

## **Kannimaar Prayers – The Seven Fairies Prayers**



சப்த கன்னியர் சந்நிதி

**Significance of the Kannimaar Prayer:-** To help male or female children or adults “caught” (affected) by a fairy or Kanni.

The male or female child or adult that is said to have been “caught (affected) by the 7 fairies” has the following symptoms:-

- Falls sick very often
- Droopy eyes
- Feels thirsty very often
- Hangs head or experiences burnout
- Sleeps all the time
- Refuses to eat

You may consult a priest if this prayer cannot be conducted by a family member. Do not take along other people except for the person that is affected. Kindly note that this special prayer is NOT a “Tamil or Telegu” prayer but rather for all people to follow.

The best days to perform this prayer:- Tuesdays and Saturdays

This prayer must be done at midday. Be at the river or sea side around 11 AM to prepare for the prayers.

**Requirements for the prayer:-** 4 plastic spoons, a small container of cooked sweet-rice, 3 kinds of fruits (eg. banana, apple, pear - 8 of each) {you may use whole fruits or cut fruits}, 1 coconut with water in it (totally cleaned {of the husk} but not broken), 500ml fresh milk, 8 whole flowers, 8 betel leaves, 8 betel (flat/brown – areca) nuts, 100g turmeric (hurdi/manja) powder, 50g kungu powder, 50g gadhampodi powder, 100g soaked (overnight) white rice + 100g soaked split green moong dal together mixed with sugar (not cooked), 100g sugar, 100g aval kadalay, 8 paper cups, 8 incense sticks, 3 blocks of camphor, 2 boxes of matches, 8 coins (any coin, eg. 5c coins will do), 1 reel of white cotton or raw cotton thread and dhoobakalsam, 1 chumbhu (lota) + teaspoon spoon, one rectangular tray, 2 large banana leaves + neem or syringaberry leaves and palm tree leaves, ten 1 metre long bamboo/mango sticks for the pandal, a 5 litre bucket of water, a small knife, a large knife or pliers for cutting the sticks, rip-cords or string

for trying the sticks for the Pandal, a bin bag for the dirt after the prayers, a rake and broom to clean the place where the pandal is going to be erected, some newspaper, 2 large towels, 7 smooth stones (measuring approximately 5cm by 5cm), a heavy hammer to knock the sticks into the ground.

**Duration of the prayer:-** Including the set up of the Pandal and the prayers etc, approximately 35 minutes.

**What is the english meaning of some of the tamil/hindi terms mentioned above and below?**

Gadhampodi - (is a brown powder used in the prayer)

Aval kadalay - (is a mixture of flatten dried rice and gram/chana dal)

Dhooba kalsam - (for aarti - double clay lamp or brass lamp)

Chumbhu - (lota/clay pot)

Pandal - (the small hut built with bamboo sticks and covered with palm and syringaberry leaves)

Kungu - (a powder used in prayers that is cerise pink in colour)

Pathai payir - (soaked white rice mixed with split green moong dal and sugar)

Dheeb-arathnay - (aarti)

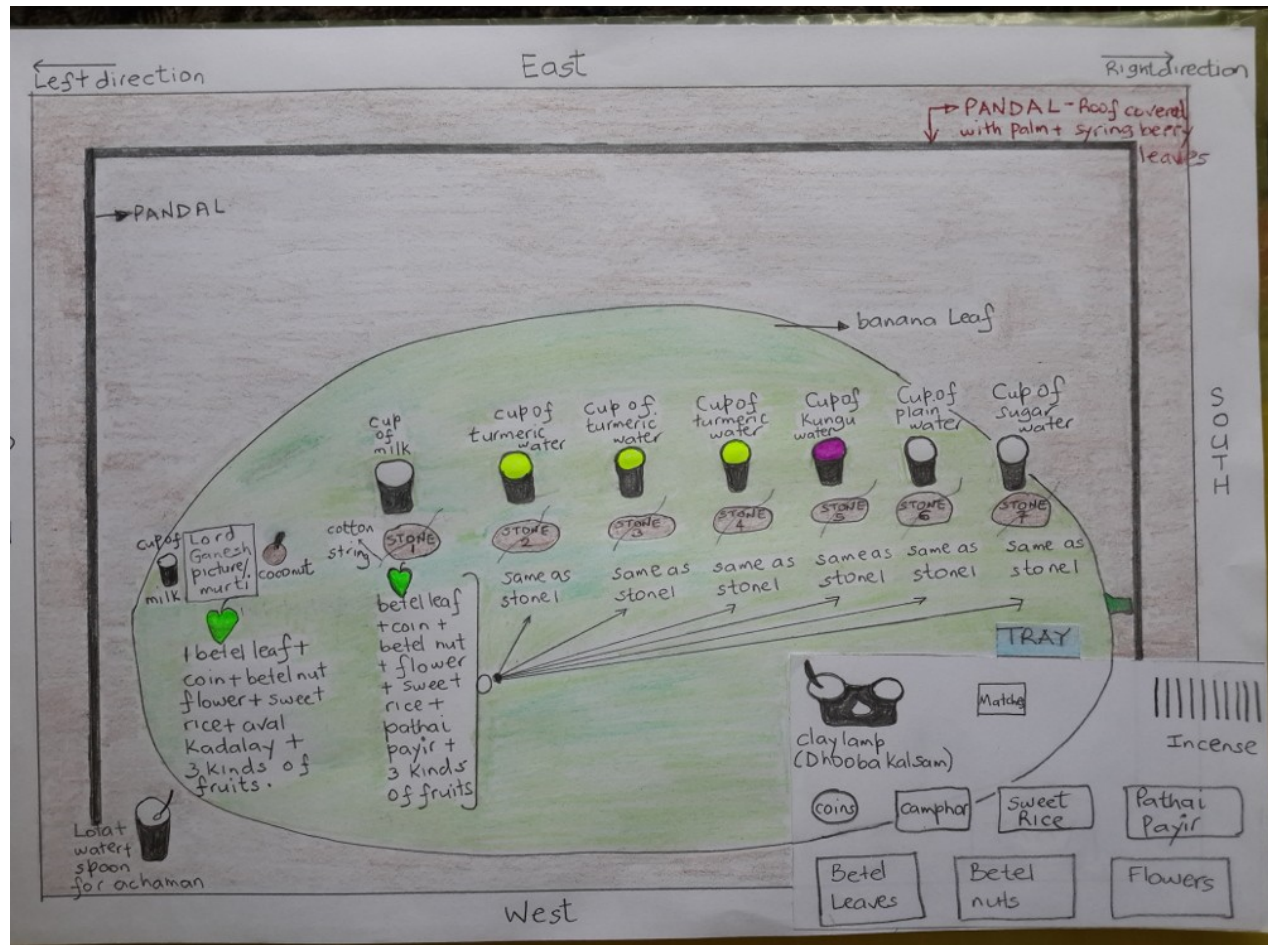
**A few suggestions:-** Purchase small fruits that are easily immersible in the water or give the fruits to a less fortunate person after the prayers. Before you proceed to the river or sea, I would suggest washing all the fruits with water and keeping the fruit in a clean packet, keep the pathai payir in a small disposable container, keep the sweet rice (kheer/payasam) in a small disposable container, the coconut must be completely cleaned of its husk, washed and kept in a packet. The betel leaves, flowers, banana leaves, neem or syringaberry leaves and palm leaves should also be thoroughly washed with water. Wash the ten 1 metre long bamboo or mango sticks with a mixture of turmeric powder and water. All the prayers goods are now placed in a cardboard box.

**Procedure:-** Proceed to the sea shore or river side (I prefer the river). Remove your shoes, and make sure you are wearing all your clothes the right side. Clean the area demarcated for the pandal using the rake and broom. Then sprinkle turmeric water on the demarcated area. Facing the **east** direction, light one camphor tablet in the middle of the demarcated area and then pray to Lord Ganesh and Mother Ganga to remove any negativities that is lurking in and around the demarcated area for the puja and your prayers to be a success. Now commence the building of the pandal (hut). Once the pandal is built, create a flooring of banana leaves. Then clean the seven stones by rubbing some turmeric powder on it, and washing the stones with water thereafter. Now dot each stone (in the middle of the stone) with kungu powder and keep aside for it to dry. On the extreme left side of the pandal, on the banana leaf, place the Lord Ganesh murti/picture. Thereafter, place the seven stones adjacently on the banana leaf (as depicted in the picture below).

Place white cotton or raw cotton (of length approximately 30cm's, with seven knots tied on the string) over each stone.

Now perform Lord Ganesh prayers, ending with dheeb-arathnay (aarti).

Both the affected person and the person performing the prayer for the affected person will sit facing East. From the chumbhu (lota) of water with a spoon in it, add a spoonful of water in the palm of your right hand and sip it chanting "Om Vishnu". Wash your hands with water and repeat two more times. Now wipe your hands with the towel.



**Simple Ganesh Puja procedure:-** Take 1 betel leaf, on top of that betel leaf place 1 betel nut, 1 coin, 1 flower and with your hands folded, pray to Shree Ganeshji chanting his mantra -

“Om ganapati devata aa-vaa-hayaa-mee sthaapa-yamee; Om ganapataye namah”

And then place the betel leaf (and its ingredients) on the banana leaf in front of Lord Ganesh's murti/picture. Do note the pointed edge of the betel leaf should be facing you. Now offer Lord Ganesh one stick of incense (turn the lit incense around the murti/picture seven times in a clockwise direction, and position it, in the ground, in front of the murti/picture. Next, offer the clay lamp (Dhooba kalsam - which has a small piece of camphor in it, light the camphor) and turn the Dhooba kalsam around the murti/picture seven times in a clockwise direction, offer a teaspoon of sweet rice and one tablespoon of aval kadalay on the betel leaf and place the three kinds of fruit around the betel leaf. Pour milk into a cup and place the cup of milk on the side of the betel leaf and the coconut on the opposite side of the cup of milk. Turn the cup of milk

three times in a clockwise direction around Lord Ganesh and drop most of the milk, in front of the betel leaf, taking care to leave a small amount in the cup (to consume later by those at the prayers). Then turn the coconut three times in a clockwise direction around Lord Ganesh and then crack it open with a brick or hard object (make sure that the coconut is in two pieces) and then offer that coconut to Lord Ganesh by turning the cracked coconut three times in a clockwise direction around his picture/murti. Lastly, offer the clay lamp (aarti) {dheeb-arathnay - seven times around the murti/picture} to end Lord Ganesha's puja.

Now we commence with the Kanni Shakti puja.

**Simple Kanni Shakti Puja procedure:-** Take 1 betel leaf, on top of that betel leaf place 1 betel nut, 1 coin, 1 flower and with your hands folded, pray to the first Kanni Shakti (to remove any negative dosha (vibrations/energies) affecting you, and then place the betel leaf (and its ingredients) on the banana leaf in front of the first stone (the one on the extreme left). Do note the tip of the betel leaf should be facing you. Do the same with the other six betel leaves (and its ingredients). Once the seven betel leaves with the respective ingredients has been placed in the correct positions – one in front of each stone, go back to the first Kanni (stone 1) and sprinkle a little Gadampodi powder on the stone and then offer one stick of incense (turn the incense around the first stone only - seven times in a clockwise direction, and position it, in the ground, in front of the first stone. Next, offer the clay lamp (Dhooba kalsam - which has a small piece of camphor in it, light the camphor) to the first stone by turning the Dhooba kalsam around the first stone seven times in a clockwise direction. Thereafter, offer a teaspoon of sweet rice and one teaspoon of pathai payir on the betel leaf and place the three kinds of fruits around the betel leaf. Place the cup of milk above the first stone. Turn the cup of milk three times in a clockwise direction around the first stone and drop most of the milk, in front of the betel leaf, taking care to leave a small amount in the cup (to consume later by those at the prayers).

REPEAT the above for the next six Kannis (stones) as is, BUT the only difference will be that, instead of offering milk as was done for the first stone, the following will be offered instead of the milk for the other stones:

2<sup>nd</sup> stone:- offer turmeric powder (hurdi/manja) water

3<sup>rd</sup> stone:- offer turmeric powder (hurdi/manja) water

4<sup>th</sup> stone:- offer turmeric powder (hurdi/manja) water

5<sup>th</sup> stone:- offer kungu powder water

6<sup>th</sup> stone:- offer plain water

7<sup>th</sup> stone:- offer sugar water (water mixed with sugar)







Lastly, light the 7 tablets of camphor (as depicted in the picture below) pray to the seven fairies thereafter offer the clay lamp (aarti) {dheeb-arathnay - seven times around the seven stones to end the seven Kannis puja. Bow down to the seven stones, then ask Lord Ganesh and the seven fairies to kindly forgive you for any mistakes or shortcomings that was committed whilst the prayers was being performed.



All those that are present for the prayers must consume a little of the seven liquids from those seven cups viz. the milk, turmeric water, kungu water, plain water and sugar water.

The 30cm cotton thread that was placed on the stones is to be tied on the affected person's wrist. This thread should be tied on the right wrist for males, or the left wrist for females.

Traditionally, the child/person affected by the fairies should wear old clothes for the prayers, since the clothes worn should be discarded after this puja. \*However, this tradition is still being researched, and is yet to be confirmed.

Before sleeping that night, it is advisable to light lobhaan, and use the smoke from the burning lobhaan to “smoke” the house, allowing the smoke to permeate the rooms of the house (slightly, not enough to cause breathing difficulties or other problems).

**NOTE:-** Any remaining edible items (eg. fruit) after the prayers have been done, can be eaten as prashad (blessed food) and also be given to a less fortunate person, but none of the puja items is to be taken back to one's home. As far as possible, try not to dispose of any items into the ocean or river as this will cause pollution. #TEAM-DIPIKA We, at [www.dipika.org.za](http://www.dipika.org.za), are extremely sensitive when it comes to our environment. Dispose of the paper cups, plastics spoons, etc. in the big bin packet you brought along and dispose of in a waste bin at the river side or nearby. DO take back home the broom, rake, knife, pliers, etc... DO NOT burn the pandal. Leave the pandal as is. This prayer is very beneficial if performed annually.

**Additional Information:-** The seven fairies are viewed in a negative/malefic light as they preside over epidemic diseases, and so forth. In the central and north parts of India these seven deities are viewed in a negative light. These seven deities names are as follows:- ...1) Sheetala devi, 2) Ghentukarna or Ghentu-debata, 3) Jvara-asura, ... 4) the Caushattee Rogas, 5) Olaai Candi/Olaai Bibi/Oladevi, 6) Rakta-aavatee devi and 7) Raktabati devi.

According to puranic lilas (pastimes), *mother Sheetala* is one of seven sisters who resides in the neem tree or syringaberry tree and brings about epidemic diseases. She provides coolness (soothing relief) to the patients of fever when she is worshipped. She is often in the company of *Ghentukarna or Ghentu-debata* (the deity of skin diseases), *Jvara-asura* (the fever demon), the *Caushattee Rogas* (the sixty-four epidemics), *Olaai Candi/Olaai Bibi/Oladevi* (the goddess of cholera) and *Rakta-aavatee* (the goddess of blood infections) and *Raktabati* (the goddess of blood infections).

Also the syringaberry tree leaves consists generally of seven 'sets' of leaves - depicting the 7 mothers. (As in the picture below – one set at the tip, and three sets of two – one on each side of the stem – sums seven in all) Amazing isn't it. :)



Mother Sheetala is depicted as having six sisters, all of whom cause pustular diseases and are venerated for recovery. The sisters are also named as:- *Masani*, *Basanti*, *Maha mai*, *Polamde*, *Lamkaria* and *Agwani*. Mother Sheetala and her sisters reside on the trees of the *neem tree* (*Azdiracta indica*), *kikar tree* (*Acacia arabica/ babul*), Egyptian

thorn, Sant tree, prickly acacia; lekkerruikpeul or scented thorn in South Africa; karuvela maram in South India), or jand tree (*Prosopis specigera*/ Vanni (Tamil); Jammi (Telugu); Chaunkra, Jant/Janti, Khar, Khejri/Khejra, Sami, Shami (Marathi & Hindi). On one of the seals found in Harrappa (Pakistan), there are the figures of seven girls with long hair. These are believed to be mother Sheetala and her six sisters. Mother Sheetala can be worshipped at any time of the year. However, the annual period of worship is the month of Chait (March–April) as per the Vedic calendar. Generally, she is worshipped early in the mornings of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays.

In the Southern parts of India, these seven deities are viewed in a negative light. They are the counterparts of the Northern deities. These seven deities are as follows:-

1) Poleramma, 2) Ankamma, 3) Muthyal-amma, 4) Dilli Polasi, 5) Bangaramma, 6) Mathamma, and 7) Renukamma. These seven sisters deities are very popular in South India. The names of the Seven Sisters vary depending on localities where they are being worshipped. Poleramma is the most well-known goddess that is found in almost every village.

**Poleramma:** The shrine of Poleramma is generally outside the village. In some places, it consists of just stones, two or three feet long that are set upright in the ground on three sides – to form a small 'square', the fourth side of the 'square' being left open. A flat stone is placed on the top. Poleramma is considered as the goddess of smallpox in the Telugu-speaking regions. She is also responsible to some extent for all other troubles in the village like cattle disease, drought, and sickness among the people.

**Ankamma:** Akamma has lot of similarities with Poleramma. She is represented by an unfinished stone image in a little temple outside the village. Ankamma is often described as a household deity. As a household goddess she is represented by a pot in which there are some shells, little earthen mugs, and other similar articles. The shells represent the teeth of demons and the pots represent the food which they yearn for.

**Muthyalamma:** Muthyalamma is a form of Mother Durga or Mother Kali. She is worshipped in Ashada month (mid June-Mid July) during Mahakali festival in Telangana. It is believed that she is worshipped in order to bring rain.

**Dilli Polasi:** Dilli Polasi is a household and a village deity. As a household goddess, she is represented by a several pots placed one on top of another. The public worship is more often engaged in by one family or a group of related families.

**Bangaramma:** This goddess is given less importance as compared to other sisters. She has no temple of her own but her image is also placed in the temple of Poleramma. At times, she receives a small share of the worship. Again, there are similarities in the worship of Bangaramma and Poleramma. The word Bangaramma means 'the golden one' that describes her mild nature.



**Mathamma:** Mathamma is a special goddess of the Madigas people. All castes fear her. Due to this, excepting Madigas nobody can take an active part in the ceremonies. As Madigas are poor, her worship is not as elaborate as that of the other goddesses. Madigas people are a Scheduled Caste clan that is found primarily in the southern Indian states of India.

**Renukamma:** Renukamma is worshipped as the goddess of the fallen, in the Vedic pantheon. She is a patron goddess of rural folk of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Her devotees have revered her as the "Mother of the Universe". She is worshipped mostly in South India, especially in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, where the deity is known by several names like Mahankali, Jogamma, Somalamma, Renukamata.

Additional information on the seven sisters that may have some relation to the seven fairies.

Are the Sapta Matrikas and the Sapta (seven) Kanni's (fairies) the same?

**NO** – The reason as to why the seven mothers (Saptamatrika(s)) cannot be the seven fairies is that they represent positivity - while the seven fairies deities represent the negative aspects. It is not appropriate when the seven Mothers (Sapta Matrika's (names below)) are referred to as the seven fairies in this prayer. These seven mothers are viewed in a very benefic/positive light as they preside over positive aspects/protection/good health, as opposed to negative aspects/harm/diseases.

Matrikas (mothers), is a group of Vedic goddesses who are always depicted together. Since they are usually depicted as a heptad, they are called Sapta Matrika(s): **Brahmani devi** (the wife of Lord Brahma), **Vaishnavi devi** (the wife of Lord Vishnu), **Maheshvari devi** (the wife of Lord Maheshvara), **Indrani devi** (the wife of Lord Indra), **Kaumari devi** (the wife of Lord Muruga), **Varahi devi** (the wife of Lord Varaha), **Chamunda devi** (the wife of Lord Shiva) and **Narasimhi devi** (the wife of Lord Narasimhadeva). In South India, Saptamatrika worship is very prevalent and popular.

The iconographical features of the Sapta Matrikas have been described in Vedic scriptures such as the Puranas, the Agamas and the Mahabharata. Puranas like the Varaha Purana, Agni Purana, Matsya Purana, Vishnudharmottara Purana and Devi Mahatmya, a part of the Markandeya Purana as well as Agamas such as Amsumadbhedagama, Surabhedagama, Purvakarnagama and Rupamandana all describe the Sapta Matrikas.

**SPECIAL NOTE:-** This article was compiled with the best of intentions - with the aim of making our fellow Hindus aware of this important prayer, which is performed primarily by South Indians. [www.dipika.org.za](http://www.dipika.org.za) is trying it's utmost to bridge the unfortunate "man-made" gap made by individuals with very narrow mindsets, who have their own agendas regarding Hinduism. Should you have more shastric backed information on the seven fairies kindly email me on [info@dipika.org.za](mailto:info@dipika.org.za) and I will amend this article accordingly. Also, if you are e-mailing me to inform me that what is

compiled above is not correct, then kindly provide me with the “correct”, proven information. I will always gladly welcome constructive criticism. :)

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