



Allow me to begin with this intention. I will share so much info with you. I have recorded most of it in written handouts, which are available online for you to download or print. I teach from many different traditions and cultures- from shamans, teachers, gurus, mystics, books, my own journeys and revelations. Never am I ever suggesting that I am right and you should buy into what I say. We all are different. We have different purposes. We have different strengths, perspectives and ethnicities. So, as we move through class, if you don't resonate with something I say, you are welcome to ask any questions. I will never debate you on any of this, as there isn't just one way to help the world. I want to share my perspective, my methods, my knowledge to help you build yours. Take what I share, use what works, fix what doesn't and pitch what doesn't fit you and your path. My goal here is for all of us to become more, to find more of our purpose, more of our power. We will all do that in slightly different ways. Nay all of us will be powered by love and compassion. Know that intention is behind all that I share with you.

Welcome to the world of Shamanism!

"I'm not an anthropology buff, but I've read enough of it to know that the Zuni don't think that their way is the way for everyone, and that the Navajo don't think their way is the way for everyone. Each of them has a way that works well for them."

— Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit*

I look forward to meeting you in class. I'm always curious about what brings you here. Many of us are seekers- looking for a higher way, a better way, an easier way. Shamanism can help you get where you wish to go. It is not religion, nor does it even have a dogma. Shamanism does have an extraordinarily long history with teachers and practitioners all over the world. The practice offers you many tools to use as fits your journey. As we introduce ourselves, I will likely ask you what brought you to the class... what is your purpose or intention for this time we will spend together. You might jot that down in a journal. Keeping a journal isn't required but it's a great way to get your thoughts down on paper so tomorrow you can review. Next year you can look back and see progress or change.

So... what brought you here to class?

Shamanism is the most ancient spiritual practice we know of. Yet, it still has amazing relevance and power in our modern times. You will likely not become a shaman but rather a practitioner of its ways as I am. We are here to learn what shamans did, why and how they did their work. Then, I hope you will take those skills and see what our world needs from you. Explore why you came here to earth at this crucial time and determine based on your purposes and skills and materials available to you, how each of us might help the world today. First I look within, then I look at the world, Shamanism to me is my path to inner me. I teach it from that perspective. It provides a point of view and a variety of practices that open your heart, connecting body, mind, emotions and spirit. It allows you to also share that connection, that energy and that great hope with others. Come along and take only what resonates with you and your path.

I was given a way to look at our world many years ago. I want to share that now, as I will undoubtedly refer to it repeatedly through these classes.

In the old world, the 3D world some call it, the world of greed, power and fear... that world honored the physical, the visible and the practical/logical. Many of us were raised with those values. We wanted science to prove things to us. We had to see it to believe it.

In the new world, the 5D world, the world of love and compassion... we are called to honor so much more. Along with the physical, we have the spiritual or energetic world.

Equally important to the visible is our invisible world.

And while practical and logical seem solid to us, our new world also is filled with magical.

Physical and spiritual, visible and invisible, practical/logical and magical.

Each empowers the other. The physical self is more when paired, combined with the spiritual. The spirit needs the physical as much as the physical needs the spirit. Embracing all those aspects of you magnifies your energy and power many times over. The physical isn't flawed and the spirit perfect. They both need the other. We are complete when we embrace both this aspects. So as we move through class, I might often mention physical and spiritual, visible and invisible, practical and magical. Just thought I'd give you a bit of background so you get my point.



What is your role?

We aren't here to dress up in a costume and play at being shamans. After class, you get to choose whatever path you wish. But while we're together, let me share my understanding of our roles in our modern transforming world. All of us may have had past lives being shamans, healers, witches, mystics. I know I have. There's no real glory in that... maybe that's one reason we don't readily remember those things. We were who we were to learn. We succeeded and failed and moved on. Today the world is asking something different of us. My mission is to share that with you as I can. You don't have to do as I do... I just want you to have the data, the perspective so you don't waste time in this life recreating a past one.

The world has changed. The energies of this world have shifted. For me the shift started in 2012 but some felt the movement, the elevation in the 1980's and 1990's. The Mayans predicted the end of an era in 2012 and maybe they were predicting this transformation. Regardless of your school of thought, the world elevated... awakened. The plants and animals- they're onboard with it all because they live connected to Mother Nature, Gaia. They hear her, care for her, communicate with her. The old world honored power, money which fostered fear and greed. That world could not survive. It wasn't sustainable, fair, equitable or kind. This new world is powered by love and compassion. We can't see this new world until we decide that it's possible and that we have a role to play in it. We must allow ourselves, train ourselves to release the fear, the blame, the divisiveness and find our ways to love.

I won't belabor this point as it could take many classes, but we will support the new world by choosing our thoughts and actions carefully. We must choose love. We must cultivate compassion. And each loving act will support allowing elevation of the planet to be seen by more. In several generations, many will see the new world but it's our actions in this life that will support change. You might think your actions are too small but they're not. We might be individuals in the physical sense and we are individuals in our energetic/ spiritual selves. But that aspect of us, the invisible, magical part is also part of a whole. Everything we do affects the whole.

If this is hard to envision, try this simple analogy. Imagine our world is a bucket of water. I have a digital thermometer. The water in the bucket is 70 deg F. When you choose to act in fear or divisiveness (old world behavior) it's like dropping an ice chip in that bucket. You can't feel the difference but the digital thermometer now reads 69.7 deg F. When you choose to act in love, it's like dropping a sun-warmed pebble in the bucket. Again, you can't feel a difference but the digital thermometer now reads 70.2 deg. Each small act affects the whole. There are millions of us all over the world working to lift the energy but finding our way to love and compassion. We don't have to get every human in the world onboard with valuing love and compassion but there's a tipping point that comes when so many people shift to the loving side that the others start wanting to bath in our nice warm water.

You can ponder all this as much as you wish. You can discard the ideas and stay in the blame, in the fear. But I say, come on over to finding your way to love... it's a much easier and more healing way to live.

Now, what does all this have to do with Shamanism. That is the basis of my practice. The world needs us to be open hearted teachers, healers, leaders. This is one path to fulfill that role

“We have reached a turning point in our progress as a nation and as a civilization. At this critical time in the life of our planet, our primary need is not for more data, doctors, or different technologies for industrial growth. Instead, we need different people– more heart-open people living from their spiritual center.” - Jeff D. Nixa, “The Lost art of Heart Navigation- a modern shaman’s field manual”

History of Shamanism

Since the beginning of human history, people developed practices and beliefs that form the basis of what we now call shamanism. Evidence from archeology, like cave paintings and old objects, supports the idea that shamanism started back in the Paleolithic era, or Old Stone Age (2.5 million years ago and continued until 10,000 BCE) and in some tribal communities, it continues today. Our ancestors hunted and gathered moved around a lot, living closely with the earth’s natural cycles and the animals they relied on to live. Those people dealt with their world's challenges not only with physical ability and smarts but also by tapping into the spiritual world which was as real to them as the physical.

Shamanism first appeared in Siberia and Central Asia among tribes of hunters and gatherers. The shamans from these areas were thought to have special powers to connect the human and spirit worlds. Their practices, like drumming, chanting, and using plants that change consciousness, allowed them to talk to spirits of nature or ancestors for healing, guiding hunts, predicting the future, affecting the weather, and more. These shamanic beliefs in the spirit of things and ancestors, along with methods like drumming and dancing for spiritual visions, spread from northern Asia all over the world. We see similar practices in every corner of our world.

Shaman’s role

Understanding the shaman’s role is important as we begin to learn these practices. In different cultures, the shamans played different roles but in general, one led in the area in which they were skilled. So a tribe might have a healer who is knowledgeable with herbs and also someone who was wise in matters of mental health. Some shamans were seers and some managed the weather. Some were the ones who could pull the tribe together to sing and dance. Some were tribal artists. You might think that all those roles fell to one person, but what was not always the case.

As the tribe moved to a new location, the shaman(s) were the leaders. They looked at what the people would need. What plants were plentiful and what purposes they could serve. What food was available? And how did the people as a community need encouragement.

A shaman's role was always to connect with spirit but honestly that also was everyone's role in tribal culture. The spirit connection belongs to all people, all plants and animals. Modern society took that personal connection to the divine away. So as we study shamanism, understand you're not so much adding new skills as you are uncovering skills that you've always had. Our power comes in finding our way back to nature and to our spiritual self

We are here to learn about what the shaman did in ancient times. We also are called to be very aware that these times we live in are very different. I don't intend to replicate what was done in some ancient time in another part of the world. I don't live in that time or place. Now we're in 2024, the age of Intuition and transformation. Let's take what we can learn from history, then write some new stories for ourselves in this amazing time.

Here's an example- shamans in Central and South America use Palo Santo as a purifying incense and as a medicine. Imagine eons ago, one tribe from Central America journeyed north to South Dakota. Yes, I'm making this up but who knows. Anyway, when they arrived, guess what didn't grow there... yes, no Palo Santo. But guess what grows like a weed there? Yes, sage. So the shaman explores what is available and abundant where the tribe is, then studies, experiments and journeys to understand how to use what they have. You too get to do this same thing. Don't feel like you have to buy white sage from the metaphysical store when there might be an abundance of mullein or mugwort growing in your back yard. See what you can do with that. We are here, our tribe is here. What resources do we have to work with?

Skills of the shaman

There are many books written that delineate many skills used by shamans. I have listed 3 of my favorite books in the reference section but seek out more knowledge as it calls to you. I hope to teach you basic skills here that you will expand on after the class.

The shaman was the go-to man or woman that the tribe relied on when they couldn't sort out life, challenges or dreams on their own. People who heard voices or had visions weren't considered mentally challenged, they were considered gifted to be receiving info from the spirit side. Some of a shaman's skills might include: dream interpretation, managing weather, seeking signs of times to hunt or to move the camp, understanding healing plants, knowing times for and leading ceremonies, rituals and celebrations.



Shamans are healers but not always in the way you might think. When we are ailing, we go to a doctor who gives us a pill. We go home and hope for the best. "Medicine" in tribal times wasn't necessarily a pill or potion. The shaman knew the ones who came to them. The shamans sought to understand if the seekers were happy, if their life was well balanced, if they felt secure in their role in the community. The shaman might have a ceremony for the one seeking healing. In those ceremonies, sometimes the shaman would journey to spirit for answers but sometimes the shaman assisted the seeker to journey to find their own solutions on the other side.

The shaman helped the community by reinforcing the belief in all that was spiritual/magical. Often the shaman dressed in a particular way, especially during ceremony. The seeker might also be asked to wear a special garment or be painted or ornamented in a unique way. The shaman used sound, scent, movement, words, fire, water, nature, wind to "set a stage" where one could believe that change could come. The shaman often got the whole community together for ceremonies or journeys. There is great energy created when a group gathers together to join in a common purpose.

The shaman received and shared information through direct knowing, direct revelation. Now most of you already understand how to do this but if you think not, let me run through some ways you already experience direct knowing.

- Intuition
- Meditation
- Dreams
- Ah-ha moments
- Gut feelings

What other ways do you get insights, surprises, unexpected information? In shamanic traditions, you practice these methods and increase your comfort with them. You might set an intention in the morning- "today I'll receive some insights into helping my friend Sam." Pause from time to time through the day and remember this intention. Breathe in deeply and picture Sam. Take that intention for a walk at lunch. Not grinding through the statement as much as sort of dedicating your walk to Sam. Be open to ideas that might come in any way- from a friend, from something you read, an "out of nowhere" thought. We're not asking some authority outside of ourselves for help, at least I don't. I am allowing my attention to sink down from my head to my heart center and I'm holding this intention, this person in my heart with love. Answers come.

Later we will talk about the traditional shamans journey, which is another way of direct revelation but taking a shaman's journey isn't always convenient. What we're trying to do with this practice is to strengthen your connection, your reliance on your higher wisdom. You may have noticed in our new world that your intuition or your psychic experiences are stronger. Yes, that's true. You can strengthen these skills further by practicing. Living and knowing that information is available to you. The veil between the visible and invisible world is so much thinner. Bridge this veil by bringing the physical and the spiritual/energetic you together to tackle these questions. Open to the possibilities. Expect the magical in your life.

Meditation to shift from head to heart center.

Your skills

Each of us is uniquely gifted. We all have different strengths, skills, dreams and purposes. **How many of you feel comfortable in your knowledge of your strengths, your goals and your purpose?** Part of the work we will do here together is to help you clarify your strengths, empower your skills and move towards fulfilling your purpose. Now, know that right now you are already fulfilling your purpose. Whatever you are doing or have done in life, so much of that has purpose. But you came to this class likely with some purpose in mind, the next goal perhaps. I want to give you a few minutes here to write about purpose. You don't have to share this, it's only for you. You can jot down a few words or ideas. Exploring your purpose is a practice that grows and changes as life goes on.

If you are drawing a blank on purpose, explore things that you loved as a kid. Things that kept you busy and fascinated for hours. Sometimes our passions as children hold clues to our purpose. Or explore this idea- if money and time were no object, what would you do that you aren't doing now. Or what would you do more of?

Ethics of a shaman

When we build our skills in shamanism it is to serve. Ethically, it's important to remember to be a kind and compassionate human. You are learning skills that help you to serve yourself and your community. Learning these ways doesn't make us different or better. It is intended to open our hearts and empower our humility. These skills can help you understand and serve your purpose in life. You aren't here to demonstrate your powers but rather to empower others, to teach others how to be their best. We never want people to rely on us, but rather to learn to rely on themselves. This way you empower the world and help it evolve into a higher wiser community

Some feel that as a whole, our society in the US especially is very adolescent. We are concerned out our stuff, our money, our house. We want things to be our way. However, a mature adult is more focused on taking their place in the circle of their community and serving as their skills might be best put to use. I suggest all of us focus on serving this new world with our skills, not focusing on what we can get if we learn to do this or that.



“Arrested personal growth serves industrial "growth". By suppressing the nature dimension of human development (through educational systems, social values, advertising, nature-eclipsing vocations and pastimes, city and suburb design, denatured medical and psychological practices, and other means), industrial growth society engenders an immature citizenry unable to imagine a life beyond consumerism and soul-suppressing jobs.”

— Bill Plotkin, *Nature & the Human Soul: Cultivating Wholeness & Community in a Fragmented World*

Shifting consciousness

In shamanic traditions as in many spiritual practices, we know that to create change/healing, we must shift not only the physical realm but also the spiritual. We must open doors, release bonds and help others believe there can be more than their reality right now, which is feeling pained to the seeker in some way. Shamans used sounds, smells, fire, dance and even plant medicines to help the seeker find more of themselves. It is common today to hear of people using plant medicines to awaken to higher consciousness. However, in the shamanic traditions, plant medicine is used to shift consciousness in only about 10% of the time. Shamans most often use rhythm and sound to help us reach into the spiritual realm.

Just an opinion note for the curious... plant medicine can be one way to open a door to the spiritual realm. In my experience, once the door is open, our jobs become to learn, to live, to grow in new and wiser ways. Revisiting the “door opener” only takes us to the same place. What I’m driving at is that we don’t need to seek “mountain top experiences” to grow. We need to learn to live in ways that help us grow. We need to practice those lessons we’ve learned and learn some more. Awakening/enlightenment is within you. You were born with it. It’s not a magic wand you need, but daily living in kinder and more loving ways that allow us to grow into our best selves.

Drumming

Drums and rattles are very powerful to a shaman’s work to shift consciousness and create deep meditative states. How the shamans understood these techniques in ancient times, we don’t exactly know but today we do understand the science behind this powerful practice.

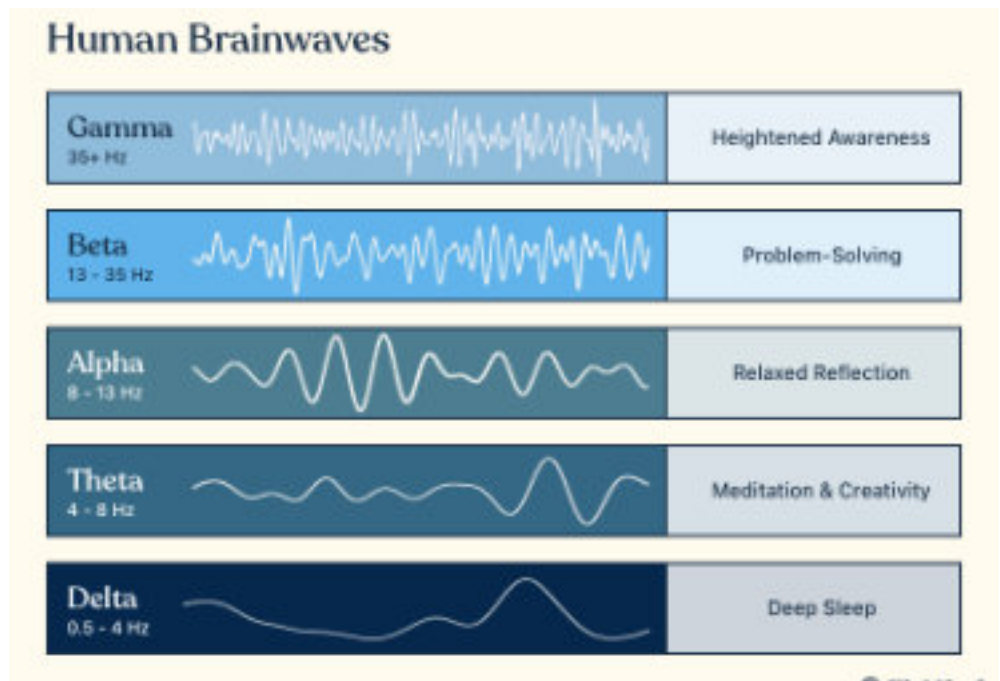
Our brains produce energy as a vibration, or brain waves. There are five types of brain waves: delta (± 0.5 to 4 Hz), theta (4-8 Hz), alpha (8-13 Hz), and beta (13-35 Hz) and gamma (35 Hz and up.)

Our brainwaves are often in Beta brainwave level during daily life. I remember that by thinking Busy Beta. When we work on relaxing or meditating, we can move down into Alpha (which also would be the brainwave of being in a flow state) or Theta (deeper meditation.) Entrainment is a term which explains how things in a particular rhythm or cycle tend to synchronize with similar objects in rhythm nearby. So a room full of pendulum clocks will all tick tock together. Women who live in the same house will find their

menstrual cycles begin to coincide. Brainwaves will also entrain to a steady rhythm of a drum or rattle.

So the shaman will play a drum or rattle at a particular rate, I use about 4 hz, which is 240 beats per minute. This is a powerful tool to help you relax and slow down your busy brain

So you allow the drum beat to slow your brain down rather than thinking, "I've got to relax" which isn't always so effective.



The Shaman's Journey

Journeying is the term used for the way that a shaman reaches into the spiritual realm or leads a seeker or a community to connect with their higher selves. Using sound, the shaman creates a peaceful environment where body can rest and heart and mind might open to higher wisdom.

Traditionally, shamans journey to one of three levels of the spiritual realm. Each world has its particular vibe and ways to interact but I find that each person interacts differently with these other worlds. Remember, shamanism isn't about dogma or rules. Just suggests to explore how you might engage with more. As a starting point, here's some typical suggestions

Lower World- a place where traditionally we might meet animal or spirit helpers. This realm is often powerful for physical healing, releasing trauma and transformation. It is often pictured as a place in nature and we access it by going down. I often find myself in underwater worlds, or in the woods. These are my "happy places" so that might have something to do with it.

Middle World- this plane is perceived as being just like our world but with no veil between us and the spiritual aspect. So we might see fairies and other elementals. Here we can work with the past and future for ourselves and our world.

Upper World- the realm of the cosmos, the stars, the heaven. One goes up to get here and is often accompanied by a spirit helper. This is the place of higher perspectives, rising above what might be holding us back. We often can see more clearly our spiritual selves.

In some traditions, you might find much more information on the worlds. Honestly, I am never sure where I will find myself. I focus on journeying to my higher self, and I end up where I end up. It's not in modern times to start a journey in one world and find yourself floating up to another. Your higher wisdom is directing you. Relax and go with it.

How to Journey

The journeyer generally reclines so that the body can totally rest and relax. Lying on a bed or on the floor with some padding and blankets is common. Lights are dimmed and interruptions minimal. The seeker sets an intention- what they are hoping to accomplish from this journey. Note, often your intention isn't exactly fulfilled but it sets a direction.

Beginners often journey to the lower world for starters. But whichever world you are venturing to, try these steps. Remember to put on your child's sense of play and imagination.

1- Imagine a safe place in nature as your entry to the other world. Caves, openings in trees, water or other points work well. These can be places you've really been or imagined places. Go through your entry place. If you're visiting the lower world, you'll often find yourself moving or sliding downward. Relax and go with it. If you're traveling up, you might be floating up in a bubble or riding the back of a giant bird.

2. Let your imagination run free. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable or frightened, you just tune back into the drum and your original intention. Or you can just sit up and open your eyes. This is one lovely advantage of not working with plant medicine. You can end a journey any time you wish.

3- Don't get too wrapped up in "Is this real?" or "Am I just imagining this?" Likely the answer to both questions is yes. We are exploring unexplored lands within you. Relax and enjoy it.

4. When the rhythm of the drum changes dramatically (I use 4 heavy booms) that is your signal to begin journeying home. You just imagine retracing your steps or sometimes you'll just be back in your blankets again. The drumming then stops after a few minutes and your drummer might speak to you to help you reconnect with this world. Grab a journal and write down what happened as these experiences will fade just as dreams do.



Your homework

Take some time to explore your strengths, interests, skills. What roles we've talked about might you excel in? Where do you see your purpose? Many of us have never been encouraged to explore these things. If you haven't, just relax, breathe and dream. Remember what you loved as a kid. Consider social groups that you feel super comfortable in. Would you rather participate in an art class or take a run? Then open yourself to how you can use your natural inclinations to help the world. No, you do not have to read this in class. (grin)

References

Thanks for joining the fun. If you're only here for this one class, I want to give you some reference books and other links that might be helpful

Three books I love about shamanism and healing.

"The Lost art of Heart Navigation- a modern shaman's field manual" - Jeff D. Nixa

This one is a heart opening story of modern or practical shamanism that I found so helpful

"Awakening to the Spiritual World- The shamanic path of direct revelation" - Sandra Ingerman & Hank Wesselman

Sandra Ingerman has decades of experience teaching and living shamanism. In this book she calls on other shamans or practitioners of shamanism to share Their insights and experiences on many subjects. It's a beautiful way to hear form the modern and the traditional, the tribal and the personal.

"Imagery in Healing- shamanism and modern medicine"- Jeanne Achterberg

This book is on the list because it resonates with me as I am primarily a healer. It speaks to the power of understanding the healing power of belief and how we can assist each other and ourselves to heal in these transformational times.

Here's one of my drumming tracks to journey with-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRDUw8r7Ym8>

You might also google Sandra Ingerman Youtube Drumming for lots of choices.

There is a beautiful History of Shamanism online that you might enjoy.

<https://shamanicsupply.com/pages/the-history-of-shamanism>

About suni

Since I was young, I've been on a quest to learn. My mission is to remember and understand the mystical world- seeking insight into mysteries beyond ordinary human knowledge. I've studied sacred writings of many traditional religions, shared in Lakota ceremonies, trekked thru the Andes to learn from descendants of the Incas. I've trained in many healing modalities- energy healing, sound therapy, massage, qigong and more. I've followed the Yogic path beyond the poses to go deeply into meditation and breathwork. I've worked with gurus, shamans and wise men and women all over the world. I've wandered deep into mother nature learning to listen to the trees and receive power from the earth below and the sun and moon above.

Thru all this exploration, I look for simple truths common to many paths. I embrace the power of sound, the wonder of meditation, the strength of our breath and the essential need for self-care on a daily basis. These ancient tools are presented in new ways that suit the energy of our times. I share these tools with you to help you expand, awaken, heal, calm and explore the wonder of the unseen, the less known world.

The most important truth I've learned is that higher wisdom, connection to spirit, awakening, enlightenment isn't something you get from someone else. You came with all that built into you. Life in a world wrapped in fear and greed didn't likely help you find that message. In today's changing world, in the new energies here to help elevate our world- the wisdom, the light you seek is within you. The simple practices I teach are intended to help you connect your physical you and the higher self. That can happen easily and, it grows with practice. The practices are easy and they bring you what you need. Just looking for some hope, or calmness- then you'll find tools here that will help. If you're seeking higher wisdom or to journey to other energetic worlds, that is available to you also.

I am your guide and I share with you what I've learned. You might not resonate with some of the practices. You might really connect and decide to explore further on your own. Great! My path was carved with the teachings of many, many beings and I trust you'll find the path that suits you. Have fun

Image from Wiraqocha temple near San Pedro de Cacha. I served as high priestess for my group of journeyers. Notice no flowing robes, no fancy anything and it was the most powerful ceremony ever for me.

