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The Path of the 9 Sacred Pillars

An Initiatory Path in Contemporary Shamanism

The Path of the 9 Sacred Pillars is an initiatory contemporary shamanic spirituality that views life, both physical and ephemeral, as a sacred ecosystem. Essential to this tradition is living in *Să'Mă* (pronounced Sah-Mah), which describes the process of balancing the nine dimensions of the soul and self, all the while reclaiming one's connection with Nature.

Shamanic training within this tradition is rigorous process and students are paced through several years of study, each with a different focus. The **first** year of study is an introduction to the Path of the 9 Sacred Pillars and is designed as preparation for later work. During this first year, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the framework of this tradition, which includes a foundational knowledge of the 9 Sacred energy sources that define our lives and the natural and spiritual energies around us, which are:

- Connection—the energetic drive toward interconnectedness between all beings and levels of existence;
- Immersion/Focus—the grounding energy that establishes purpose, niche and individuality;
- Discovery—the energy that promotes discovery, expansion, and awareness;
- Understanding—the energy that promotes consciousness and depth awareness;
- Nurturing—the energy that promotes relational connection, support, and nourishment;
- Generating—the energy that promotes initiation and movement, combating inertia;
- Openness/Play—the energy that promotes reception, experimentation, and feedback systems;
- Communication/Vision—the energy that promotes identity, creativity, self-expression, and modification;
- Adventure/New Experience—the energy that promotes transformation, change, resiliency, and rebirth.

As students move through their first year, they learn a wide range of self-healing and energy techniques based upon these 9 sacred energies. Additionally students actively learn about their natural environments and take an active role in reconnecting to the natural, non-human energies around them. At the conclusion of their first year, students create a comprehensive pillar

assessment about how the pillar energies move in their own personal lives as well as engage in a vision quest.

During the **second** year, students learn more advanced shamanic techniques, including dimensional and retrieval work, pillar divination strategies, and begin working with numerous helper spirits. Students in this level of training are also grounded within the ecotheosophical and cosmological elements of this training.

Third and Fourth year study is designed for those wishing to pursue more professional roles within this tradition. **Third** year study is designed for those students wishing to pursue professional practice associated with advanced healing. Students completing the third year of study are certified within a wide range of healing and divination concentrations. Certifications include energy healing work, crystal therapy, and flower essence therapy for example. Those who wish to pursue ordination within the tradition enter their **fourth** year of study, which includes advanced coursework in the ecotheosophical aspects of this tradition, devotional and ministerial duties and strategies, and pastoral-based shamanic counseling techniques. Students within this year of training must complete an additional one year supervised mentorship and successfully complete theological coursework in world religions. Students at this level of study take on teaching positions of this tradition. Participation in the third and fourth year of study requires admissions acceptance.

Through each level of training students learn tradition-based shamanic ritual practices and become fluid in the sacred chants and symbols utilized in this tradition. All students have access to a wide range of additional learning tools and an opportunity to connect with other students from around the world at the fully-integrated online class site. Additionally, students have opportunities to attend online real-time classes to further deepen their learning on adjunctive topics.

Students interested in applying for the 9 Sacred Pillars program may apply online at <http://www.OceanSeminaryCollege.org/Admissions.html> or may email Dr. Katherine MacDowell for further information: oceanseminary@verizon.net. Students admitted are required to review prerequisite material explaining foundational information to the tradition. Once this is reviewed, students may elect to begin formal study. Students studying the Path of the 9 Sacred Pillars may elect to obtain a degree from any other program at Ocean Seminary as well as pursue another initiatory program. Additionally students may withdraw from the program at any time for any reason. Students may additionally study this tradition as it merges within three additional initiatory paths: Womyn's Wheel (a Goddess-based, women-only path); Pillar Seidr (a Norse, women-only path); and the 9 Sacred Trees (a Druidic Pillar path).

About Dr. Katherine MacDowell. Dr. MacDowell holds a masters degree in Counseling Psychology and is presently completing her doctorate in Health Psychology. Additionally, she holds two theology doctorates and has studied the initiatory path of Dianic Witchcraft with Z. Budapest and eclectic Wicca with High Priestess Lady Raven Moonshadow. She is the founder of the path of the 9 Sacred Pillars and has been practicing this tradition for more than 25 years. She is also a professional writer and produced, award-winning playwright and composer. She is the president of Ocean Seminary College and has been teaching adult learners for more than 8 years. In addition to her theological work, she has worked as a professional psychotherapist and addictions counselor for more than 10 years. She is the author of *Sacred Groves, Ethics & Professional Practice for Neopagan Clergy*, and *Introduction to the Path of the 9 Sacred Pillars*, which are slated for publication in Summer 2009. Her research on the psychological and health effects of Eminent Domain is currently in revision for publication.