



# Ontario Konkani Association

## e-Samachar (September 2022)

[www.ontariokonkanis.com](http://www.ontariokonkanis.com)

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### President's Message

Namskaru OKA Bandhavs,

We are now in the glorious season of Fall, a time for cooler temperatures, colourful trees, corn mazes, apple picking and warm, delicious treats! The crisp fall air has also brought in the festival season and we are in the midst of Navaratri.

Navaratri is a major Hindu festival that is celebrated all over India under numerous names such as Navaratri, Durga Puja and Dussehra. Though there are four Navaratrias that take place in each of the four seasons, the post-monsoon autumn festival called Sharad Navaratri has the largest celebrations. Navratri, Durga Puja, and Dussehra all overlap and which holiday is celebrated depends on where you hail from in India.

Navaratri is celebrated for nine days and focuses on worshipping the Goddess Durga in her nine forms, ending with a celebration of Lord Rama's victory over Ravana. Each of the nine days are dedicated to one of the nine forms of the goddess and worshippers wear different color clothing on each day. Many devotees choose to observe a fast and pray for the protection of their health and property. As a period of introspection and purification, Navaratri is traditionally an auspicious time to start new ventures. In many states, on Dusshera, an effigy of Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Meghanada (Ravana's son) are burnt to celebrate the victory of good over evil.

Durga Puja is celebrated for ten days, celebrating the victory of Ma Durga over the demon Mahishasura. In many parts of India, idols of Durga are erected in pandals and worshipped. On the last day, they are carried to nearby seas or rivers and immersed. Durga Puja ends with Sindoor Khela, where married women put vermilion on each other before the immersion of Durga's idols in nearby rivers.

In OKA, we have an annual tradition of celebrating Navaratri and playing homage to Ma Durga by playing Dandiya with our extended OKA family and friends. Dandiya is a unique dance form performed to pay respect and homage to the Goddess Durga. It is a representation of the battle between Goddess Durga and Mahishasura. The sticks used for performing the Dandiya dance represent the Goddess's sword.

We hope you enjoy this edition of E-Samachar. We will get into regular, monthly E-Samachars from now on. In this edition, there are great articles on topics such as Emergency Preparedness, religious ritual of Tapta Mudra Dharana, an adorable Kid's Corner and a thought-provoking write-up on Thoughts as Tools.

Please do consider contributing to the E-Samachar on a regular or one-time basis. We look forward to hearing from you.

Anjana and Pravin Pai



Picture Courtesy: OKA 2019 Rangili Navratri

## Kids Corner

By Neha Mallya

Hi Readers,

We're right in the midst of summer and I'm sure the kiddos are enjoying every second of their summer break. I also understand the struggle parents are going through finding ways to constantly keep the children occupied. After all, an idle mind is the Devil's Workshop, right?

And we for sure don't want No Devil's to deal with, am-I-rite? :D

A month left for school to start - and they will be back to being in their own little world with their friends, classes and schedules.

Parents- Until then, let's spend as much time as we can with those munchkins.

We don't want any regrets. These little ones grow up in the blink of an eye and will be moody teenagers before we know it. Those Devils are even harder to deal with!! :D

These month's Gen Alphas are **'Shreesha & Shlok Bhat'**



They are the precious kiddos of Gayathri and Sarvottam Bhat.



Shreesha studies in Clarks Dale Public school, Burlington. She is in Grade 4. Her favorite subjects are Science and Math. Her hobbies are drawing, singing, swimming and dancing.

*(I'm sure most of us have seen her dance at our past OKA events. She's a natural and such a graceful dancer!)* She also likes to spend time with her younger brother Shlok.

Shlok is 5 years old and loves Cars. Collecting cars is his hobby!



Shreesha is a wonderful artist and wishes to share some of her beautiful artwork with us.



(Shreesha, Please keep drawing and dancing and singing and performing and continue being so talented! We are waiting to see more of you at our future OKA events! God bless both you and Shlok with everything you pursue!)

## Seniors Forum

By Sadanand Mankikar

Since its inception in July 2016, the OKA Senior's Forum has been functioning under the umbrella of Ontario Konkani Association. The goal of the Forum is to develop and implement socio-cultural programs which will help the seniors and soon to be seniors in our community to prepare for and adapt to the changes. It has developed teams of volunteers to provide support and assistance to the seniors. The Forum representatives have participated in developing ethnic friendly Retirement/Senior's Homes in GTA and/or surrounding area.

OKA Seniors Forum programs/activities also include Interactive Communication through Aadhar Chat, Information Sessions, Car Pool, Technical Support Workshops and Emergency Preparedness Program. For additional information please visit OKA website.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

**OKA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM:** Estate, Will and Power of Attorney and End of Life Planning are two major elements of this OKA Seniors Forum Program.

For **preparing Wills and Powers of Attorney** you may contact Marvin Talksby (905) 405-0199 ext. 257 or Mary Bojkovski (905) 405-0199 ext. 276 of Nanda & Associate Lawyers. For additional information or assistance, you may also contact Raghunath Kamath or Ashok Bhatt.

For **End of Life Planning** one may contact Harjinder Bilku of Chapel Ridge Funeral Home at (905) 305-8128 or (647) 966-0093.

**OKA AADHAR CHAT:** This interactive web-based chat was established in 2017 as a part of the OKA Seniors Forum to facilitate communication amongst seniors and soon to be seniors. Since then, we have started posting upcoming events and relevant information on this chat. Members can post any questions and we will attempt to get answers. We invite everyone, young and old, seniors or not,



to join this chat and share information including their experiences and expertise. To join this chat group, please send an email to [shraddhapai.home@gmail.com](mailto:shraddhapai.home@gmail.com)

Additional information about OKA Seniors' Forum is posted on [www.ontario-konkanis.com](http://www.ontario-konkanis.com)

## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

**INDUS COMMUNITY SERVICES:** This organization provides very helpful service to South Asian seniors. They had held a Town Hall on Monday, November 29, 2021. At this highly informative session, the Director of Health Services shared updates on Health Services and programming while the CEO shared updates on a Long Term Care facility that Indus will be running for the South Asian community. The session also involved discussions about what supports the community requires. For the presentations, please visit <https://www.induscs.ca/seniorstownhall/> If you want to stay connected with Indus, you may sign up for their newsletter here [Subscribe- Indus Current](#)

A few upcoming events/programs by Indus Community Services:

- Old Age Security (OAS) & Canada Pension Plan (CPP) October 15
- Hiring Information Session Royal Bank of Canada October 17
- Beginner Computer Literacy October 19 and 26

## C.A.R.P.

Are you a member of C.A.R.P. - Canadian Association of Retired Persons? If you are over 45, you may want to consider becoming a member of C.A.R.P. It is a national organization with chapters all over the country. Its mission is to "Promote and protect the interests, rights and quality of life of Canadians as we age"

C.A.R.P. is an advocacy group and from time to time they arrange interesting and informative seminars and workshops. Their monthly magazine Zoomer consists of

useful articles and provide information on topics related to insurance, travel, health, entertainment and lifestyle.

For additional information, you may contact them by email: [support@carp.ca](mailto:support@carp.ca)  
Phone: 1-833-211-2277 Website: [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca)

A few interesting readings published by Zoomer Wellness ([everythingzoomer.com](http://everythingzoomer.com))

- Better Brain
- What you should do and not do to reduce your risk of Dementia
- The importance of maintaining friendship after Dementia Diagnosis.
- Reap the Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Exercise.
- Step it Up: 7 reasons Nordic Walking is better for you than the Normal kind
- 5 ways to age well while living alone

**ONTARIO GUIDE TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS:** Please click on the following link for the latest upgraded guide. [A guide to programs and services for seniors.](#)

**SENIORS HOUSING AND HOME CARE DIRECTORY:** Help for Mom has developed this very helpful publication which is about 130 pages, softcover and Readers Digest size. To get a copy send an email to [helpformom.com](mailto:helpformom.com) or call Mary (647) 967-9821.

The following organizations disseminate very useful information either through regular news release and/or seminars, webinars and workshops:

Canada India Foundation [www.canadaindiafoundation.com](http://www.canadaindiafoundation.com)

C.A.R.P. Canadian Association of Retired People) [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca)

Diabetes Canada [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

Indus Community Services [www.induscs.ca](http://www.induscs.ca)

UHNF (University Network Foundation) [www.uhnfoundatiom.ca](http://www.uhnfoundatiom.ca)

**(ARTICLES BY AND FOR SENIORS FOR THIS SECTION ARE ALWAYS WELCOME)**



## Tapta Mudra Dharana

By Niranjana Kamath

Well, this article should have been out in July, nevertheless it is better late than ever. On July 10<sup>th</sup> all Amchigele's along with others observed this very ancient ritual of stamping a Mudra on our body. This ritual is called Tapta Mudra Dharana. Since ancient times our Rishi's who developed this practice have observed this on the on the Shukla Paksha Ekadasi in the Ashada month. This year Mudra Dharana was done on July 10<sup>th</sup> and for 2023 date is June 30.

Tapta Mudra Dharana is a unique Vaishnava practice in South India in which a mudra or seal with symbol of Srihari Vishnu is stamped on the body. Tapta means heated and mudra means seals.



Stamping of the hot mudra on the body is seen as a way of stating one's utmost devotion to Vishnu. The belief is that it burns away sins and protects one from all kinds of evils. It is also believed that the ritual helps in fighting diseases.

The usual mudra that is printed on the body is that of Shankha, Chakra, Gada, Padma and Narayana Mudra. The mudra is heated in a homa of til (sesame) and ghee. Healthy men are permitted to have the mark in five places. Women and children should only have one on the arm. All over India, our Maths observed this practice on July 10<sup>th</sup> which was Ashad Ekadasi. The four-month rituals and food restrictions associated with Chatur Mas also begins after the Tapta Mudra Dharana.

Relevance:

Tapta Mudra Dharana is mentioned in Vishnu Ragasya and in Vedas as well. It is also discussed in detail in Ayurveda Shastras. All these shows that it has been in practice for a very long time. It is a fundamental requirement for a Vaishnava. The wearing of Tapta-mudra- dharana has been explained in various spiritual scriptures like Rigveda, Padma Purana, Mahabharatha etc. It is also mentioned in Sumadva Vijaya that Shri Madacharya also blessed his disciples with this sacred Tapta-mudra-dharana.

This was also a cleansing process. It is said that during Mahabharata war 'Tapta Mudra Dharana' was done for the soldiers. It is a reminder of 'Bhakthi to Lord Vishnu'. The mantras which are chanted while doing 'Mudhradharana' bless us – let the glow of 'Sudharashana' remove all our ignorance and the sound of 'Paanchanjanya shankha' destroy all our accumulated sins and lead us in the path of 'Vishnu marga'.

The significance of this act is – The 'jnanagni' (light of knowledge) obtained from our Shaastras should sever the darkness of ignorance and the 'omkaara naada (sound) from the shankha should enlighten us bestowing 'jnana bhakthi and vairaghya'. One should get the 'Mudra dharana' done with this attitude. This demonstrates the great importance that is given to Tapta Mudra.

# Thoughts are tools

By Shraddha Shenoy

The ability to formulate abstract thoughts and derive meaning from it is an exceptional trait that distinguishes us from all other animals on this planet. But to what extent are we utilizing our abilities, and does that make any difference at all?

During one of Dr. Jordan B Peterson's podcasts, he fleetingly says "thoughts are tools". Somehow that phrase kept lingering on my mind. **Thoughts are tools** – what a profound phrase that is.

For centuries people who thought differently than the rest made all the difference in the world. Edison's electric light bulb, for instance, was told off as 'ignis fatuus' i.e a fairy tale, a sham. Benjamin Franklin on his quest to discover static electricity was considered "that crazy kid who has a death wish". Mahatma Gandhi followed *Ahimsa* — an unheard-of concept, that received immense backlash. He led a non-violent freedom struggle against the British colonizers who couldn't be more violent if they tried. Elon Musk to this day is considered a delusional freak.

With increasing polarization around the world, one has to be either black or white. There seems to be no grey, let alone pink, blue, or green. Holding an opinion that slightly varies from either side of the spectrum seems to have no place, which is inadvertently shaping cookie-cutter humans who hold cookie-cutter opinions.

Our systems are designed to build standardized humans. Let me explain. People wear the same clothes, eat the same food, follow the same religion, celebrate the same holidays, obsess over the same gadgets, pursue the same hobbies — going wherever the wind blows. As a marketing major, I can attest to the blessing that is a "homogeneous market" brimming with John and Jane Does. However, one's absolute contribution to society comes from the individuality of one's being. By

blending in, are we doing a disservice to mankind?



[Source](#)

## POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

When political correctness borderlines censorship of opinions of the other side, that is hypocrisy too. People have the right to an opinion, even if it's politically incorrect. Even if it's against everything considered right. The right to speech must come before the right to be righteous. As long as opinions are expressed in a civil manner and do not yield significant political or social influence, they deserve the right to be expressed. That's how we progress and grow as a society.



This applies for the majority of us that may have little influence on others, being original and different is something to explore, (respectfully) express, and learn from. Agreeableness is a trait we develop to fulfill our needs to fit in. But those who fit in never stand out. In striving to undo the wrongdoings of our predecessors, we're growing too intolerant towards politically incorrect views. How does that make us any different from the ones before?

Let's instead try to be more accepting. To be ourselves however different we may be. And then to accept others, however different they may be. As a result, we can only hope to grow, learn, and build each other. A wise person once said that *learning is in the execution*. I hope this article adds to your learning process and trickles down in the form of execution.