

Nicholas Roerich
Mount of Five Treasures (Two Worlds) 1933



Nicholas Roerich – Mount of Five Treasures (Two Worlds), 1933, tempera on canvas

Nicholas Roerich lived an extraordinary life. Not only a Russian painter, but a man of all humanities, he was a lawyer, an explorer, an archeologist, a poet, a historian, a philosopher, a scientist, an activist concerned with the preservation of culture. He was all that and much more. He was **Nicholas Roerich**.

Deeply concerned with spirituality, Roerich was particularly drawn to Asia. After a five-year expedition across the mountainous regions of India, Tibet, China and Mongolia, he was denied access to enter Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, due to the British suspicion that he was a Soviet spy. The Russian settled in India, spending the last 20 years of his life there.

In his eyes, mountains were the physical representation of enlightenment, reverently referring to the Himalayas as the *treasure-house of the Spirit*. He dedicated a large amount of his work to depicting mountains, with beautifully rendered landscapes such as **Mount of Five Treasures (Two Worlds)**. The painting presents the majestic beauty of the third highest mountain in the world, Kanchenjunga, which, rising across Nepal and India, is also called *Five Treasures*

of Snow for its five high peaks.

There are not many words to describe the beauty that Roerich depicted, which is why I'll leave you with this letter that Rabindranath Tagore, the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature winner, wrote to him:

Your pictures profoundly moved me. They made me realize one thing which is obvious and yet which one needs to discover for oneself over and over again: it is that Truth is infinite. When I tried to find words to describe to myself what were the ideas which your pictures suggested, I failed. It was because the language of words can only express a particular aspect of Truth, and the language of pictures finds its domain in Truth where words have no access. Each art achieves its perfection when it opens for our mind the special gate whose key is in its exclusive possession. When a picture is great we should not be able to say what it is, and yet we should see it and know. It is the same with music. When one art can fully be expressed by another then it is a failure. Your pictures are distinct and yet are not definable by words – your art is jealous of its independence because it is great.

London, 1920

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<https://artschaft.com/2018/01/25/nicholas-roerich-mount-of-five-treasures-two-worlds-1933/>

You can read more about Nicholas Roerich here:

<http://www.abcgallery.com/R/roerich/roerichbio.html>

https://www.rbth.com/arts/2013/12/05/nicholas_roerich_an_extraordinary_life_31389

<http://www.roerich.org/roerich-biography.php>