

THE RINGING CEDARS OF RUSSIA by Vladimir Megre

Book 2 of *The Ringing Cedars Series*

Translated by: John Woodsworth Edited by: Leonid Sharashkin

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Translator's Preface

Most readers of this present volume will have already marvelled at the euphoric and mind-boggling revelations contained in Megre's first book, *Anastasia* (published in English translation by Ringing Cedars Press in February 2005).

In addition to offering the reader fascinating glimpses into the story of the publication of the first book, this second volume, *The Ringing Cedars of Russia*, delves deeply into the ethical and metaphysical concepts behind *Anastasia's* sayings presented so dramatically in the 'series opener'. The chapter-titles associated with these concepts range from the mystical ("The Space of Love") to the mysterious ("Illusory people") to the theological ("Why nobody can see God") to the downright practical ("How to produce healing cedar oil"). They all ring a chord of response in the reader's heart and soul and at the same time call upon the thinker in each reader. And out of concepts such as these pop up at least as many questions as answers — questions that may well cause the reader either to re-examine or re-affirm his or her basic concepts of life.

My own involvement with *The Ringing Cedars of Russia* did not pass without a personal effect on me (independently of the actual translation process, in which I take special care to be guided by objective professional standards). In no small measure the opportunity to work closely with the book not only reconfirmed much of what I already believed, but also helped me re-discover my own faith, allowing me a fresh look at a number of concepts I had been brought up on from childhood (like moving around

a three-dimensional object and seeing it from a different angle). It also caused me to re-examine the reasons for believing in what I had long believed (including the practical understanding and application of a spiritual approach to healing), and for this I am grateful.

Indeed, it is hard for me now to believe that at this time last year I had never even heard of a Siberian recluse named Anastasia, or a Russian writer named Vladimir Megre, or a Russian-American forester named Leonid Sharashkin, or the mysterious 'Ringing Cedars'. Yet these are names that, since entering my field of awareness in September 2004, have not only become a significant focus of my professional activity as a translator but also figured prominently in my daily thought, conversation and life experiences.

Within four months I had not only read the first three books of Megre's Ringing Cedars Series but also completed the translation of Book 1, Anastasia. And now, less than four months after that, the translation of Book 2 is ready to go to press and I have already started work on Book 3.

Translating the 'cherry-tree' chapter brought back a particular memory of my initial read of the three books. This had taken place back in September and October, when our Ottawa weather still allowed a pleasant outdoor afternoon sit on our front porch. With its south-west exposure and view of nothing but the fields and trees across the road, the porch made an ideal spot in which to absorb this brand new literary adventure into the delights of a summer glade in the far-off Siberian taiga. The afternoon sun was bright and warm enough to permit me to dispense not only with heavy outer clothing (which had already sprouted on the backs of many pedestrians on downtown sidewalks here) but also with my eye-glasses, which I am accustomed to make use of during any indoor reading.

During the same period I was especially struck by the following incident. On the porch, right in front of where I was sitting, stood a clay pot containing several red geraniums my wife had planted earlier in the year. My reading prompted me to look at them — and one flower in particular (the one closest to me) — through new eyes. I began to regard it with warmth and affection (I would even say love) every time I saw it.

Of course I had known from news reports about the effect of people's thoughts and attitudes on growing things, but it was not until my reading of Vladimir Megre that I had really seen anything like this in practice. My newfound feelings for the geraniums remained strong throughout the month of October, and as the days gradually grew colder, most of the flowers in our garden (as well as other geraniums on the same porch) faded and expired for the season. But the geraniums in this pot, especially the one closest to me, refused to fade or even droop with the cooling of the air. Even toward the end of October, when I finished my reading of Book 3, it was still standing proud and just as bright red as when my attention was first drawn to it. And even when I saw it months later, all bent to the ground by winter snows, its vivid red hue had scarcely faded.

Two other extraordinary co-incidences occurred in our home during this period. In mid-November, just after I had finished translating the "Concert in the taiga" chapter in Anastasia and was working on the description of Anastasia's dance routine in the morning mist in the following chapter ("Who lights a new star?"), my wife Susan, who had not read any of the text at this point, presented me with a poem she had recently written. The poem was entitled Gracefully, the dancer... and described a dance of a young girl "where all movement conforms to poetry" and whose "life itself had become a never-ending dance" — rather close indeed to Megre's own expression.

Three months later, shortly before the first print-run of Anastasia rolled off the presses in February 2005, Susan, an amateur artist as well as a poet, showed me a coloured-pencil drawing she had just been

working on of a nude figure in her twenties with blonde hair, her hands upstretched to the heavens, the parts of her body drawn with colours of Nature instead of the flesh, and with a face very similar to the illustration of Anastasia on the cover of the Russian edition. The remarkable thing is that at that point my wife had not read any of the text about Anastasia, nor even seen a portrait of her, and did not have her consciously in mind as she was doing the drawing.

In his Afterword, editor Leonid Sharashkin will be sharing with you similar 'co-incidences' from his own experience connected with the publication of the English translation of Anastasia in America. These and the hearty welcome of the book in the English-speaking world are indeed reminiscent of the surprising reaction of thousands of readers to the book's initial appearance in Russia in 1996.

Hearing the impressions shared with me by the first readers of Anastasia in English — by people from quite different walks of life — I have come to appreciate just how far-reaching and universal Anastasia's message is in its scope. For one thing, it does not limit itself to any formulated creed. It is not a new religion with a new set of doctrines for which we must necessarily abandon whatever we believed in previously in order to follow. It speaks to the hearts and minds of people of many different religions as well as, equally, to those who profess no religion at all. It speaks to the hearts and minds of many scholars and students of the physical sciences — especially those who are reaching out to explore the more holistic dimensions of their fields and to find answers that lift them beyond the confines of their specialist training and into an understanding of how their investigations relate to the universal aspects of Man, Nature, the Cosmos and even God.

In addition to a deeper exploration of these universal concepts, Book 2 offers an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at how Book 1 finally came to be written and published. Like all great mind-stirring works of history, the birth-throes attending its emergence into light came at a considerable price to the author. Just how high the price was — indeed, the whole chain of extraordinary circumstances that led from the wilds of Siberia to the book's appearance on Moscow street-corners and its eventual inclusion in national bestseller lists — is part of the fascinating adventure you will now share with the author as you journey from the mental heights of a taiga glade to the urban depths of Russia's capital city, passing indeed "through the valley of the shadow of death"¹ en route, along with a surprising encounter in a completely different tree-lined setting and a final stop in the foothills of the Caucasus mountains for yet another amazing discovery.

While the book's message is indeed universal in its scope and applicable to individuals the world over, there is no escaping the fact that its original expression, in terms of not only words but concepts, draws in significant measure upon the Russian tradition, and this fact, as with its predecessor in the series, presented its share of challenges to the English translator. Two of these deserve particular mention here.

First, the Russian word *sviatyni* (derived from *sviatoi* = holy or sacred) has no direct equivalent in English. It refers not only to holy places such as sanctuaries, tabernacles, shrines and crypts, but also to sacred objects (including icons, statues and relics), sacred texts (e.g., the Bible or the Koran) and even trees. Having the same root as the Russian word for 'light' (*svet*), *sviatyni* may also be used to designate sacred concepts such as spirit or grace. None of these alternatives by itself would be sufficient to

¹Psalm 23: 4 (Authorised King James Version).

compass the range of the original Russian term. Since most of its occurrences relate to what we call 'locations', it was eventually decided to use the awkward but more or less accurate combination sacred sites as a general equivalent and employ alternative translations where the context required.

Another Russian word whose translation engendered considerable discussion was *pervoistoki* — derived from two basic roots: *perv-* (first, primary, primal) and *istok-* (origin, source, spring — as in describing the headwaters of a river, for example). The compound term, especially as used in this book, unmistakably conveys the sense of a pure, uncontaminated source, and this eventually led to the selection of the particular combination *pristine origins*. Other specific translation challenges are documented, where appropriate, in the footnotes.

Again, as in Book 1, the footnotes are also used to give background information on specific people, places and events unfamiliar to most English-speakers.

And now, dear readers, I need only invite you once again to find yourselves a comfortable reading-place — preferably one shielded from the possible intrusion of artificial sounds (a quiet outdoor setting would be ideal!) — and join with me in exploring the second instalment of the author's adventure through both the geographical space of Russia's vast distances and the mental space of the spiritual essence of the Universe, as revealed by *The Ringing Cedars of Russia*.

Ottawa, Canada
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John Woodsworth

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- Book 1 *Anastasia* (ISBN 0-9763333-0-9)
- Book 2 *The Ringing Cedars of Russia* (ISBN 0-9763333-1-7)
- Book 3 *The Space of Love* (ISBN 0-9763333-2-5)
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