoration, rather than a strictly clinical case study. It doesn't diminish the work, but the reader should bear this in mind.

What the book does well is chronicle the journeys undertaken by the Roerich's. Starting in Russia, their epic journey took them to Europe, the US, Central Asia and, finally, to their spiritual home, India. These travels are brought to light by the journal entries of Nicholas that add intimacy to Drayer's description. Drayer covers the lives of two people who wanted to change the world for the good of humanity through spiritualism. An inspiring read for dreamers and cynics alike.

Reviewed by Katherine Boothroyd