

26. Then the four of great heroic strength including Skanda rushed to attack Indra. I offered my protection to Indra.

27. Afraid of Guha, Indra with all the gods went away to his region agitatedly. O sage, he did not know his secret.

28. That boy remained there itself as fearless as before. O dear, he was highly pleased and continued his divine sports of various sorts.

29. Meanwhile the six ladies named Kṛttikās came there for bath and they saw the lordly boy.

30. All of them desired to take and fondle him O sage, as a result of their simultaneous desire for taking and fondling the boy, a dispute arose.

31. In order to quell their mutual dispute, the boy assumed six faces and drank milk off their breasts. O sage, they were all satisfied.

32-33. Realising his desire, the Kṛttikās, O sage, took him to their region joyously. Feeding him with their breast milk they nursed and nurtured Śiva's son who was more refulgent than the sun.

34. They never let him go out of their sight. He became the object of their love, dearer to them than their own lives. Verily he who nurses and nurtures the child has the right of possession over the son.<sup>137</sup>

35. With great love they gave him the rarest garments and excellent ornaments in the three worlds.

36. Feeding him specially on the choicest delicacies day by day they brought up the boy prodigy.

37. O dear, once that son of the Kṛttikās went to the celestial assembly and showed wonderful feats.

38. The boy of wonderful miracles showed his rare splendour to the gods including Viṣṇu.

39-40. On seeing him, the gods and sages including Viṣṇu became surprised and asked the boy "Pray, who are you?" On hearing it he did not say anything in reply. He returned to his abode and remained concealed as before.

<sup>137</sup>. Verses 34-36 of this chapter are the same as verses 31-32 of the following chapter.