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## CULTURE

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### CREATIVE ENERGY OF CULTURE

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*“Under any circumstances we need to save  
what keeps human spirit alive”  
N. Roerich*

#### Abstract

Cultural monuments and works of art have a great importance for mankind as they carry a special kind of energy that positively affects human beings. This article highlights the meaning of preserving the world's cultural heritage and the urgency of the Roerich Pact that protects the cultural and scientific values.

**Keywords:** culture, protection of cultural property, the Roerich Pact, energy of culture

Human civilization is in constant development, but even though we have already moved into the third millennium, situation in the world remains very tense. We are facing constant military conflicts which lead to the deaths of people and destruction of priceless cultural monuments. And all of this is happening against the background of global environmental, climate and economic crises. Something has got broken in ourselves, we lost something valuable, the very essence of the human being, and this is Culture.

When talking about Culture we don't think of the deep meaning this word has. Very often the word culture is being used to describe very limited range of concepts like theatre, music, literature, museums or entertainment industry. According to philosophical Encyclopedia, CULTURE - (from the Latin.Cultura - cultivation, upbringing, education, development, worshiping), a specific way of organizing and development of human life, represented in the product of material and spiritual labor, in the system of social norms

**5th the International Conference  
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and institutions, spiritual values, relationship of people to nature, each other and ourselves.

Academician Dmitry Likhachev claimed that it is culture that turns people living in a certain space into the nation and that culture is a shrine of the people, nation, and the spirit. Likhachev thought that we will not survive physically if we die spiritually.

Russian artist and philosopher Nicholas Roerich believed in the forthcoming mission of culture. In Roerich's vision Culture is a synthetic concept which main aspects are art, science, education as well as ethical values declared by all the world religions. Culture must elevate all things. In the course of our history the true notion of culture was blended and degraded. Modern world has forgotten its primary sacred meaning and very often the eternal idea of culture is mixed with temporary notion of civilization. Roerich however urges us to distinguish between these two concepts. In his view culture is much broader, comprehensive, sophisticated and primary concept which must justify and spiritualize civilization as its component. According to N. Roerich culture is worshiping of Light, Beauty and Higher matter. "Where there is culture, there is peace, there is hero action, there is correct solution to the most challenging problems of society... Where there are sources of Culture, there are hot springs, erupting from the depths of the Earth. Where the Culture was once born, it is impossible to destroy. You can kill a civilization, but Culture, as a true spiritual value, is immortal" [1].

***The energy field of Culture***

Monuments and works of art bear their own special energy. Each artist impregnates his creation with thoughts and feelings, that is, his energy. Thus every composition is a living entity that contributes to the energy exchange and accumulation. Once the great German scientist and philosopher Leibniz visited renowned painter Rembrandt. He told Leibniz that every stroke he puts on the painting does not just reflect his feelings and thoughts, but also captures them on the canvas, so his works of art can affect other people through their surface. Leibniz was so impressed by this idea that he recorded it in his diary. Nowadays, however, this already does not look so surprising. Modern science views the human as a complex system, which among other activities can not only generate its own energy but also accumulates and transforms the energy from outside in that way having its own energy resources. In the 1960s a new scientific branch appeared that was studying bio-energy or in other words mechanisms of transformation of the energy in the life processes of organisms. One of the main results of bio-energy

**5th the International Conference  
on Science and Technology 2015**

studies in the last decades was establishment of uniformity of energy processes in the entire living world, from microorganisms to people. The next logical step, most likely, will be the scientific recognition of the fact that man imbues with his energy everything that emanates from him, including words thoughts and actions. And the quality of this energy defines results of his creative activity. True cultural masterpieces fill us with life-giving, health-restoring energy. And the higher the spiritual and moral level of creator, the more beneficial his works of art are to the people. "Great art works are the pantries of enormous quantity of energies which can activate and change millions of viewers, affect countless number of generations through the message of beauty radiating from them. This is the extraordinary power of art, its hidden force that is always active and present in a great masterpiece... In the future we might be able to measure the energy of our thoughts and it might help us understand that everything around us is filled with ideas and that our thoughts imprint on everything"[2].

The fact that true art have a positive effect on people has long been known. That kind of impact is created by energy and vibrations. Nowadays modern medicine uses the treatment by sound (music therapy), treatment by color (color therapy) and treatment by magnets, i.e. vibrations of a certain frequency.

Every nation lives and is being formed in a specific cultural energy space. This space imbues human consciousness with all the beauty that is emitted from the masterpieces of human minds and spirit. This common cultural space preserves not only traditional values and cultural identity of its inhabitants, but also the territorial integrity of the state, the foundation of its evolution.

Historian and writer L.V. Shaposhnikova, reflecting on the heroic behavior of the people in 1941-1944 besieged Leningrad, highlights the importance of high cultural and spiritual space that emerged during the years of existence of the city. It is this cultural space that helped residents of Leningrad to survive through the inhumane conditions of blockade, proving the calculations of German physiologists to be wrong. [3]

***The Pact on Protection of Culture and Peace***

From the ancient times humanity was facing a problem of the protection of historical heritage and works of art from the devastation and destruction during the war. More than 2000 years ago Greek historian Polybius wrote: «I hope that future conquerors will learn not to destroy the cities they defeated, that they will refrain from decorating their countries at the expense of misery and misfortune of other nations» [4]. However cultural monuments

### **5th the International Conference on Science and Technology 2015**

are endangered not only in the heat of war, they are also being destroyed by the ignorance of people and lack of funds for their preservation and restoration.

At the beginning of the last century Nicholas Roerich proposed to protect the cultural heritage in time of war and peace. He wrote: "My idea to preserve the artistic and scientific institutions by, first of all, creating an international impulse to defend the most precious things that keep humanity alive. If the banner of Red Cross reminds us about humaneness, then the sign with the same meaning must remind people about the beautiful treasures" [5].

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1935 A Treaty named "International Pact for Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions, Historic Monuments, Missions and Collections" (Roerich Pact) was concluded and signed by representatives of 21 countries at the White House, Washington. Roerich also suggested adopting a distinguishing sign of the Pact, which was named the Banner of Peace or the Banner of Culture. It was made in the form of the white cloth with three red spheres inscribed in a circle on it. The sign represents the unity of the past, present and future in the circle of eternity. This International Flag of Culture does not humiliate anyone or violate anyone's peaceful interests. In case of military conflicts The Banner of Peace, as the Red Cross of Culture, must protect cultural sites. When speaking about the Pact, Roerich emphasized its educational value, and that it must be referred to not in the form of declarations but in the form of educational law. "The Pact for the protection of cultural treasures is needed...as an educational law, that from the first school days will educate the younger generation with noble ideas about preserving the true values of the whole mankind" [6].

The message of the Roerich Pact was forgotten in the heat of the Second World War and it resulted in the destruction of a huge number of great cultural masterpieces. After the war the world community realized the urgent need to protect cultural treasures and the idea of Pact once again attracted the attention of the society. In 1945 the protection of cultural sites became one of the most important tasks of the special UN agency – UNESCO. Roerich Pact played a role of the instrument, used by International Law to preserve Peace and cultural values. On the basis of this document in 1954 there was adopted the Hague Convention on the protection of cultural sites during the armed conflicts, and later other analogous documents. Today the Hague Convention is signed by the governments of 123 countries, including Russia.

*The urgency of the Roerich Pact at the present time*

### **5th the International Conference on Science and Technology 2015**

21st century became a period of unprecedented losses in the world cultural heritage. Military conflicts, acts of terrorism and vandalism lead to the destruction of priceless cultural monuments created by previous generations, which represent spiritual and historical memory of the mankind. Dramatic events in Afghanistan, Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Belize and Ukraine show how essential the peacebuilding ideas of Roerich are. The Roerich's words "Peace through Culture" are reflected in the Pact in the form of concrete action plans to prevent wars. This international treaty was meant to protect cultural objects not only during the war, but in the times of peace as well.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 marked 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Roerich Pact. To celebrate this event there was created an international cultural and educational exhibition project of the International Centre of the Roerichs "The Roerich Pact. History and Modernity". This project was supported by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNESCO. First exhibition was opened in 2012 at the UNSECO Headquarters in Paris. Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova highlighted the importance of the project: "The principles declared in the Roerich Pact have been inspiring UNESCO for a long time in its work for conservation of all forms of heritage and cultural diversity of the world... I would like to express my gratitude to the International Centre of the Roerichs for organizing this brilliant educational exhibition, which presents us with documents, illustrating the history of the Pact creation and its spread around the world as well as paintings of Nicholas Roerich. I am also grateful to the Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation and India at UNESCO for the support of this important initiative" [7]. In 2013-2014 the exhibition was successfully held at the UN departments in Austria, Germany, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Switzerland, Netherlands, India, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with broad support from the state and public figures. In April 2015 the Roerich Pact exhibition was opened in the building of UN General Assembly in New York. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon highlighted that by welcoming this exhibition UN would like to pay tribute to the principles of the protection of cultural heritage, which were promoted by Nicholas Roerich.

We might wonder why Roerich emphasized the fundamental role that culture plays in the development of our civilization. The answer is that only in the cultural space mankind has access to the most important type of energy, which is necessary for its evolution. This is the energy of Beauty, which refines and elevates our consciousness. That is why the Great Russian writer Dostoevsky said that "Beauty will save the world".

#### **5th the International Conference on Science and Technology 2015**

Neglecting cultural values and their protection leads to the spiritual impoverishment of people, that in turn leads to the increasing level of aggression among them. If the energy of human and society is not aimed at the creation in the cultural sphere, then whether we want it or not it will be spontaneously used for the destruction. Therefore the Pact of Culture stresses the great importance of the man-creator and keeper of beauty and takes him under the protection.

The energy that was invested in the Roerich Pact by the Great artist is still active. Nowadays the importance of the Pact has grown since the issue of preservation of culture on our planet is very acute. Roerich Pact calls for the constant, consequent and courageous protection not only of cultural monuments but, above all, the human-creator and carrier of culture. This Treaty is aimed at the future with the intention to unite the humanity for the peace through culture.

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