

# ADVANCED SHAMANIC PRACTICE TRAINING

Alice Springs

September, 2008

TRAINING BRIEF

Spirit of the Earth Medicine Society  
Australian Dreaming Project

## INTRODUCTION

The opportunity to offer this training has been a long time in the making. This is simply because it has taken many years to build up the Medicine Society and Ikon to a point where there is a substantial culture and infrastructure to support the next steps in the evolution of medicine ways work. It is also largely a matter of the readiness of members of SOTEMS, and graduates of Ikon to undertake such serious further steps. And, of course, there needs to be changes in Australian society in order for this work to be supported.

On the international scene, there have been great advances in shamanic training, what with courses being offered in the Americas and Europe, in particular, with most of those of worth being set in nature, away from cities. Moreover, there has been a steady rise in the amount of professional, scientific research done on shamanic healing which has added to the viability of our work.

We have the opportunity to our own approach to shamanic practice, pursuing what we have achieved in the last twenty years. The way is open for a unique kind of practice to develop here. The combined efforts of SOTEMS and Ikon have made this possible.

*We stand on the edge of a new era in our work!*

On behalf of all of the community of SOTEMS and Ikon Institute, I welcome your interest and potential commitment.

## THE PROGRAM

Fundamental requirements:

The pre-requisites for this program, in terms of experience and qualifications, appear in the brochure which has already been circulated.

In addition, the following values and actions are required:

1. In order to pursue shamanic practice, a wholehearted commitment to medicine ways is required. It cannot be an incidental part of your life; it must be lived, embraced, passionately pursued and expressed. It is the most ancient of all spiritual pathways yet the most relevant today as it speaks to our fundamental part in nature, and Spirit, therefore, and the survival and growth of human beings and the world we live in.
2. It is essential that, in committing to this pathway that you do so with a mindfulness which will allow you to practice despite what others think or say about you and what you do. This requires courage of a 'moral' kind; not physical courage, but the summoning of the strength and focus to pursue what is the right action for you and your clients.
3. Whatever befalls you throughout your lifetime is all material for the path, whether it be misfortune or good fortune, health or illness,

inclusion or banishment, success or failure. You need to know that the path will test you, just as in all spiritual traditions, sometimes taking you back to some experience which you had put behind you, would rather forget or perhaps you thought was resolved. This all has the potential to strengthen your medicine and your power to reach and assist others.

4. There is great joy in this path: the opportunity to celebrate with others, to help them move along their path to a fuller, more vibrant life is a peerless experience. Your own growth in charity, healing, inclusiveness, being a citizen of the world and all worlds will offer you beauty and fulfilment.
5. But, there is no room for hubris in these pursuits. There is no room for narcissism. There is no room for power-seekers. This work is expressed through humility, grace, and the notion that the only power that matters is that which makes the world work better through the reduction of suffering, the enhancement of our understanding and healing work with each other and nature, the world which supports us.
6. Once you are committed, the path will never relent; it will always be with you, always call you. Be very aware of this and be thankful for it.
7. Remember always that when we use the term 'Spirit' it is not an obeisance to a being or person; rather, it is an acknowledgement, respect and thankfulness for the gift of life, your life, all life, the source of life.

The elements of the 2008 program:

The first part of the training is focused upon spirit and nature. Classical shamanic training always recognises the place of human beings in all nature and, therefore, the spirit of all things. It is about our being in the many worlds of nature and encountering the beings who inhabit those worlds. This means the beings of earth [soil, rock, hill, valley, riverbed, etc], sky [clouds, wind, sun, moon, stars, etc], water [rain, river, ocean, lakes, pools, etc], fire [embers, smoke, sun, stars, flames, heat, etc].... also, the worlds of animals, birds, fish as well as trees, shrubs and grass, insects ..... all life.

Much of this means developing a different kind of awareness of our part in nature: for example ....

- Learning how to walk in nature
- Learning how to listen in nature
- Learning how to enter into the worlds of nature
- Learning how to communicate with the beings in nature

This also means working with the stuff of nature.... earth, rocks, bark, wood, water, wind, and so on.

Details:

The program will involve the following activities:

1. It will be located in the same area as the 2008 VQ but at a distance from the questors, for obvious reasons. We will have a separate camp area from that of the VQ.
2. The first six days of the quest will observe the usual fasting/low intake requirements as the VQ. You will have the same meal as the VQ participants on days 4 and 6. The rest of the time, there will be a balanced, but minimal diet available with appropriate supplements supplied. Any special requirements will be taken care of, within reason.
3. There will be an opening ceremony involving your personal dedication to the program and shamanic work. This will be matched by my dedication to you and the SOTEMS/Ikon spirit.
4. Work will begin immediately the VQ participants are settled.
5. The work will involve a series of ceremonies and myths which will occur at dawn each day and then unfold into work in the environment. For example, we may start with the myth/ritual complex of earth at dawn and then unfold this into the walking and being with the earth to engage the spirit of place and to derive its medicine for us. Instruction will be given throughout on how to do this and how to let your medicine guide you.
6. Each evening, we will convene and debrief on the day's experiences and take the training some steps further. This will involve acquiring the skills and knowledge to work in the atmosphere and medicines of day and night.
7. All of this will build on the mythology which already exists within SOTEMS and which has been generated by shamanic, visionary practice.
8. A significant part of our work will be concerned with extending our Dreaming through this work, developing our mythology and ritual practice as a group and as individuals. Throughout, the group's interests will prevail.
9. Personal and group instruction and counsel will occur throughout the program.
10. You will receive a package of materials which includes the mythological context of your work and especially the Dreaming Wheel and its many aspects. You will need to thoroughly familiarise yourself with this material. *Don't come unprepared.*
11. The program will end with a closing ceremony and an assessment for each person in terms of where and how far you have travelled and what needs to be done next. There is much to do between the ten-day sessions.
12. Each of the ten-day sessions will end with your being awarded a staff which represents the successful completion of the training. Keep in mind that you could fail. At the end of the program, you will have four staffs. Successful completion of the course will involve your receiving the fifth staff, the symbol of shamanic status. This will be awarded by degree ... there are five degrees. Exceptional work will be rewarded

with a fifth level. All levels allow practice to begin upon completion of the program. There is a parallel with the way in which martial arts gradings are achieved.

Sample of the program:

Day 1:

Opening ceremony: Dedications

The mythology which frames the work

The Dreaming Wheel as framework and guide

Travelling into the worlds of nature and spirit

The medicine of the earth

The spirit of place/country

The dreaming paths of your life

The shamanic tools from the earth

Stories, songs and dances

Within the program, you will receive special healing work designed to clear away obstacles to your embracing this path and especially moving through personal matters which hold you back. The healing will be direct and often confrontational, but truly worthwhile.

Some practicalities:

**Finances:** To participate, you must pay the deposit and then arrange a method of payment for the remainder of the course. This translates into the following formula:

Total cost: \$9,500.00

Deposit: \$1,000.00

Payments over 18 months: \$472.00

You can negotiate a payment plan other than this, but it cannot extend for more than two years.

**Camping:** The arrangements for the program are camping and bringing the same equipment as in the VQ. A list of things needed will be sent to you well before the program starts.

**Afterlife:** On the evening we return to Alice Springs, it is proposed to have a dinner together. It is not compulsory and no judgement obtains if you don't want to attend. You will be notified of arrangements.

There will be work to do between ten-day sessions. You will receive regular communication and support.

I hope that you are excited about this. I am!

Yours in Spirit

Rafael  
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