

Om Sri Subramanyaaya Namah

SKANTHA SASHTI CELEBRATIONS

October 20th to October 26th 2017

Skantha Sashti commemorates the destruction of evil forces by the Supreme God Muruga, second son of God Shiva and Goddess Parvathi. Skantha Sashti is the grand festival for the Lord Muruga (also known as Subrahmanya, karthikeya, velayudha, guha, shanmukha, skantha) celebrated each year. This year we start the celebration from October 20th. There will be daily Homam and Abhisekam for Lord for six days (20th – 25th). On October 24th, God will receive the “Vel” from his mother. The important pooja, Skantha Shashti falls on October 25th. On this day, Lord Muruga vanquished the demon Soorapadman. This is celebrated with grandeur in all Subrahmanya temples through out the world, more so in the six places sacred to Muruga (aaru padai veedu, in Tamil – six settling places) – Tiruchendur, Tirupparankunram, Palani (thiruaavinankudi), Pazhamudir solai, Swamimalai, and Tiruttani. On October 26th, Thursday (seventh day) the marriage of Lord Subrahmanya and Indra's daughter Deivayanai will be performed.

Legend has it that the demon, Soorapadman performed most rigorous penances to Lord Shiva and received rare boons from Him. Armed with the power of these boons, he started harassing Devas and humans. Suffering Devas prayed to Lord Shiva for relief. Lord Shiva blessed them and told them that a son born to him will kill Soorapadman and save them. In due course, Lord Muruga was born to relieve the sufferings of Devas. The Lord – who has two kinds of compassion, dharmic and punitive (arak karunai, marak karunai), the first for the good and the second for those that are evil – deployed his punitive compassion on Soorapadman. The Lord felt that Soorapadman ought not to be consigned to the nether world Naraka because of his arrogance, making waste the boons obtained by him. Therefore, Muruga battled with the demon, cut his body into two halves, and, converting one half into a peacock and the other into a flag, took the first for his mount and the other for his insignia, thus blessing Soorapadman. This legend has an inner meaning. A soul mired in the sin of arrogance will not attain divinity and will be born again and again to troubled existence on the earth. The Lord Subrahmanya alone can remove the sin. Thus, out of his compassion, the Lord destroyed the physical body housing Soorapadman's arrogance and absorbs the demon's cleansed soul into Himself.

Skantha Sashti is a seven-day festival; celebrated in the temple each day with homam in the morning and abhishekam to the Lord in the evening for the first six days. Abhishekam is accompanied by chanting of Rudram, Kandha Sashti Kavacham, Thiruppugal and other songs in praise of Lord Muruga, Devotees of Muruga usually fast on all these six days eating only fruits and other light food that was offered to God at the end the day after performing all the poojas to the Lord. **The fifth, sixth and seventh days are very important days.** On the fifth day, Tuesday, October 24th, the Lord Subrahmanya receives the spear (Vel Vanguthal – in Tamil – receiving the spear), from his mother Shakthi (Parvathi), in preparation for waging the war on evil forces led by Soorapadman. In the Singara Velar temple in Sikkil, near Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu, Lord Muruga breaks out into pearl-like perspiration as he accepts the spear from his

mother Parvathi in preparation for the battle with the demon, Soorapadman. This is an annual miracle thrilling the devotees. The sixth day, October 25th Wednesday is celebrated with the dramatic enactment of Soora Samhaaram (The destruction of the demon Soorapadman) and abhishekam to the Lord. The lord first fights Gajamukhaasuran (Tarakaasuran) the elephant headed demon, and beheads him. A new head of Simha mukha (Lion head) is then mounted on the asura's body. Lord Subramanya beheads Simha mukhaasuran also. Finally Soorapadmaasuran comes to the battlefield. God vanquishes him - symbolically splitting him into two halves - turning one half into a cock, which becomes his banner symbol, and the other half into a beautiful peacock, which is his vehicle. Indra in gratitude for saving Devas from suffering, offers his daughter, Deivayanai in marriage to Lord Subrahmanya. Thus the grand finale is celebrated on the last day, October 26th Thursday, with the marriage (Kalyana Utsavam) of Subrahmanya to Deivayanai (and Valli). We hope all our devotees will attend all the seven-day festivities and receive the blessings of the Lord Muruga.



October 20th Friday - October – 25st Wednesday

Morning (10.00 AM – 12.00 Noon) Poorvanga Puja, Moolamantra Thirusathi Homam, Poornahuthi

Evening (6.00 PM – 8.00 PM) Vishesha Abhishekam, Skanda Shasti Parayanam, Alankaram, Upacharam, Aarathi

October 24th, Tuesday: Vel vanguthal

Morning (10.00 AM – 12.00 Noon) Poorvanga Puja, Moolamantra Thirusathi Homam, Poornahuthi

6:00 - 8:00 PM: Vel Vanguthal (Sakthi ayuda Grahanam) Lalitha Thrisadi archana for Sivakami, Abhishekam and Aarathi for Muruga

October 25th, Wednesday: Soora samhaaram

Morning (10.00 AM – 12.00 Noon) Poorvanga Puja, Moolamantra Thirusathi Homam, Poornahuthi

6.00 - 8:00 PM: Soorasamhara Uthsavam, Sooran Por, Kavadi, Skantha Abhishekam, Alankaram, Bhajans, Upacharam, Aarathi

October 26th, Thursday: 6.00 PM – 8.00 PM Subramanya Kalyana Uthsavam

Pattina Pravesam; Kanya Dhaanam; Mangalya Dhaaranam; Paanigrahanam; Subramanya Kalyanam.

May the blessings of Sri Subramanya be always with you and your family!!