

**CONSTITUTION OF SANTINIKETAN ASHRAM
SAMMILANI INTERNATIONAL (SASI) 08- 4-2008**

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PREAMBLE

Santiniketan Ashram Sammilani International (SASI) is an association of former students, teachers, and staff of Visva-Bharati University, which is located in Santiniketan, India. The association is dedicated to the humanitarian ideals of the founder of that university, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941).

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of the association will be **Santiniketan Ashram Sammilani International, henceforth SASI for short.**

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

SASI will promote social, cultural, and educational interactions among alumni of Visva-Bharati around the world. Alumni from all parts of Visva-Bharati, including the school Patha Bhavana, are included.

SASI will foster unity among the alumni and enhance their sense of identity. It will generate understanding of the humanitarian values and ideals of Rabindranath Tagore, and make its members aware of their relevance in present-day society. SASI will enable its members to undertake useful initiatives for the betterment of the Visva-Bharati University.

SASI's activities may include publication of books, newsletters, and magazines, operation of dedicated websites, holding of conferences, seminars and symposiums, and provisions of educational tools and facilities for the students of Visva-Bharati.

SASI will not align itself with any political party, nor will it act as a political lobby. It will not favor nor discriminate against any particular religion. SASI's organization and operation will fall under the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code (see Article X below).

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP & PRIVILEGES

All alumni of Visva-Bharati are eligible to join SASI. There will be three types of membership: life membership, regular membership, and student membership.

A member in good standing shall be entitled to receive all publications (at membership prices) and membership mailings, vote and participate in all general organizational activities.

The policy with respect to membership and privileges will be determined annually each July, on the basis of a simple majority of votes received.

ARTICLE IV - DUES

All members shall pay dues annually, as fixed by the general body of members by simple majority voting upon recommendation of the Executive Board. The period of annual membership shall be from July 1 to June 30. Membership dues must be paid by July 31 each year, as otherwise membership will lapse.

ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board consists of a President, a Secretary, a Joint Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Board is empowered to make additional appointments on an ad hoc basis as required. It can constitute standing or temporary committees and sub-committees to carry out various tasks. All elected officers of the Executive Board, as well as ad hoc appointees, must be members of good standing.

Members of the Executive Board shall be elected for a term of one year or until their successors are elected and assume office. No officer shall serve more than 3 consecutive terms in the Board; but an officer shall be eligible for reelection to the Board again after a lapse of 2 years.

The term of office shall begin on August 1, and end on July 31, of the following year.

Elections will be held during the annual meetings in early July each year. Since only a few dozen members are likely to be able to attend such meetings, most members will vote by mail, either postal mail or email. Votes received by mail/email will be verified by the Trust Council. Officers will be elected by simple majority of the votes actually received and verified.

The Trust Council will serve as an Election Committee as of June 1 each year, that is at least a month prior to the annual meeting. Nominations of eligible candidates shall be sent to the Chairman, Trust Council at least 2 weeks prior to the annual meeting. If there are no nominations, the Trust Council is authorized to nominate eligible members to fill the vacancies.

In case of mid-term vacancies among office-holders, ad hoc appointments may be made by the Board on a temporary basis to avoid disruptions to ongoing activities. The Trust Council will have the right to intervene to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made until the next elections.

An officer of the Executive Board can be removed from office by a two-thirds vote if she/he fails to uphold the Constitution and bylaws, or if performance is demonstrably poor.

The distribution of functions within the Executive Board and its operating procedures will evolve with experience during the initial stages. The Board will prepare status reports every quarter, and will elaborate upon or codify these matters at the annual meetings.

The Treasurer will have the special mandate of liaising with the IRS as and when needed, of dealing with all tax matters, and of ensuring that SASI's activities conform to the relevant IRS code. He/she will arrange for annual external audits with the help of the Trust Council.

ARTICLE VI – TRUST COUNCIL

A Trust Council consisting of 3-5 members will be elected by the general body of SASI at each annual meeting. This Council will include at least one past president if available. The initial Trust Council will serve 2 years. Thereafter, members of the Trust Council will be elected for 2-year terms.

The Trust Council will advise the Executive Board, and oversee compliance with the Constitution. It will conduct elections of office-bearers of the Board, inviting nominations at the latest by June 15.

It will arrange for external audits of all accounts of SASI every year in June, in coordination with the Treasurer.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

A General Body Meeting will take place in the first week of July each year, to coincide with the Banga Sanmilan in North America. The business of this meeting will be to consider the annual report of the Executive Board, to review the external audit of the Treasurer, to discuss issues that may be included in the agenda, and to hold elections to the Executive Board and the Trust Council.

The Executive Board will issue its draft Annual Report in the first week of June, and suggest issues for discussion at the general meeting. Members can also introduce issues in the agenda provided they do so in writing by June 21. The final agenda, and the candidates' list will be distributed electronically prior to the general meeting.

Special meetings of the general body can be called to discuss specific issues. Such meetings can be called by the Executive Board, the Trust Council, or by a petition signed by more than 50% of the members.

ARTICLE VIII- AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and the by-laws can be amended by a two-thirds majority of voting members in a special meeting of the general body, or at the annual meeting in July.

A minimum of 3 weeks notice will need to be provided for such a meeting (including the text of the proposed amendments).

ARTICLE IX – TAX EXEMPT STATUS

This organization is organized exclusively for tax-exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It will not undertake any functions which are not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal Income Tax, as per the above-mentioned Section.

Upon dissolution of this organization, after paying or adequately providing for debts and other obligations of this organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed to non-profit funds, corporations, or foundations organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which have established their tax-exempt status under that Section.

END

