



# Chiguru

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# North American Sankethi Association (NASA)

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## President's Note...



### *Contact us!*

ಎಂದೆ ಪ್ರೀತಿಯ ಸಂಕೇತಿ ಬಂಧುಗಳಿಗೆ 2015 ಪುನಃ ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ (ಆಂಗ್ಲಕ್ಕೆ) ಶುಭಾಶಯಂಗೆ. ಅಪ್ಪಡಿಯೇ 2015ಕ್ಕೆ ಮುದಲ ಹಬ್ಬೋ "ಸಂಕ್ರಾಂತಿ" ಶುಭಾಶಯಂಗೆ. ಇಂದಸಲಕ್ಕೆ "ಚಿಗುರು ಪತ್ರಿಕೆ" ತರಾತರಿ ವಿಷಯಂಗೆ ಇರಾಂದಿ. (Health Corner, Recipes, Food for thought, etc.) ದಯೋವಷ್ಟಿ ಎಂಗಡೆ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಕ್ಕೆ ಸಹಕರಿಚ್ಚಿ, ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸಿಂಗೊ. ಉಂಗಡೆ ಸಲಹೆ, ಕೋರಿಕೆ, ಆರೋಗ್ಯಮಾನ ರುಚಿಕರಮಾನ ತಿಂಡಿ ಪದಾರ್ಥಗಳಿಗೆ, ಮಿಕ್ಕ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಚಾರವಿನಿಮಯಕ್ಕೆ ಎಂಗಳೆ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಿಂಗೊ. ಮಿಕ್ಕ ವಿಚಾರಮಲ್ಲ ಆಂಗ್ಲ ಭಾಷೆ ರಾಂದಿ, ಓದಕೊಂಗೊ.

My beloved Sankethi Relatives & Friends, Happy New Year & Happy Pongal / Sankranti to you all. We "Astalakshmi Team" wish each and every one of you a prosperous 2015. We are attempting to publish new columns in our "Chiguru" newsletter for your reading pleasure, knowledge and entertainment. In this edition of Chiguru you will read interesting columns like "Health Corner, Recipes, Food for thought, etc." For us to continue such articles we need your support, please write to us, send in your articles / recipes / food for thought / jokes etc. Also please share your Joy / celebrations and any interesting news from back home "Sankethi Gramas". We appreciate your positive feedback / suggestions to improve NASA. Please encourage your entire family to read "Chiguru" and participate in all NASA events / activities. Hope to see you all at the "Ugadi Festival", in April 2015 please stay tuned for more details.

लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु

Regards,

Divakar Rudrapatna

Dasa to NASA (Always at the service of Sankethis)

NASA-President (2014-15-2016 Term)

(North American Sankethi Association)

ಇಂತಿ ನಮಸ್ಕಾರೋ,

ದಿವಾಕರ್ ರುದ್ರಪಟ್ಟಣಿ

## **1. Upcoming Festivals Sankranthi – 15 January 2015**

Reference: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makar\\_Sankranti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makar_Sankranti)

As Sankranthi is just around the corner, we thought that this edition of Chiguru will focus a bit on that wonderful festival of the harvest. Interestingly, Sankranthi is marked by the sun transitioning into the Makara Rashi (Capricorn) and is one of the few Indian festivals that typically falls on the same date in Gregorian calendar every year – 14 January or 15 January if it is leap year. Sankranthi marks the end of an inauspicious phase that begins around mid-December and is the start of the auspicious phase. Scientifically, this day also indicates the beginning of warmer and longer days signaling the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Sankranthi is celebrated in a variety of ways all over India with various customs, rituals and traditions.

In Karnataka, it is known as the Suggi or harvest festival for farmers of Karnataka. On this auspicious day, young females (kids and teenagers) wear new clothes to visit near and dear ones with a Sankranti offering in a plate, and exchange the same with other families. This ritual is called "Ellu Birodhu." [4] Here the plate would normally contain "Ellu" (white sesame seeds) mixed with peanuts, dry coconut and fine cut bella (jaggery). The mixture is called "Ellu-Bella" The plate also contains sugar candy moulds of various shapes (Sakkare Acchu, ಸಕ್ಕರೆ ಆಚ್ಚು ) with a piece of sugarcane. [5] There is a saying in Kannada "ellu bella thindu olle maathadi" which translates to 'eat the mixture of sesame seeds and jaggery and speak only good.' This festival signifies the harvest of the season, since sugarcane is predominant in these parts. [6]

In some parts of Karnataka, a newly married woman is required to give away bananas for a period of five years to married women (muthaidhe) from the first year of her marriage, but increase the number of bananas in multiples of five. There is also a tradition of some households giving away red berries "Yalchi Kai" along with the above. In North Karnataka, kite flying with community members is also a tradition. Drawing rangoli in groups is another popular event among women during Sankranti. [7]

Another important ritual in the villages is the display of cows and cattle in colourful costumes in an open field. Cows are decorated for the occasion and taken on a procession. They are also made to cross a pyre. This ritual is common in rural Karnataka and is called "Kichchu Haayisuvudu." [8]

The NASA BoD wishes you all a very happy and joyous Sankranthi!

## **2. NASA 2014 Recent Events**

### ***Celebrating Navarathri/Deepavali Satyanarayana Temple CT Oct 25, 2014***

On a bright, sunny day in October, NASA held a combined Navaratri/Deepavali program at the Satyanarayana Temple in Middletown, CT. NASA members were treated to a beautiful display of dolls, artfully arranged by Prema Kumar, Mahathi Kumar and Tara Rudrapatna. After light snacks and coffee, a group of about 20 ladies chanted the Lalitha Sahasranama and Ashtotra in unison, invoking the power of the Devi. During this time, the children decorated small rangoli patterns with paint and glitter. The Sahasranama was followed by Lakshmi pooja performed by the children, with Prema providing instruction. After conducting aarathi, everyone enjoyed a delicious potluck "habba oota." Many thanks to the families who contributed to our wonderful feast, including many of Prema's friends in Connecticut who are strong supporters of the Sankethi community! Our afternoon entertainment program began with storytelling by the children. Sudhanva Nagaraj, Jathin Rao and Tejan & Reyva Poage shared different legends related to Navaratri and Deepavali. Following the stories, we were all treated to a music program delivered by young and old members alike. The highlight of the program was a group singalong of light devotional songs led by Sandhya Nagaraja. During the

function, we were proud to meet some new Sankethi families - Chandra Shekar & Meghana from Norwalk, CT, Madhusudan Krishnamurthy & Priya also from Norwalk, CT, and new life member, Vimala Srinivas from Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, who traveled with NASA President Divakar Rudrapatna to attend the event. We look forward to seeing you all at future NASA events! Thank you to Prema, Mahathi and Tara for leading the event, and to Nagaraj for taking beautiful pictures.





### 3. Award-Winning Sankethis

#### ***Ms. Sithalakshmi Madhavan***

NASA congratulates Ms. Sithalakshmi Madhavan who is no stranger to our community for being awarded the prestigious “SPIFPA Ambassador Award”

In recognition of her dedication to the arts, hard work and accomplishments in Carnatic Music throughout her life, the directors of SPIFPA and the community Foundation of Westmoreland county, which is affiliated with the Pittsburgh Foundation nominated Mrs. Sithalakshmi Madhavan to receive the ‘SPIFPA Ambassador Award’ at this year’s cultural festival held at the SV Temple, Pittsburgh, on November 22, 2014. She was also one of the featured performers at the event.



Srinivasa Prasad International Foundation for the Performing Arts (SPIFPA), which is affiliated with the Pittsburgh Foundation, is a 501 C(3) non-profit cultural organization dedicated to the promotion of South Asian performing arts among North American youth.

#### ***Mr. R. V. Ramnath***

NASA congratulates Mr. R. V. Ramnath of Boston, MA who has recently received the following awards:

- Glory of India Award – 2012 in New Delhi
- Mother Teresa Award – 2013 in Hyderabad
- Mahatma Ghandi Award – 2014 in London

We are very privileged to have such accomplished and recognized members within our community. They serve as an inspiration to us all.

#### **4. Are You Taking Care of Yourself?**

##### ***The Health Corner Blog – By Dr. Amrutha Viswanath***

More than 3 decades ago when we arrived in this beautiful country, we were busy exploring the new country, environment and the new culture. We got busy, facing all kinds of hurdles in our attempts to enter the mainstream. Then the kids came, time zoomed, and we were busy sending the kids to college, preparing for weddings and then the grand children. We focused most of our attention on the care and well-being of our children – rightfully so.

Now all of a sudden our attention is turning towards our own health as 'most important now'. It is a scary fact that Diabetes, a silent killer is rapidly increasing in Indians. Could it be our diet in addition to other factors such as stress and inactivity – particularly during the cold winter months?

Diabetes as called in Karnataka as 'Sakkare Khayile', can affect several parts of the body. It can lead to heart disease, blindness, kidney failure etc. Indians are now entering the statistics. As Sankethis, we love to eat – in fact one could say that it is an identifying factor of our community! One of our staple foods is rice and that too white rice, which is a contributing factor. How do we change? It is very difficult especially for me.

Every body knows avoiding processed foods such as white rice and white flour in addition to eating more veggies particularly greens along with good aerobic exercise will help keep our blood sugar in the normal range and avoid diabetes.

We have many doctors, with all kinds of specialties and so many knowledgeable gems in our Sankethi community. Please come forward and share your thoughts, expertise and your health experiences for the benefit of others in our community. Your valuable input will be appreciated.

Have a safe winter.

Amrutha Viswanatha M D.

#### **5. It's All About the FOOD!!**

Sankranthi is marked by pongalu! This is also considered one of those simple heart-warming foods that bring joy to the stomach! Both Khara (Savory) and Sweet versions of Pongalu are prepared during this festival season. Enclosed, we have provided recipes for both from Radhika Rudrapatna - who wishes all a very happy Sankranthi! -- Bon Appetit!!

##### ***Khara Pongalu***

Ingredients:

Moong Daal 1 cup  
Rice 1 cup  
Cashew nuts 10-12 no (roasted in ghee)  
Cumin Seeds, Black Pepper Powder 1 tsp each  
Chopped Green Chilli 3-4 no (depending on size and taste)  
Dry Coconut Flakes 2 tbsp  
Turmeric Powder 1/2 tsp  
Home made Ghee 2 to 3 tbsp  
Salt to taste

Roast Moong Daal and cook it along with rice in a pressure cooker.

In a separate pan heat ghee and add mustard and cumin seeds,  
Then add green chillies (or dry red chillies what ever you prefer)  
then add curry leaves, asfoteida, turmeric powder, pepper powder  
To this add the rice and daal that was cooked together  
Add Salt and sprinkle coconut flakes and stir well. You can add extra water and mix well.  
(Note: You can also add cooked Papdi Lilva (avare kaalu) in your Pongal

### ***Sweet Pongalu***

Roast Moong Daal just like above and cook it along with rice and keep aside.  
In a separate pan melt jaggery (qty according to taste) with some water and let it thicken a little. Add Ghee (you can use more ghee for better taste) and freshly grated coconut  
To this add the cooked rice and daal and let it mix for a while by stirring.  
You can sprinkle some Cardamom powder and add ghee roasted cashews and raisins.

## **6. Things to Ponder – Some Lighthearted Fun!**

- If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?
- How come “Abbreviated” is such a long word?
- Practice makes perfect but if no one is perfect, why practice?
- Since light travels faster than sound, people appear bright until you hear them speak!
- If a bus station is where a bus stops and a train station is where a train stops then, on our desks we have a work station which would be where ... what more needs to be said?!

### **More Seriously now ...**

- Did you know that in 1947, when India gained independence, there was parity between the US Dollar (USD) and Indian Rupee (INR)?!! That's right 1 INR = 1 USD. Today 1 INR is worth 0.016 USD. There are many reasons that explain why the rupee has lost so much of it's value – some think that it is due to high inflation in India during the 70s followed by strengthening of the US dollar during the 80s. Then in the 90s, economic liberalization in India brought with it a sharp devaluation of the Rupee and the Forex reserves dropped to multi-year low point. During that period, India had to borrow large amounts from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), thereby further losing value. The low Rupee however, came as good news for exporters and particularly the IT sector that was picking up at that time. More recently, euro-zone issues as well as domestic problems may have caused further depreciation of the rupee. It will be interesting to predict where the INR may end up in the future ... Does it have a chance of picking up? What would it take to raise the value of the INR? The global marketplace is definitely inter-connected and becoming smaller ...

Reference: <http://stockmusings.com/tracing-the-genesis-of-the-rupee-dollar-relationship/>

## **7. Congratulations**

### ***Weddings***

Manju Madhavan, son of Smt. Sitalakshmi and Sri. Vasanth Madhavan, was married to Reshmi Srinath. The wedding took place on September 6, 2014 in New Haven Connecticut.

Shubha Dathatri, daughter of Sri. Yelleshpur and Smt. Geetha Dathatri, was married to Sanjay Nagaraja, son of Smt. Saroj and Sri. A. Nagaraja. The wedding took place on October 12, 2014 in Woodbury New York.



Madhuri Saligrama, daughter of Smt. Vidya and Sri. Vamadeva Saligrama, was married to Vipul Sharma, son of Smt. Gayathri and Sri. Ramesh Sharma. The wedding took place on July 13, 2014 in Morganville, New Jersey.

NASA would like to congratulate the new couples and wish them all the best for a long future of happy togetherness.

### ***Births***

Sheela Nagaraj-Dikshith and Pramod Dikshith announced the arrival of a new baby girl - Ahaana Dikshith on 21 Nov 2014. Mom, Dad & Baby are doing well. NASA would like to welcome the new addition to our community and wish Ahaana the best for a long, prosperous and healthy life.

## **8. Regrets**

### ***Condolences***

Ms. Rama Nagaraj who is known to many within the Sankethi community passed away in late December. The cremation ceremony was held on Sat Dec 27, in Pittsburg, PA. Our sincere condolences go to the family. May her soul rest in peace.

## **9. NASA on the World Wide Web!!!**

Have you visited [www.sankethi.org](http://www.sankethi.org) recently? If so, thanks and please keep surfing to our website! If not, please visit NASA online where you can find news and information about our events and activities, the latest information and update, as well as interesting reading about the Sankethi heritage and traditions. You can also read this and previous editions of Chiguru online.

We welcome all your contributions to the section on the webpage titled "Sankethis in the News" in which "Famous Sankethis" are described. We know there are many notable Sankethis (many of whom are in your families) and their cultural and societal contributions to recognize on our website. So please send a brief



write-up about these individuals along with relevant photos to be included on this page of our website to the NASA Secretary.

### **10. Helping NASA Better Communicate with You**

NASA is committed to keeping in touch with members and sharing community news in a timely and efficient manner. Please help us stay in good touch with you by keeping us apprised of any changes to your contact information (i.e., email addresses, postal mailing addresses, phone numbers, etc.). Our renovated website will provide you with a mechanism to update your contact information independently, but until those renovations take effect, please send this information to the NASA Secretary.

We have moved to an entirely electronic mode of communication, particularly with respect to sending you the *Chiguru* / NASA Newsletter. If you are not yet receiving electronic editions of the *Chiguru* / NASA Newsletter, please help us to include you on our electronic mailing list by providing an email address at which you wish to receive such correspondence.



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