

## [Church Membership Now Based On San Marga Master Course Studies](#)

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# Church Membership Now Based On San Marga Master Course Studies

A Brief Review of Four Memberships; Associating, Contributing, Participating and Confirmed

With the recent release of the first few lessons of the San Marga Master Course by Himalayan Academy, Saiva Siddhanta Church has adjusted its categories of membership to correspond more precisely to the study and completion of these new Master Course lessons.

The undergraduate study of Himalayan Academy consists of the study of lessons one through fifty-four of the San Marga Master Course. Simultaneous with enrolling in this study a student becomes a Contributing Member of Saiva Siddhanta Church.

The postgraduate study of the Academy is Master Course lessons fifty-five through one-hundred and eight. Simultaneous with enrolling in the postgraduate study a student becomes a Participating Member of Saiva Siddhanta Church.

After successful completion of the one hundred and eight lessons, the student becomes a Confirmed Member.

It is acceptable for one spouse in a family to become a member of the Church and study at the Academy even if the other does not. However, the spouse not participating would need to sign a statement of non-objection to the other's participation.

In addition to these memberships, which have existed for a number of years, the Church is establishing a new category called Associate Membership in response to the many born Saivites supportive of Gurudeva and the work of the Church who wish to formally associate with it.

Associate Membership is open to all those born into the Saivite Hindu religion who wish to associate with Saiva Siddhanta Church. No formal study or disciplines are required. Associate Members receive all the Church's publications as well as announcements of all regular and special Church activities. They financially support the work of the Church through a donation of \$10 or more a year; in Sri Lanka or India a donation of Rs. 10 is requested.

Contributing Membership is open to all born or self-declared Saivite Hindus who feel that Master Subramuniya is their Guru and wish to study with him at Himalayan Academy. Contributing Members study lessons one to fifty-four of the San Marga Master Course. They are encouraged to perform Bhakti Yoga by joining with others in regular Satsang, attending pujas at a nearby temple and making pilgrimages. They financially support the work of the Church through a donation of \$10 or more a month (Rs. 10 in Sri Lanka and India). They are trained to be teachers of these lessons.

Participating Membership is open to all who wish to complete the postgraduate study of Himalayan Academy. Participating Members study lessons fifty-five to one hundred and eight of the San Marga Master Course. They are considered Karma Yogis, performing their religious duties toward Temple, Guru, and God within. They perform the discipline of the Pancha Nitya Karmas - "The Five Minimal Religious Duties of Saivites." These are: Dharma (proper conduct); Upasana (daily puja done in the home shrine); Utsava (observing special religious days by fasting & temple attendance); Tirthayatrai (pilgrimage); Samskaras (receiving the traditional Hindu sacraments). They financially support the work of the Church through tithing, the giving of one-tenth of one's income to support one's Church. They are now qualified to teach the first fifty-four lessons of the Master Course to new students and are also training to be missionaries.

Confirmed Membership is open to all who have completed the one hundred and eight lessons of the San Marga Master Course. If not born into the Saivite Hindu religion, they must have received while a Contributing or Participating Member the traditional Namakarana Samskara (Hindu name-giving sacrament) and legally

changed their name. Confirmed Members also perform the Pancha Nitya Karmas as their discipline and support the Church through tithing. They are now qualified to perform the work of missionaries and are encouraged but not required to do so.

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