CHAPTER 19

The “Chalice of Poison”

And so we drink the chalice of poison
tendered by the hands of our former co-workers.
E. Roerich, A letter to co-workers, September 1935

While Nikolai Konstantinovich and Yuri were absent from Kulu, some very important events were taking place in their Himalayan Ashram. The first of these was the “miraculous” apparition of the Buddha Chalice predicted some ten years earlier. This occurred during Esther’s second visit to Kulu on the 3rd of March, 1934, and was briefly recounted in her diary: “At 1:30 p.m. Mother found the promised Chalice of the Buddha in the little carved wooden box from Lahoul beneath the painting Fiat Rex – at the feet of the Lord. Indescribable was Mother’s and our joy. The fingerprints were seen so vividly on the Chalice”.

This second miracle, like the first Parisian one, seems also to have been Roerich-made. Oyana, who by that time had become Elena’s favorite disciple and her spiritual sister, reported in the same diary entry that the Chalice “must have been there for some time” because Raya saw it on the 6th of January, that is when Nikolai and Yuri were still in Naggar, and she then told George (Yuri) about her discovery. The next day (4 March) Elena revealed the secret to Oyana: “Mother told me more of the miracle of the bringing of the Chalice of Buddha ... it was brought on the 3rd of January, and Mother just read to me from her diary of the night of the 3rd to the 4th of January that she saw a figure clad in cyclamen color; it was hidden in a mist and the hand stretched out upon which were the Chalice and other objects. Mother witnessed the Miracle. She feels, however, that George hid from her that Raya saw the Chalice’s wooden box”.

Another surprise comes from Elena’s own diary where she recorded on the day of the miracle her “conversation” with the Master:

Master: The important thing is that the magnet is in the Ashram. <...>
The Chalice is the gift of the father to his daughter, let everyone know this.

1 E. Lichtmann’s diary, Notebook 9, p. 8, entry for 4 March 1934.
Elena: Lord, I feel hurt so much because Raya found it!

Master: We’ll learn next time how to keep better in secret the things we send. I’m asking you, my dear Svati, not to worry. There are so many beautiful things ahead. <....> There is no need to bury the chalice – I’ll tell you later.

And the next day Elena heard more from her Master: “Of course, Urusvati knew when the Chalice was brought”.2 Thus, as in the case of the miraculous “apparition of the Black Stone”, the Roerichs seem to have been involved again in the making of this second miracle, “a great sign” of the New Era. The Chalice appeared on the very eve of Nikolai’s and Yuri’s departure for their Manchurian Expedition, which, as we know, was to start the model agricultural cooperatives, thereby laying the foundation of the New Country. Like the Black Stone, the

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