

**LONG TIME FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE, DR. ALEXANDER VASCHENKO OF
MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY VISITS MIR CENTRE FOR PEACE AT SELKIRK COLLEGE
ON JULY 17, 2009 TO SPEAK ON
"TRADITIONAL CULTURES: PATHWAYS TO UNDERSTANDING."**



This is his third visit to Selkirk College and the Kootenays, his second visit to the Mir Centre, and his first visit to the Mir building since its completion.

Dr. Vaschenko is Head of the Chair of Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture at MGU in Moscow Russia; he has been an ex-officio member of the Mir group at Selkirk College since the early 1990s, a friend and supporter to the Doukhobor community in Canada, and a world expert on aspects of Indigenous cultures in Russia and North America.

In his talk to about 20 community members, Vaschenko said that to see the beauty of the Mir Centre for Peace come to such a beautiful fulfilment was a dream come true, a remarkable intellectual and cultural achievement.

Professor Vaschenko said that he understood the Mir Centre was based in the living knowledge that traditional cultures, the community in dialogue the world, were critical for any sense of healthy identity in a rapidly globalizing world.

*“For, to be something in the outer world, the bigger world, one must be rooted in an intimate, known world, a traditional world,”
Vaschenko said.*



“The Mir Centre for Peace is one of those critical places where past, present, and future meet, and change one another; this place is a living thing—joining cultures and histories, a true place of ‘confluence’.

“Your Mir Centre is still a baby, even so it has meaning at every level, even International. “It is a celebration of life giving forces.

“It is a meeting place for social and cultural elements which otherwise would never have met. It is a meeting place for all that is sacred: tradition—the essence of humanity, and communal and environmental concerns.

“And, specifically, it is the living embodiment of the theory and practice of peaceable living.

“Your Mir Centre is young now, but in itself it is already encompassing the individual, the communal, And in fact, national significance. In essence, your Centre is already international.

“I applaud you for the materialization of this dream, and wish that you, and the Mir Centre, may stay young in spirit and body—and that you may not lose the sense of the sacred which joins past, present, and future in this place.”

Professor Vaschenko ended by saying, “if there is any way in which I can help your activities in Russia I will do so.”

The afternoon concluded with approximately one hour of questions and comments from the audience.

Myler Wilkinson

