

## Thai Poosam Kavady 12<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019

### It's Origin & Significance

Vanakkum and Prem Namaste friends, all glories to Mother Parvati-Lord Shiva.  
All glories to Shree Ganeshji, all glories to the all-merciful Lord Muruga.



We humbly seek the divine blessings of our most merciful Lord Muruga in compiling this article on the significance of Thai Poosam Kavady.

Shree Krsna said, "O Arjuna, of generals I am Skanda, the lord of war".  
Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10 verse 24.

"Thai Poosam" falls every year on the full moon day in the 10<sup>th</sup> Tamil month of "Thai" (January/February). This year it falls on **21<sup>st</sup> January**. On this day, the full moon is in transit through the brightest star "Poosam" (in the zodiac sign cancer) and the planet Guru (Jupiter) is the presiding deity. This event is called "Thai Poosam".

January 12<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) : THAI POOSAM KAVADY - FLAG HOISTING  
January 21<sup>st</sup> (Monday) : THAI POOSAM KAVADY

The Kavady prayer and penance is observed over 10 days by Lord Muruga's devotees – starting with the Thai Poosam Kavady Flag Hoisting on the 12<sup>th</sup> January.

### The 10 days of observance leading to Thai Poosam Kavady

The flag which is raised on the first day (12<sup>th</sup> January 2019) marks the beginning of the 10 day fast (vrata) and the observance of the Kavady festival. During the 10 day Kavady period the devotee has to abstain from various non-sattwic things like alcohol, meat and drugs etc. Devotees are required to observe celibacy, to sleep on the floor (this is optional) and to maintain a vegetarian diet for this entire period. Every morning or evening (depending on one's circumstances), one should prepare a food offering to Lord Muruga's namely PAYASAM (a.k.a kheer / sweet rice). When preparing the Payasam, do make sure that it is prepared with total purity - meaning no talking or thinking of negative thoughts during the preparation of this offering as our Lord is going to partake in this preparation. While preparing the Payasam, do add milk and gur {jaggery/sugar}, a pinch of cardamom powder. Optional items like 2 strands of saffron, cashew nuts, almonds and pistachio nuts are added later to garnish the Payasam. Fruits like mangoes and bananas are quite appropriate to

offer to Lord Muruga as well. With regards to what flowers one can offer our Lord, well in South Africa marigold is generally offered due to its yellow colour and availability, but in other places around the world jasmine garlands are offered to our Lord. So, once again, this is what you are recommended to do daily (note that this is merely a guide) - after having a bath, wear clean clothes, then prepare Payasam, and place some cut mango or banana in a bowl, and in a cup (lota/chumbu) add milk with gur, and betel leaf + betel nut. These items should be placed on a tray, as in the pictures provided below.

Tray #1:- 3 Incense sticks in an incense holder, lamp with a tablet of camphor or ghee and a wick and one marigold, jasmine or a flower that is easily accessible ...



Tray #2:- Payasam in a bowl, 1 clean spoon, cut mango or banana in a bowl, milk in a cup (lota/chumbu), 1 betel leaf + betel nut (the flat, brown one).



Now offer Tray #2 by placing the tray in front of a picture or murti of Lord Muruga. Pray to the Lord and ask that he enjoys the food prepared by yourself with love. Leave the tray for 5 minutes after offering it to the Lord - for the Lord to partake in his meal. After 5 minutes, return and pray to Lord Muruga asking for forgiveness if the food prepared by yourself

wasn't to his satisfaction but it was prepared with utmost devotion. Always remember humility, as one should never think what they are cooking or preparing is the best but one is simply trying to please the Lord.

Light the incense and the lamp, place these items on the tray together with a flower and then offer your tray assembled like Tray #1 by turning the tray in a clockwise direction around the picture/murti 7 times. Should you desire to be more specific with the aarti as performed in temples, then you can offer the tray offer four circles (clockwise) to the lotus feet of Lord Muruga, two circles to the navel, and three circles to the Lord's face; then offer seven circles to the Lord's whole body.

Finally the six-syllable mantra is chanted daily to Lord Muruga viz. 'OM SARA-VANA-BAVA NAMAHA x 108 times in front of a deity or picture of Lord Muruga. Please chant this most auspicious mantra with a lot of faith. Once done with the chanting, one should pay their obeisances to the picture/murti of Lord Muruga and you can continue with your day constantly remembering our Lord and his pastimes during the day.

\*\*\* REMEMBER that your devotion or bhakti is what is important and means the most to Lord Muruga.

One can also make daily visits to a local Lord Muruga temple. While traveling to the temple don't allow yourself to focus on problems at home or at work. Do hear to religious music in your car audio system or your cell phone and listen to the music with lots of faith.

The Kavady procession is seen as an outward demonstration of mass devotion towards Lord Muruga. There are various reasons for carrying the Kavady but the two main reasons are either to express gratitude to Lord Muruga or to request Lord Muruga for help in overcoming a particular problem/issue in one's life.

Many request help via email, etc., and I always advise people to pray to Lord Muruga (a.k.a Lord Skanda deva). Many North Indians (for example Hindi and Gujarati, etc. people) misunderstand that he is a Tamil deity, which cannot be further from the truth. Most North Indians (Hindi or Gujarati, etc. people) perform the Shree Satya-Narayana Katha and this katha is from the Reva Khanda of the Skanda Purana. If only the North Indian (Hindi or Gujarati, etc.) people knew this fact, they would surely be surprised. Also, Lord Muruga is the commander-in-chief of Lord Vishnu's army. So I would humbly advise you to pray to a deity or picture of Lord Muruga. I would suggest you write all the things you desire from Lord Muruga (but please don't be unrealistic or ask for trivial things). Fold this page a few times and then place it in between your palms and pray to Lord Muruga praying that what you wrote on the page is realised or comes true and you will carry a Gargo (Kavady) for 3 years. Now leave this page by Lord Muruga's Deity or picture and a R10. Use this money when you are buying things for the next Kavady of your choice. All Kavadies are special and powerful, but I personally recommend the Thai Poosam Kavady which occurs around the latter part of January or the beginning of February yearly.

In the Bhagavad Gita 5 main topics discussed viz. 1) Ishvara (The Supreme Lord), 2) Jiva (The living entities), 3) Prakriti (The material substratum), 4) Kala (Time), and 5) Karma (The results of one's actions). Among these five, Ishvara, Jiva, Prakriti and Kala are eternal. Additionally, the four being Jiva, Prakriti, Kala and Karma are all subject to Ishvara. Karma, the results of actions, is described as 'pragathava' which has no beginning but does have an end. An example of pragathava is: summer is coming but from where summer has come cannot be ascertained; but the end of summer can be determined - Karma is to be understood like that. In simpler words, Karma can be changed fairly easily by carrying Kavady, observing Vrats like Nirjala Ekadashi, and so forth. But certain Karmas are

extremely difficult to overcome. Although this is a topic for another time and article.

Some may ask, “Am I not bargaining with Lord Muruga as in - 'you do this for me and I will do this for you?’” NO, you are not. In order for Lord Muruga to assist you, you need to ask him for help as one of the Universe's Rules is “help those who ask for help”. So Lord Muruga can't rock up at your home and start dishing out blessings. One needs to humbly request his divine help.

**The Importance of flowers in Lord Muruga worship:-** Every object associated with the ritual of Puja or worship is symbolically significant. No puja ritual of a Deity is complete without use of flowers. If we know such things as which flowers for worship or leaves are to be offered to a particular Deity, in what numbers and their spiritual benefits then we will get more benefit from that puja ritual. There are subtle frequencies of Deities active in the atmosphere. These frequencies are attracted towards certain flowers. These frequencies are then emitted back into atmosphere and are then known as ‘pavitrak’. The negative energies present in the atmosphere get distressed due to the Deity principle pavitraks projected by the sattvik (mode of goodness) flowers. In short, the sattvik flowers fight with (ward off) the negative energies present in the atmosphere by emitting frequencies of deity principles. Such flowers when brought into contact with a person suffering from the distress of negative energy then the negative energy which has entered the person subsides. So one of the important flowers that is offered to Lord Muruga in South Africa is the Marigold. So use Marigold flowers liberally in decorating the Kavady.

Iduman, one of the disciples of Agastha Muni, was asked to bring two hills - representing the two forces inherent in all living beings (Shiva and Shakti). Iduman carried these two hills with a Kavady (a beam across his shoulder) - with one hill suspended on each end. Mid-way through his journey, he stopped to rest for a little while. When he was ready to resume his journey, he found that the hills were too heavy to pick up. As he prepared to forcibly pick them up with more effort, he saw Lord Muruga in the way and he angrily asked Lord Muruga to move out of the way. Lord Muruga refused which made Iduman annoyed and a battle commenced between Lord Muruga and Iduman, whereby Iduman was easily defeated. Lord Muruga, through his eternal mercy, revived and pardoned him – and then a change came over Iduman and he became Lord Muruga's greatest devotee. Iduman carried the first Kavady out of absolute devotion to Lord Muruga. Lord Muruga also made Iduman his gate keeper. That is why when a devotee goes to the famous Pazhanimalai temple in South India, one must first pray to Iduman and then proceed to the main temple.

The goal of Lord Muruga worship is to learn to control the negative instincts, the ramifications of the intellect, the pride of the ego and to manifest one's spiritual nature. This is the inner process within the individual, of divinity overcoming darkness and the regular worship of Lord Muruga helps one become a wiser person, who is more inclined to make these inner changes and thus make tangible progress on one's spiritual path.

**What is a Kavady?:-** It is a Tamil word meaning flattened pole with loads at both ends. The Kavady carried in a religious procession also has a pole with a semi circular arch. The arch is decorated with flowers and palm leaves. The loads attached to the ends of the pole are brass vessels filled with milk or other offerings. Peacock feathers and a Vel (spear) are also attached on the Kavady.

A brass pot filled with milk should be carried for Lord Muruga as an offering and it is called “Paal Kodum”. One question which is often asked by devotees is - “can I fast for Kavady without carrying a Kavady?”. The answer to this question is a definite **“YES”**. One does not have to carry Kavady to show one's devotion to Lord Muruga. Observing the 10 day fast and

attending the prayers for the Kavady period (10 days) at the local temple is also seen as devotion towards Lord Muruga. Devotees, please remember it is your love and devotion towards the Lord that is important.

**Why is a flag raised and a 10 day fast observed?** The flag which is raised on the first day (12<sup>th</sup> January 2019) marks the beginning of the 10 day fast and the observance of the Kavady festival. The flag also serves as a reminder that one should start fasting and visit one's local temple often in those 10 days and the flag is also a sign of trying to be victorious in your observance to the Lord. The 10 day fast or sadhana is the clearance of one's mind, body and soul. By fasting and going to temple and praying for these 10 days, devotees become spiritually charged and uplifted to carry their Kavady and to fulfil their vow to Lord Muruga.

**The meaning of the banner or flag:** - The Sevel (Rooster) symbolises the approach of the Sun or the dawn of knowledge. It is the Sevel that proclaims the coming of the Sun in the east. The Sun is the heavenly body that dispels darkness. The Sevel on the banner announces the approach of knowledge which will destroy all ignorance.

**The Vel:-** Lord Muruga's Vel (spear) is strong, straight and sharp, representing our spinal cord running through the spinal column, to the top most part of our brain, which is the highest point of knowledge.



The Vel is the spear of wisdom and Jnana shakti (the power of knowledge) which penetrates one's intellect and leads one to seek the ultimate reality. The Vel is a deadly foe to the arrogant - and to the lower natured, it affords strength and protection for the awakened soul. The world changes because the individuals in the world changes it. In other words, the world becomes a more divine, peaceful environment as more individuals find divinity and peace within themselves. Certainly, one would consider the worship of Lord Muruga and his Shaktivel, his Vel of wisdom is a potent force in moving the world in that direction. Vedic deities in our temples all have mystical symbolism. A common symbolism is to depict the Shakta Energy as male and Shakti Energy as female (generally as his spouse). This is because in these temples, they have Lord Muruga with two consorts. So, there is an explanation of two concepts. God in Hinduism is generally seen everywhere as the beloved divine couple. Philosophically however, the caution is always made that the Lord and His energy are one. The metaphor of the inseparable divine couple serves only to illustrate this oneness. In the case of Lord Muruga, his consorts are Valli and Devayani. Additionally we have the Vel as an important symbol. These three represent three distinct energies, powers or shaktis. Valli represents the iccha shakti, the power of desire. Devayani represents kriya shakti, the power of action. The Vel represents jnana shakti, the power of wisdom. Whether an action we have committed is dharmic or adharmic, the worship of Lord Muruga and the power of his Vel will help one understand the ramifications of their actions, as well as granting one the ability to see the wisdom or lack of wisdom in one's actions more quickly. In some of Lord Muruga's temples, the importance of the Vel is stressed by the fact that the only murti in the main sanctum is the Vel.

**The Mayil (Peacock):-** The peacock represents his vahana (vehicle) symbolising his conquest over ego, vanity and pride. By Lord Muruga sitting on the peacock it symbolises the control he has over our pride and ego. Valli and Devayani are the consorts of Lord Muruga. Valli is Ichhashakti (the power of will) and Devayani Kryashakti (the power of action).

**Why yellow?** The ancient tribes in India started the Kavady festival by worshipping the rising sun. They believed that the sun could provide heat and light but symbolically it could also burn up sins and redeem devotees. They recognized the sun as Lord Muruga. The sun was seen as a yellow colour which is associated with Kavady. This is the reason behind devotees' attire generally being yellow for Kavady.

**Types of Kavadies: - Various Kavadies one can carry**

Manjal (turmeric powder) / relief from worries and debts

Pushpa (Flowers) / progress and success

Paal (Milk) / Good life and prosperity

Thayier (Sour milk) / relief from sickness

Illanier (tender coconut) / conceiving

Then (Honey) / truthfulness and honesty

Ellemichaai (Lime) / protection from enemies

Vibhoothi (Holy ash) / blessings

Panier (Rose water) / wealth and progress

Ney (Ghee) / liberation

The six-syllabled mantra chanted for Lord Muruga is:-

**OM SARAVANABAVA NAMAH/POTRI**

- SA - Confers the prosperity of Shakti.
- RA - Gives the wealth of knowledge.
- VA - Bestows happiness and enjoyment.
- NA - Protects one from all forces of evil.
- BA - Confers morality.
- VA - Confers a blessed life.

One can develop a close relationship with Lord Muruga in which one can pray to our Lord as a good friend or brother and one can get to know our Lord through bhakti yoga (devotional service). The practice of devotional disciplines, worship, prayer, chanting and singing is performed with the aim of awakening love in one's heart and opening oneself up to the Lord's grace. Devotion to Lord Muruga can be increased or cultivated. Here are some of Dipika's humble suggestions or guidelines.

1. Make one's visit to the Lord's temple a religious one. While travelling to the temple don't allow yourself to focus on problems at home or work. Play religious music in your car audio system or your cell phone and listen to the religious music, for example.

2. Always take an offering to the Lord's temple. *It's said that when you visit a temple empty handed you leave empty handed.* The act of giving opens you to the blessings of the temple deities. Never visit a temple without bringing an offering and offering that to the Deity. Also, a point to note, if you are offering flowers to the Lord, it is very important not to smell that flower first and keep the flowers/offerings covered in a paper bag (for example) so that, besides you when you first see and pick the flower, no one else can see and admire the flowers as you want Lord Muruga to view and smell. Every little detail taken should be to please our merciful Lord.

3. Afford as much time and prana (energy) into the offering as possible. Buying a garland at the store is all good, but making it yourself is way better and something I personally suggest. The prana in the offering (meaning the energy coming out of your hands when you make the garland) goes into the garland and therefore when the garland is placed on Lord Muruga in a deity or picture form, it is almost like you are touching the deity and creates an even greater closeness.

4. During the puja keep focused on the murti and what the priests are chanting. Please pay close attention and don't let your mind wander. When singing bhajans, keep focused on the meaning of the mantras (if you are familiar with the meanings) and most importantly CLAP. So one may ask, "Why should I clap?" When one claps while a bhajan is being sung, Clapping of the hands in a temple (for a bhajan, etc) changes the lines on your palms that changes negative into positive lines, in other words if the heart line on your palm was weak, constant clapping of your palms during bhajans makes your heart line stronger. Amazing, isn't it? You have just got to love being a Hindu.

5. Finally, the blessings, the shakti (power) of a deity is stronger on certain days than other days. So attending the temple on the days where vibrations are especially powerful is extremely helpful to attuning oneself to the shakti of that particular Deity. For example, there is a stronger vibrational shakti on yearly festivals, such as Skanda Shasti or Thai Pooam Kavady for Lord Muruga.

Performing daily puja is definitely an effective way to deepen one's personal relationship with Lord Muruga. It's important to note that our Lord Muruga is traditionally worshipped to invoke the forces of divinity, to overcome the forces of darkness - so why should one wait? Go now and pray to our Lord and see miracles happening in your life. Of course, it should be noted that it this is all optional, and one should not feel compelled to do these things. That's the beauty of being a Hindu.

### **The Appearance of Lord Muruga** **With additional information on Lord Muruga**

Mother Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva, immolated herself at her father's Yagna, which was later destroyed by Lord Shiva. (That's why, in times past, a lady used to join her late husband on the pyre, hence she committed Sati). Thankfully this is forbidden in Kali Yuga. Also we often say SATI-MA. We Hindus often say this when we want a person to really believe what we are saying is true i.e. to prove that we are not lying. Mother Sati was reborn as Mother Uma, or Mother Parvati - the daughter of the mountain King Himavaan (the Himalayas). Lord Shiva withdrew himself from the universe and engaged himself in yogic meditation in the Himalayas.

Meanwhile, the demon Soorapadman ravaged Earth and tormented its beings. It was realized by the devas that only the son born of Lord Shiva could lead the devas to victory over Tarakasuran, Soorapadman, Singamuhan and their demon companions. These brothers had obtained great powers through intense penance and were harassing the devas. Unable to bear their cruelty anymore, the devas requested Lord Parameswara (Lord Vishnu) to save them from the brothers. The devas plotted with Kamadev, to shoot a flower arrow at Lord Shiva, as he sat in meditation, so as to make him fall in love with Mother Parvati. When Kamadev aimed his arrow, Lord Shiva opened his third eye and burned Kamadev to ashes instantly. When Lord Shiva opened his Third Eye, he also emitted six sparks, which enveloped the three worlds with lustre. These sparks were carried by Agni-dev, Vayu-dev and the other Devas to Mother Ganga and Mother Ganga in turn carried them to Lake Saravana Poigai, where the fire sparks took the shape of six male babies, cradled by lotus

flowers and reeds that floated in the lake. Philosophically the lotus represents the pure heart and the reeds represent the network of nerves in a human's physical body. Symbolically, the Divine Effulgence in the lake with its lotuses and reeds, are within each being.

In the Lake the sparks became six divine children and were nursed by six Karttika maidens who saw the babies floating in the lake, took them and reared them till Mother Parvati a.k.a. (Mother Durga/Sati/Kali) came there and fondly hugged the six babies to her bosom. The six babies coalesced to form into a single child with six heads with faces and twelve hands. And that is how Lord Shanmukha (meaning 'six faces') was born to save the Devas. He is the incarnation of pure consciousness and divine knowledge.

Lord Muruga (a.k.a. Lord Shanmukha) became the supreme general of the devas and their armies. When the appropriate time came, Lord Skanda, himself, prepared to fight Soorapadman and his clan, finely equipped with arms. Above all, Mother Parvati gave her son the Shakti Vel with which Lord Subramanya fought the Demons (Asuras). At last, when Soorapadman's wife requested the Lord to spare her husband, Lord Skanda honoured her request by leaving him to remain as His flag (seval kodi - the flag with a cock emblem) and His vehicle - peacock (Mayilvahanam). As a mark of gratitude, Devendra married his daughter Devayani to Lord Skanda. The six sites at which Lord Kartikeya sojourned while leading his armies against Surapadman are Tiruttanikai, Swamimalai, Tiruvavinankudi (Palani), Pazhamudirsolai, Tirupparamkunram and Tiruchendur (all in South India).

Another version of Lord Muruga's birth is from the Mahabharata. In a rather complicated pastime, Lord Muruga was born from Agni-dev and Svaha-devi, after Svaha-devi impersonated six of the seven wives of the Saptarishi (Seven Sages). The actual wives then become the Pleiades. Lord Kartikeya is said to have been born to destroy Mahishasura. (Mahishasura later became the legendary adversary of Mother Durga). Lord Indra attacked Lord Kartikeya as he saw Lord Muruga as a threat, until Lord Shiva intervened and made Lord Kartikeya the commander-in-chief of the army of the Devas. He is also married to Devasena, Lord Indra's daughter. Now, one may inquire as to the reason for two different pastimes on Lord Muruga's birth. One must understand that in every cycle of a Maha-Yuga (4.32 billion Earth years) there's always a different pastime on how Lord Muruga appeared. You see Sanathan Dharma (a.k.a. Hinduism) is not boring and tiresome - thus pastimes are always enacted differently in every Maha-Yuga - and there have been so many Maha-Yugas already.

In our traditional homes, Vaikasi Visakam is celebrated with a special puja (with Sahasranama Archanai - i.e. 1008 names) to Lord Muruga and Sarkarai Pongal is offered as Naivedyam (food offering). Kanda Sashti Kavacham, Subrahmanya Bhujangam and Shanmukha Kavacham are some of the religious verses that are read with all devotion in some homes. These Kavachams are like different sets of armour to protect us from the evil spirits and evildoers. For many of these devotional verses in the MP3 format, one can go onto <http://www.prapatti.com> to download them for free.

Generally Lord Muruga is spoken of as Ceylon one - who is ruddy in colour. However, the Shree Tattvanidhi describes Lord Muruga as dark blue in colour holding the Vel; sometimes he is depicted with the two consorts, Devayani and Valli. Besides him stands the peacock gripping a snake with its claws. This entire picture is, in itself, a narrative description in which every aspect symbolises a deeper meaning. The blue indicates infinity. To the human perception all infinite expanses for example the sky or ocean, appear blue. Lord Muruga is the Infinite Reality existing in the cavern of the heart - the Guhan. This reality expresses itself through the mind and together with the five sense organs, forms His six faces - Shan (six)-mukham (faces).

The peacock is symbolic of vanity and pride. The serpent represents ego, the carnal personality of man, which kept wanting the mundane pleasures. The ego is created by ignorance and this must be kept in check and channeled to discover the Truth. The peacock holding the serpent within its claws conveys this Truth. Finally the Vel is symbolic of the removal of the negative and evil tendencies, which veil the true Divine Self. The Vel represents wisdom, Jnana Shakti; his consort Valli is the power of will and is the personification of Divine Love, and Devayani is the power of action and is the personification of immortality.

He is the Vedic deity of war. In the Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter 10, Verse 24), Lord Krishna, while explaining His omnipresence to Shree Arjuna, names the most perfect being, mortal or divine, in each of several categories. While doing so, Lord Krishna says: "Among generals, I am Skanda, the lord of war." So, Lord Muruga is the commander-in-chief in the devas army and thus Lord Vishnu's army. Leaders of today (eg. government officials) always take shelter in a heavily guarded and safe area in times of war whereas Lord Muruga awaited His enemies (the asuras/demons) front and centre. There is a famous wrestling entertainer that most are familiar with and his words are "you want some come get some". So, in the same way, Lord Muruga states to His enemies that to get to His army, they must first go through Him. This is not seen as arrogance of Lord Muruga - rather it shows how glorious and strong Lord Muruga is.

According to the great Tamil devotional work, Thiruppugazh, "Lord Muruga never hesitates to come to the aid of a devotee when called upon in piety or distress".

The Atharva Veda describes Lord Kumaran as 'Agnibhuh' or son of Agni, the fire god. The Satapatha Brahmana refers to him as the son of Rudra and the ninth form of Agni. The Taittiriya Aranyaka contains the Gayatri mantra for Lord Shanmukha. The Chandogya Upanishad refers to Skanda-deva as the "way that leads to wisdom". The Baudhayana Dharmasutra mentions Skanda-deva as 'Mahasena' and 'Subrahmanya'. The Aranya Parva canto of the Mahabharata relates the pastimes of Kartikeya Skanda in considerable detail. The Skanda Purana a.k.a Kartika Purana and Kandha Puranam (as it is known in Tamil) is the most voluminous of all the Puranas devoted to the narrative of Lord Kartikeya. It's the largest of all the 18 major Puranas. The Skanda Purana contains eighty-one thousand one hundred Shlokas (stanzas) - Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 12, Ch. 13, Texts 4-9. It has seven parts- Maheshwar, Vaishnava, Brahma, Kashi, Avanti, Nagar and Prabhasa. Many Hindus perform the Satya Narayana Katha when they are performing their Jhandha (flag hoisting) puja. Now this same Satyanarayan katha (Pastimes of Lord Satya-Narayana) comes from the Skanda purana of the Reva kaanda. You can download the Skanda Purana by clicking on the link provided <http://www.astrojyoti.com/skandapurana.htm>

Lord Muruga is venerated throughout the Tamil year. Each Tuesday of the Tamil month of Adi is also dedicated to the worship of Lord Muruga. Tuesday in the Hindu tradition connotes Mangal-dev, the Deity of the planet Mars and war. This reveals the link between Skanda-dev and Kuja-dev (Mangal-dev).

Finally, to end the article, here is a beautiful pastime of Lord Muruga and the water-god (Varuna-dev). In Tiruchendur (South India) Lord Muruga's Temple is practically on the sea shore - within 100 metres of the waves. The Temple is a cave with the entrance at the sea level and the cave inside is sliding down to the Sanctum Sanctorum of Lord Muruga. When one stands in front of Lord Muruga, the sea water level outside is higher than the visitor's heads. There is every likely hood that tidal waves and tsunamis can rush in and fill the cave temple with sea water. In the history of the Temple, it is explained that the Varuna-dev (The Water Deity/administrator) had promised Lord Muruga that he will not cross the boundary of the

temple.

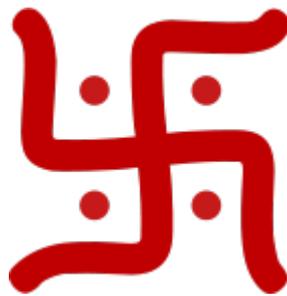
Varuna-dev has kept his promise. While the tsunami of 26/12/04 had lashed the eastern coast of India, it had heavily inundated all places near the coast - however the sea water did not enter the temple. At 10h00 on the fated day (26/12/04), the sea near the temple receded by a kilometre - people could see there a big crater with rocks visible - gradually the sea came back to its original level – even though sea water had entered Jeeva Nager suburb - located opposite Tiruchendur bus stand at 12h30. All other coastal areas near Tiruchendur were affected by the lashing of the tsunami. The temple area was unaffected as the sea receded there to keep the promise in tact.

FINALLY... The message is that the Kavady offerings to Lord Muruga need not be confined to a special day set aside for that purpose. We should mentally carry the Kavady each and every day of our lives; that is, we should ask God's help to live a well balanced life at all times. Please remember that Kavady is not only for the Tamil-speaking people but also for all Hindu's. Let's not segregate rather congregate.

HA-RA-GA-RO-GA-RA – Hail, Hail, Hail and Hail yet again to you, O Lord Muruga

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