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We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श											ष
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



Subbarāyana Shashṭhī

Subbarāyana Shashṭhī is an important *Vrata* observed in the month of *Mārgaśīra*. Though its scriptural name is ‘*Skandashashṭhī*’, since the Lord is famously known by names such as ‘*Skanda*’, ‘*Shaṇmukha*’, ‘*Kumāra*’ etc, is called ‘*Subrahmaṇyeśvara*’ in tradition, the *vrata parva* of *Shashṭhī tithi* (related to his special) worship is called ‘*Subbarāyana Shashṭhī*’ in custom, where the word *Subbarāyana* is the kannada version of the Sanskrit word of *Subrahmaṇya Rāja*.

1. When should this *Vrata* be observed?

This *Vrata* should be observed on the *Shashṭhī* of the month of *Mārgaśīra* in the *śuklapaksha*. If this *Shashṭhī* happens to be touched by the *Pañcamī* of the previous day, it is much superior.

कृष्णाष्टमी स्कन्दषष्ठी शिवरात्रिश्चतुर्दशी ।

एताः पूर्वयुताः कार्याः तिथ्यन्ते पारणं भवेत् ॥

As per the above said words of *Bhṛgu*, the *vedha* of the previous day is very auspicious for this. It is still special if it falls on a Sunday conjoined with the *yoga* called ‘*vaidhṛti*’. (*Vaidhṛti* is a special *yoga* identified in the *Pañcāṅga*.) Then this *vrata* will be called ‘*campāshashṭhī*’. But, sometimes, the *campāshashṭhī* may happen to have the *vedha* of either *Pañcamī* or *Saptamī*. "If the likelihood of doing *Pāraṇa* in the middle of the first *yāma* of the night of the next day is not there, then there should be the *vedha* of *Pañcamī tithi*. Otherwise the day with the *vedha* of *Saptamī* itself is auspicious" says *Divodāsa*. *Pāraṇa* should be done as a part of the *Vrata*, when the *tithi* ends. This *vrata* is famous in *Maharashtra* by the name ‘*campaShashṭhī*’. In the remaining parts of the country, it is popularly known as ‘*SkandaShashṭhī*’ (or ‘*Subbarāyana Shashṭhī*’).

The *Pañcamī* which precedes this *Subbarāyana Shashṭhī* is also a day of worship of serpents. So also, the *Pañcamī* of *Śrāvaṇaśukla paksha* is called ‘*NāgaraPañcamī*’ and is also called ‘*GaruḍaPañcamī*’, and *Nāgadevata* is worshipped on that day. The *Shashṭhī* of the following day is renowned as ‘*Siriyāḷa Shashṭhī*’. Even the *Pañcamī* and *Shashṭhī tithis* of the bright fortnights of the

months *pushya* and *māgha* are auspicious for the worship of *Nāgadevatas* and *Kumārasvāmi*. It is said that all the *shashṭhī tithis* of the bright fortnight of every month are auspicious for the worship of *Kumārasvāmi*. But among these, the most famous is the *Subbarāyana Shashṭhī* of the *Mārgaśira* month. The *Nāgapūja* of the previous day is also famous. In all the famous pilgrimage centers of *Kumārasvāmi*, special worship of *Kumāradevatā* and *Rathotsavas* are held on the *Shashṭhī tithi* of the bright fortnight of the months of *Mārgaśira*, *pushya* and *māgha*.

Pañcamī is the day when Lord *Skanda* married *Devasenā* and obtained *Śrīyoga*. *Shashṭhī* is the day on which he accomplished the task of killing *Tārakāśura*. Therefore, both these are great days which are dear to *Skanda*, says the *Mahābhārata*.

श्रीजुष्टः पञ्चमीं स्कन्दस्तस्माच्छ्रीपञ्चमी स्मृता ।

षष्ठ्यां कृतार्थोभूद्यस्मात्तस्मात् षष्ठी महातिथिः ॥ (वनपर्व 229)

2. Who should observe this *parva*?

All those who are desirous of obtaining the exceptional grace of this great deity, who is called by names such as *Skanda*, *Shaṇmukha*, *Kumāra*, *Kārtikeya*, and *Subrahmaṇya*, may observe this festival. *Skanda* is the supreme deity who can grant all the four fold values of life. And also, this *Kumāra Kārtikeya* specially blesses (devotees) with

Brahmajnāna, longevity of life, Good health, relief from great diseases like fits, leprosy etc., relief from the torments of *Bhūtas*, good fortune of progeny, prosperity, contentment, fame, victory against enemies and for *Skandasālokya*.

स पुष्टितुष्टी सम्प्राप्य स्कन्दसालोक्यमाप्नुयात् (वनपर्व 232-21)

सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तो याति ब्रह्म सनातनम्

आयुष्मान् पुत्रपौत्रैश्च स्कन्दसालोक्यमाप्नुयात्

(वाल्मीकिरामायण, 11, बाल, 37-34)

अपस्मारकुष्ठक्षयार्शः प्रमेहज्वरोन्मादगुल्मादिरोगा महान्तः ।

पिशाचाश्च सर्वे भवत्पत्रभूतिं विलोक्य क्षणात्तारकारे द्रवन्ते ॥

(श्रीशङ्कराचार्य-सुब्रह्मण्य भुजङ्ग - 15)

Those for whom *Kumārasvāmi Subrahmaṇya* is the family deity or *Ishtadevatā*, celebrate this festival in a special way. The divine *darśanas* related to *Bhaktiyoga* are six in number. *Skāndabhaktidarśana* is also one of them. This day happens to be the greatest *Parvadina* for those devotees who follow that, and there can be no doubt about it at all.

शैवं च वैष्णवं शाक्तं सौरं गाणापतं तथा ।

स्कान्दं च भक्तिमार्गस्य दर्शनानि षडेव हि ॥

3. How should this *parva* be observed?

As we have noted earlier, the tradition of worshipping *Subrahmaṇya* on both days i.e. on *SubrahmaṇyaShashṭhī* and the previous day is in

vogue. He is worshipped in the form of *Nāga* also. He is also worshipped in the forms of *devatās* such as *brahmacāri BālaSubrahmaṇya* and as a divine householder having six faces along with *Devī* and endowed with many weapons, such as *śakti*, *vajra*, *Aṅkuśa* etc. A treatise called '*Śaivāgamaśekhara*' depicts the seventeen types of the forms of the Lord as *jnānaśakti*, *Skanda*, *Agnijāta*, *Saurabheya*, *Gāṅgeya*, *Śaravaṇodbhava*, *Kārtikeya*, *Kumāra*, *Shaṇmukha*, *Tārakāri*, *Senāni*, *Guha*, *Brahmacārī*, *Deśika*, *Krauncabhedana*, *Śikhivāhana*, and *Velāyudha*. (It is said that *Śrī Śankarabhagavatpāda* revived the six *darśanas* viz - *śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *śākta*, *Saura*, *Gāṇāpatya* and *skānda* as *Vaidikabhaktidarśanas*.)

Devotees worship *Subrahmaṇya* in the form of *Nāgadevatā* on the day of *Pañcamī* or *Shashṭhī* or on both the days. Lord *Subrahmaṇya* is invoked in anthills where snakes live, or in images in the form of a serpent located on the platform built around peepal trees, and is given a holy bath with milk, and *pāyasa* is offered as *naivedya*. On that day food is taken either only once or fast is observed.

This *Kshīrābhisheka* is called "*Tanī ereyuvudu*" in the Kannada country. On the day of *Shashṭhī parva*, *Kumārasvāmi* is worshipped at homes in the image of a serpent with *Abhisheka* etc. On the day of performing *Tanī* to the *Nāgadevata*,

cooked items, fried items and items with salt content are not offered as *naivedya*. They are neither taken as *prasāda* also. Serpents do not tolerate the touch of the heat of fire. They are pleased with only cool and sweet dishes as *naivedya*.

A treatise by *Divodāsa* says—"Kumārasvāmi should be worshipped on both *Pañcamī* and *Shashṭhī* by observing austerities such as *brahmacharya* etc. Devotees who take up the worship of this God, are expected to follow a high level of *maḍi*. The Lord does not tolerate even the touch of any kind of impurity. On *Shashṭhī* Lord *Kumārasvāmi* should be invoked in an idol of silver with the following prayer.

“सेनाविदारक स्कन्द महासेन महाबल । रुद्रोमाग्निज षड्वक्त्र
गङ्गागर्भ नमोऽस्तु ते ॥” and, after *pūjā* is performed, it should be given as *dāna* to a deserving person."

Just as the number 'twenty one' has a special significance in the *Gaṇeśa pūjākalpa*, the number 'six' is of special significance in the *pūjākalpa* of *Shaṇmukhasvāmī*. The day of his worship is the *Shashṭhī tithi*. He has six faces and six *śaktis*. The most important power among them is called '*Shashṭhī*' only. The musical sound that is dear to him is named '*Shashṭhīnāda*'. The *raga* is called '*Shaṇmukhapriya*'. The number of materials used

for his worship - viz, leaves, flowers, and a steamed sweet (*kadubu*) cooked without oil numbering six, are to be offered as *naivedya*.

After worship, six *brahmacāris* (or at least one, if six *brahmacāris* are not available) should be worshipped with the supposition that they are *‘BālaSubrahmaṇyasvāmi* and should be made happy with food, offering of clothes and *Dakṣiṇa*. After that *Brahmacāripūjā*, the *pūjāvratīs* should fast on that day and should do *pāraṇa* after the *Shashṭhī tithi* ends. Or, should take the *prasāda* that day itself as *Ekabhukta*.

Though there are differences in the modalities of worship of *Kumāra*, the abovesaid description is generally found in all the *pūjakalpas*.

In order to make some important matters related to this *parva* of *Subbarāya* to be easily understood, we present hereby some questions and answers.

Question 1:- The worship of *Kumārasvāmi* is seen only in South India. Tamils call him "*Tamilar Kaḍavu!*" (God of Tamilians) with pride. Therefore, He must be a God of Dravidians only and not of Aryans, isn't it?

Answer: - Categorising Gods as Aryan and Dravidian is itself simply *Aśāstrīya*. It is as ridiculous as distinguishing the Sun as the Aryan

Sun and the Dravidian Sun. It also becomes a matter of offence to God to deny his glory, who reigns over all the living beings of the universe.

Moreover, the statement that the worship of "*Kumārasvāmi*" is confined only to *Dravida Deśa* is also not correct. There are people in North India who have been worshipping him since ages. One of the Gupta emperors of North India is renowned by the very name '*Kumāragupta*'. The great poet *kālidāsa* a north Indian, has written a *kāvya* itself by name '*Kumāra sambhava*' which highlights the glory of *Kumārasvāmī*. Even in his poem *Meghasandēśa*, the worship of *Kumārasvāmī* who is '*Śaravaṇa bhava*' is mentioned. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *purāṇas* which are the property and the wealth of the whole of India, his divine story has been depicted. The places *kraunca parvata*, *Kumāraguha* etc., are located in North India only.

Question 2:- Even though the stories of *Kumārasvāmi* are available in *Itihāsas* and *purāṇas*, it is not found in the *Vedas*. Therefore, is he not an *avaidika devatā*?

Answer: None of the Gods that have manifested to the inner eye of *jñānis* and described by them, can be an *avaidika devatā*. Because, in our tradition, (works such as) the *smṛtis*, the *purāṇas*, *Itihāsas*,

and *āgamas* which are not opposed to the *Vedas*, are accepted as treatises of authority. They are accepted as "*Anumita śruti*" and honored on par with the *Vedas*. Now, as *Kumārasvāmi* is very clearly described in *Śrīmadrāmāyaṇa*, *Itihāsas*, *purāṇas* and *āgamas*, we shall call him a *vaidika devatā* only. The *yogic* vision of the *jnānis* itself is the *vaidika dr̥shṭi*. How can a *devatā* that is manifested to the inner eyes of *jnānis* and described by them, be a an *a-vaidika devata*? Forgetting this *tattva*, categorization of *devatās* as *vaidika* and *avaidika* serves no purpose that is useful for the upliftment of the soul.

The study of the *devatās* taken up by us should be for the sole purpose of spiritual benefit and not for the mere satisfaction of intellectual curiosity.

It is not right also to claim that the name of '*Shaṇmukhasvāmī*' is not found anywhere in vedic literature. His name is indeed clearly mentioned in *Shaṇmukhagāyatri*, in the *Mahanārāyaṇa* which is the concluding part of the *Āranyopanishat* of the *Taitthirīyaśākhā* of *Kṛshṇa yajurveda* 'तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महासेनाय धीमहि । तन्नःषण्मुखः प्रचोदयात्' ॥

Question 3: The above mentioned *Mahanārāyaṇa* is an *Upanishad* of recent origin. How can it be accepted as a part of authentic vedic literature?

The *R̥shis* who had the divine vision of the *Vaidika mantras* have mentioned only the name of the *r̥shi*, *devatā* and *chandas*, and have not involved themselves in mentioning the date or month or the year of them. It is because, the *tattvas* told by them are universal and timeless. Therefore, we have no reliable evidence to classify the *vaidika mantras* as ancient and modern.

However, no one can refuse to agree that the '*Mahanārāyaṇopanishath*' is *Ārsheya*. Sage *Āpastamba* has called it as '*Yājñikīupanishat*' and has prescribed the offering of *tarpaṇa* in the ritual of *upākarma* for those sages who are the presiding deities of (that *Upanishad*).

Question 4:- Though the name of Lord *Shaṇmukha-Mahāsenadeva* appears in the *Upanishats*, he could be a concept of recent origin. This is because he has no place in the '*Pañcāyatana pūjākalpa*' .

The names of *Āditya*, *Ambikā*, *Vishṇu*, *Gaṇeśa* and *Śiva* appear in the *Pañcāyatana* worship. These five represent the five great elements viz *Pṛthvī*, *ap*, *tejas*, *Vāyu* and *Ākāśa*. *Gaṇeśa* represents the *tattva* of *Pṛthvī*. *Vishṇu* represents the of (*tattva*) of '*ap*'. *Āditya* represents the *tattva* of *tejas*. *Ambikādevi* represents the *tattva* of *Vāyu* and *Maheśvara* represents the last *tattva* i.e. *ākāśa*. The

Mahābhūtas are only five in number and there is no sixth *Mahābhūta* above them. It is possible to match only the above five deities as representatives of the five *Mahābhūtas*. This adaptation has been accomplished already. So, the concept of *Kumārasvāmī* should be of recent origin only. Isn't it?

Answer: Where indeed is this adaptation formula of yours found in the *śāstras*? You are caught in the web of your own imagination and you are trying to hook the five deities viz *Āditya* and others to that, and so you have no right to term *Kumārasvāmī* as an outsider. It is against the scriptures to limit the great deities viz *Nārāyaṇa* and others to reign over just one each of the *Mahābhūtas*. Actually, as *the Vedas* proclaim “नारायण एवेदं सर्वम्” ‘सर्वो वै रुद्रः’, they are allpervading and the Lords of all the *tattvas*.

Question 5: Then why is it that in the *pūjākalpas* of *pañcāyatana* worship, only five *devatās* have been mentioned dropping *Kumārasvāmī*?

Answer: - *Pūjākalpas* are many in number. In some of them *Gaṇeśa* is mentioned and in some he is not. For example in the *kalpa* of *Rāmapañcāyatana*, *Gaṇeśa* is not mentioned.

Therefore it is not right to conclude that *Gaṇeśa* is a concept of recent times.

There is a reason for mentioning only *Āditya*, *Ambikā*, *Vishṇu*, *Gaṇeśa* and *Śiva* in the *Pañcāyatana pūjākalpa* you have mentioned above. Generally, the *gr̥hastha upāsakas* desire for five benefits specially. 1) Obstacle free deeds 2) Health 3) power of wealth 4) *jnāna* and 5) *Moksha*. The five forms of the supreme deity who have been authorized to directly and specially grant these five benefits are *Gaṇeśa*, *Āditya*, *Śakti*, *Śiva*, and *Nārāyaṇa* respectively. The following statements of the *śāstras* attest the above.

आरोग्यं भास्करादिच्छेत् श्रियमिच्छेद्भुताशनात् ।
ईश्वरात् ज्ञानमन्विच्छेत् मोक्षमिच्छेज्जनार्दनात् ॥

(Vaidyanāthīya Ahnikakāṇḍa- Devapūjāprakaraṇa)

‘श्रियं देवीमुपह्वये श्रीर्मा देवी जुषतां’ (श्रीसूक्त)

Śāstras have prescribed a *kalpa* of worshipping those five *devatās* for the householder devotees who practice *Pañcayajnas*, for the special *siddhi* of those five benefits.

आदित्यमम्बिकां विष्णुं गणनाथं महेश्वरम् ।
पञ्चयज्ञपरो नित्यं गृहस्थः पञ्च पूजयेत् ॥

(Quoted in the *Smṛtisaṅgraha-Vaidyanāthīya*)
(*Ahnikakāṇḍa—devapūjāprakaraṇa*)

Also, there is a *darśana* which mentions the worship of *Kumārasvāmī* and *pūjākalpas* are also

there. As we have noted earlier, *Skānda darśana* is also famous like the *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śakta* and *Gāṇapatya darśanas*. The glorious story of *Skanda* has been clearly rendered in *Sruti*, *Smṛti*, *purāṇa* and *Itihāsas*. There is no proof or evidence in them to conclude that *Gāṇapatya darśana* is ancient and *Skānda darśana* is of recent origin. In the *Yājñikī Upanishat*, both *Gaṇeśa* and *Skanda Gāyatrī mantras* are stated together. In both of them the *Liṅga* of the word '*tatpurusha*' which states relationship to *Śiva* is there. Both of them carry equal importance.

In the *Gṛhyaparīśishta* also, the worship of *Skanda* and *Gaṇapati* have been stated together. “ते देवाः गणपतिर्वा स्कन्दो वा सूर्यो वा सरस्वती वा गौरीपतिर्वा श्रीपतिर्वा अन्यो वा अभिमतस्त एते यथारुचि समस्ताव्यस्ता वा इज्यन्ते”. It is also stated there that these *devatās* may be worshipped together or separately. There no proof whatsoever to identify the worship of *Skanda* as modern. Even in *Amarakośa* the names of *Skanda* have been mentioned after the names of *Gaṇeśa*.

Question 5:- We agree to the point that distinguishing the worships of the two as ancient and modern is not correct, as the description of *Gaṇeśa* and *Skanda* are found together in *Sruti*, *Itihāsa*, *purāṇas* etc. But there is no doubt in the fact that it is only the South Indians who have given the name '*Subrahmanya*' to *Skanda*. It is not seen

anywhere in the ancient *nāmāvalis* of *Kumārasvāmī*. It is not seen even in the names of *Kumārasvāmī* in the *Amarakośa*. This name '*Kumārasvāmī*' is not taken by the North Indians, isn't it?

Answer: Yes, that name does not find a mention in the *Amarakośa*. But the name *Subrahmanya* is seen in the ancient Vedic literature itself. It is not a name (given) by the South Indians. *Śrutis* clearly proclaim that name. "*Subrahmanyo, Subrahmanyo Subrahmanyom*". (*Taittirīya āraṇyaka*) In this quote it stands for *Indra*. The *sāmaprakāra* in the *Vedas*- viz., *Subrahmanya sāma* is also well known. The meaning of the word is as follows:—

The word *Brahma* means one who is a benefactor and the one who is well disposed towards *Vedas* - *Tattvas* and *Tapas*. ("*Brahmaṇe hitah*" "*Brahmaṇi Sādhuh*" - suffix *yat*.) In this sense it applies to *Indra* also and *MahāVishṇu* also. “ब्रह्मण्यो ब्रह्मकृत् ब्रह्म” “नमो ब्रह्मण्यदेवाय गोब्राह्मणहिताय च”. Ancient *nāmāvalis* of *Kumāra* express the word '*Brahmanya*' to denote *Kumārasvāmī* also.

For example, the *Mahābhārata* mentions the word *Brahmanya* with reference to *Kumārasvāmī* as follows:-

ब्रह्मण्यो ब्रह्मदेवश्च ब्रह्मदो ब्रह्मसङ्ग्रहः (स्कान्दपुराण, स्कन्द अष्टोत्तर)

स हि मे भविता भर्ता ब्रह्मण्यः कीर्तिवर्धनः । (महाभारत, वनपर्व 224-9)

“जातं ब्रह्मर्षिभार्याभिः ब्रह्मण्यं कीर्तिवर्धनम् (अध्याय 223-2)

ब्रह्मण्यो वै ब्रह्मजो ब्रह्मविच्च (अध्याय 232-11)

It (i.e. the word *Brahmanya*) is prefixed by ‘*Su*’ which stands for the sense ‘excellent’ and thus the word *Subrahmanya* gloriously denotes the great deity *Kumārasvāmī*. This is an ancient name which is celebrated in the *śāstras*.

Question 6: Ancient *purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* describe *Kumārasvāmī* as a form of God, having six heads, twelve ears, twelve eyes and arms, one neck and only one (belly) and Holding the weapon. *Śakti*.

षट्शिरा द्विगुणश्रोत्रो द्वादशाक्षिभुजक्रमः ।

एकग्रीवैकजठरः कुमारः समपद्यत

द्वाभ्यां गृहीत्वा पाणिभ्यां शक्तिं चान्येन पाणिना (महा. वनपर्व 225 17-24)

In some places he is depicted as having one face, two eyes, wearing matted hair on top of the head as a crown, having four arms, holding the *vajrāyudha*, the *śaktyāyudha*, a *kukkuṭa*, and sporting the *abhayamudrā*.

एकवक्त्रं द्विनेत्रं च जटामकुटसंयुतम् ।

चतुर्भुजैर्वज्रशक्तिकुकुटाभयधारिणम् ॥

And he is also described as having two faces, eight arms, and holding the *kukkuṭa*, *khetaka*

(shield), *vajra*, *ājyapātra*, *sruva*, *akshamālā*, *khadga* and *svastika*.

द्विमुखं चाष्टबाहुं च श्रेतं वा श्यामकं दधत् ।

सुवाक्षमालां खड्गं च स्वस्तिकं दक्षिणे करे ॥

कुकुटं खेटकं वज्रं आज्यपात्रं तु वामके ।

अग्निहोत्रविधिं देवमग्निजातस्वरूपकम् ॥ (शैवागम शेषर)

All of these are the different divine forms of *Śrī Kumārasvāmī*. They are *devata mūrtis* which have a marvelous male form. But this *Subrahmanya* has nowhere been described in the *śāstras* as having the form of a serpent. When such is the case why did the custom of worshipping *Subrahmanya* in the form of a serpent come into practice? Why did the *devatāmūrti* become a *sarpamūrti*? In general usage, the words *Subrahmanya* or *Subbarāya* bring to the minds of ordinary devotees, only the picture of a serpent and not the six-faced deity. Therefore the attribution of the serpent form to the deity in a male form is only the result of a concept of recent times, isn't it?

Answer:- Meditating upon a deity having a serpent form is renowned in *śāstras* since ancient times. Even in the experiences of *yoga* the *Kundalinī* in the shape of a serpent or *Pranaśaktisvarupa* is established as direct evidence of truth. This is no modern concept. Even if that divine *Kundalinī* serpent form is meditated upon in a particular stage, it will lead to the *darśana* of the

divine auspicious form of *Kumārasvāmi* to the *yogis*, at a distinct time.

It is indeed proper to call such a pure *Kuṇḍalinī* serpent form as *Subrahmaṇyasvāmi*, which facilitates the *darśana* of *Kumārasvāmi*. Is not a *Saligrama* stone that facilitates the *darśana* of 'Lakshmīnārāyaṇa' called as *Lakshmīnārāyaṇamūrti*? In the same way, even though this experiment leads to the *darśana* of *Kumārasvāmi* in the form of a serpent in the beginning, the manifestation of the deity *Shaṇmukha* occurs in deeper meditation and on a deeper immersion, He, the Lord of *yoga* is visualized as total effulgence. In the *Ashṭottara* of *Skanda*, in the *śloka* नागराजः सुधर्मात्मा नाकपृष्ठः सनातनः , the word 'Nāgarāja' clearly denotes his serpent form. When it is so, why should one try to wrongly interpret it as a concept of recent times?

Question 7:- This is a *tāttvik* description. Are there any evidences to prove that *Kumārasvāmi* assumed the form of a serpent?

Answer: - Yes. We shall present two stories in briefly. "When Lord *Kumārasvāmi* fought *Tārakāśura*, the panicked demon assumed the form of a an insect and disappeared into an anthill to remain incognito. To catch him, as *Kumārasvāmi* assumed the form of a serpent and entered the ant

hill, the demon with no other alternative, ran outside, faced the God in his demonical form itself and was killed". This is one story. The divine serpent appearing in the anthill of *Sushumnā* and invading the demonical power which was in the form of an insect, is indeed nothing but Lord *Subrahmaṇya* in the form the of pure *Kuṇḍalinī* serpent.

Lord *Śiva* got angry because *Kumārasvāmi* insulted *Brahmadeva* and cursed him to become a serpent. *Kumāra* with full respect, accepted the curse and came to 'Valmīka kshetra' (at present called 'Kukke Subrahmaṇya') and hid himself in a cave there and came to be called 'Guha'. When *Takshaka* and *Vāsuki* came there and sought refuge, the Lord made them merge in his ownself and blessed them to become pleased by the worship offered to himself. Then he assumed the form of a great serpent and entered into a cavity and became *yogārūḍha*. In the pilgrimage center called *Kukke Subrahmaṇya*, we can see all the three ie. *Skandamūrti*, *Śeshasarpamūrti* and *Vāsukisarpamūrti* in the sanctum sanctorum.

Skanda assumed the form of a great serpent by the *saṅkalpa* of *Śiva* only, to facilitate devotees to meditate. *Takshaka* and *Vāsuki* are also *Amśas* of that great *Kuṇḍalinī*, the deity of *Mahāprāṇas*. These *amśas*, accept the worship offered to the *Amśi*

the great deity *Kumārasvāmi* from his devotees, and become pleased by the gulps of *ambrosia* graced as *prasāda* by him. It may be remembered here that deities live upon only by consuming the drops of the *Ānandāmṛta mahāsāgara* of the supreme deity, which the *upanishats* say "एतस्यैव मात्रामुपजीवन्ति".

Question 8: Why did *Śiva* pronounce a curse on his dear son *Kumārasvāmi*?

Answer: - There is an interesting background to this. Lord *Śiva* entrusted *Brahmadeva* the responsibility of performing *Aksharābhyāsa* to *Kumārasvāmi*. *Brahmadeva* wrote 'OM' and asked *Kumārasvāmi* to trace it. The disciple asked his guru to teach him the meaning of 'OM'. The teacher told him—"Child, it is very difficult. At present you won't understand it even if I tell you. Just trace what I have written down; That is enough'. But that naughty boy replied—"Sir, you don't know the meaning. That is why you are advancing excuses like this'. *Brahmadeva* got angry and told him 4000 meanings of the *Praṇava*. From each of his face came one thousand meanings (*Brahmadeva* has four faces). But the naughty boy was not satisfied. He went beyond and said, Sir, there is no fool like you!' and started lashing *Brahmadeva* with a whip. *Brahmadeva* had to suffer six thousand whiplashes. Each of those lashes was making the sound 'OM' 'OM' of *praṇava*. Finally, left with no alternative,

Brahma reported the misbehaviour of this wicked disciple to *Śiva*. *Śiva* advised his son in the assembly and told him "There are five thousand meanings to the *praṇava*. As you are still a little boy, *Brahmadeva* told you four thousand meanings only. You insulted him saying 'There is no fool like you'. For this you should beg his pardon".

Kumārasvāmi with a mischievous smile on his face said "It was wrong on my part to have told *Brahmadeva* like that". Then he told his father that there are six thousand meanings for the *Praṇava* and preached them to his father himself. As he taught Lord *Śiva* himself, he came to be called *svāminātha*. Even then *Śiva* was angry with him for being ridiculed and cursed him to become a serpent-This is the background of the story.

The *tattva* that emerges here is that it is only *Kumārasvāmi* the supreme deity of *Nāda* that occupies the pride of place in the matter of expounding the meaning of *praṇava*. The *Vaikhānasāgama* says that *Kumārasvāmi* should be invoked in the *nāda* of a bell, while it is being installed. And, this story also drives home a moral that knowledge is more important than age.

Question 9:- All these are fine. But the stories appearing in *Itihāsas* and *purāṇas* about the birth of *Kumārasvāmi* cause a lot of disgust. "Agni drank

the semen of *Śiva*. He let it out in the river *Gaṅgā*. The wives of six sages who had no knowledge of this, took a bath in *Gaṅgā* River and became pregnant. *Svahādevi* the wife of *Agni* sucked that semen from the wives of the sages, or (according to another story), she took it in her cupped hands joined together. She went on placing it in a golden pot covered with *darbha* grass. Thus *Subrahmaṇyasvāmi* who was born like that, came to be known as *skanda*, because of the semen that slid (*skanna*). He came to be called '*Shāṇmātura*' as he was breastfed by six mothers i.e. the six *krittikādevīs*. Both *Śiva* and *Agni* put forth the claim of paternity. And *Pārvatī Devī*, *Gaṅgā Devī*, *Krittikā Devī* and the wives of *Brahmarshis* - all these began to claim the motherhood of *Kumārasvāmi*. Then *Kumārasvāmi* approached them in different forms and convinced everyone of them to happily feel that he was the son of all of them" This is the story.

Some people look at this story with disgust and say—"How can this become a sacred story? How many fathers! How many mothers for this male God!." And some ridicule also. Some people even drew cartoons and exhibited them. To a common man, the reactions of these people appear quite natural, isn't it?

Answer: But these fools have forgotten two principles here—1) One should not measure the acts

of great deities who are above *Dharma* and *Adharma*, with the yardstick of the standards applicable to ordinary people. 2) Deities don't need to follow the rules applicable to human beings. **Here, we would like to humbly remember the example given by *Śrī Raṅgagurudeva*. He said—"The rule that buttermilk and cold water should not be consumed is meant for a patient and should not be imposed on a healthy person. And a healthy person should not be blamed for disobeying the rule." So also, not all the acts of *devatās* are models for (human beings) "न देवचरितं चेत्"**

(2) The above said story of the incarnation of *Kumārasvāmi* is not a collection of events in history. It is a story of the assembly of spiritual principles. "सुदोऽग्निः स्वष्टकृत्" says that *Agni* is a part and a glory of Lord *Rudra*. *Gaṅgā Devī*, *Svāha Devī*, *Prthvi Devī* and the wives of *Maharshis* etc, are all the *vibhūtis* of Goddess *Pārvatīdevi*. *Kumārasvāmi* is a deity born of the divine interaction of all these glories and a form of the divine effulgence of *Śiva*, which makes everyone happy. *Kumārasvāmi* is a great deity endowed with all the divine glories and characters such as (divine) knowledge, power, wealth, valour, effulgence, strength, beauty, kindness and concern etc. He bestows all the *purushārthas* upon his devotees. All his six heads

are the six divine *siddhis*. His *Ātmaśakti* itself is his *śaktyāyudha* which destroys the evil forces like *Tārakāśura* and others, who could not be subdued even by the *devatās*. The *Śaktyāyudha* is broad (gross) at the base, but getting sharper (subtler) (as it moves) upwards, becomes very sharp at the uppermost point, and penetrates into the vital parts of the enemy. His vehicle the peacock is a *Māyāśakti*. Though it keeps bewitching the world by unfolding its multicolored feathers, it directs the *jnānis* towards the *Ātmeśvara*, sporting the signs of *soma*, *Surya* and *Agni mandala* and *Praṇava* on the feathers. The crest of divine knowledge is shining forth on its head and also on the head of the cock which is the flag of *Kumārasvāmi*. These are the (*tattvas*) that are taught to us by the *divya maṅgala vīgraha* of *Kumārasvāmi*.

This story also proclaims the *tattva* that (even) his divine glories are unable to bear the divine effulgence of *paramātma* completely. When one discerns at the above said stories of his birth without the comprehension of the *tattvas* that are behind them, aversion is naturally caused. But when we look at them from the *tattvadṛṣṭi* bestowed upon by *jnānis*, they fill us with supreme bliss only. There may be some differences in the parts of the stories described by different *purāṇas*. But none of them lack the *tattva* part. The *Mahābhārata* says us

that *Viśvāmitra* among the *saptarshis*, realised the mystery of the birth of the Lord in the *tattvik* way and performed the rites of *Jātakarma* etc to the Lord for his own satisfaction and became very dear to Him. One of the names in the *Nāmāvalis* of *Kumārasvāmi* is '*Viśvāmitrapriya*'. The *jnānis* say that the great Sage *Viśvāmitra* had specialized in the divine knowledge of the *Agni tattva*. Thus, he understood the mystery of *Skanda* the son of *Agni*, well before others.

Kumārasvāmi is the supreme glory of the highest deity, by his birth, character and deeds. He is full of effulgence of all these i.e. *Mahādeva*, *Mahādevī*, *Gaṅgā Devī*, *Agnideva*, *Svāhadevī* and the wives of *Brahmarshis*. He shines brightly like the flames of the burning fire, with a weapon that is *tattvarūpa*, jewels and retinue. Just on the sixth day of his incarnation, he astonished even *Indra* by his valor and gave him *abhaya*. He tore apart the '*Kraunca*' mountain. He vanquished the *yoga vighnas* in the form of *Tāraka*, *Mahisha*, *Tripāda*, *Hradodara*, son of *Tāraka*, Brother of *Tāraka* and others who were a bane to the world.

He is the mysterious '*Guha*' who dwells in the caves of the hearts of the *yogis*. He was crowned in the *ātmāsāmṛājya* just as he was crowned by deities as the commander of the armies of *Devas*. He was very humble though he possessed these divine powers. He was full of the divine ambrosia of love.

Even though *Indra* was much inferior to him in prowess, he comforts and consoles *Indra* with the words “अहं ते किङ्करः शक्र” (“O *Indra*, I am your servant”). He delights all the great souls who came to him calling him their son. The *Śivapurāṇa* says that even though he is the younger brother of *Gaṇeśa*, he is also considered as a *Gaṇapati* of *Śiva*. There is no great quality that he does not possess.

शक्तिर्धर्मो बलं तेजः कान्तत्वं सत्यमुन्नतिः ।

ब्रह्मण्यत्वमसम्प्लोहः भक्तानां परिरक्षणम्॥

निकृन्तनं च शत्रूणां लोकानां चाभिरक्षणम्।

स्कन्देन सह जातानि सर्वाण्येव जनाधिप ॥ (महाभारत, वनपर्व 229-36-37)

Question 10:- Which is the peacock that is described by the *śāstras* as the vehicle of *Kumārasvāmi*?

Answer: - It is not just some ordinary peacock that we see in the external world. It is the all enchanting *Yogamāya* of God. It charms ordinary people and rides on them. But as *Subrahmaṇya* is a great *devatā* who is a complete *Brahmajñāni*, the game plan of *Yogamāya* does not work on him. He himself takes control of it and rides on it.

Question 11:- Which are the marks of *Yogamāya* on the peacock?

Answer: - We have already described in the article on *Śrīkr̥ṣṇajayanti*, the significance of the peacock feather, worn as an ornament by

Śrīkr̥ṣṇaparamātmā. To put it briefly here, just as the peacock bewitches people with its multi colored feathers, so also *Māya* strongly beguiles ordinary people who are not devotees of God. As this *Māya* is also an ornament of the Lord, he has imprinted his marks also on it. We see the natural figures which represent the *soma*, *Sūrya* and *Agni maṇḍala* on the feathers of the peacock, as described in the *Yogaśāstra*. We can also see the marks of *Praṇava*. On top of the head of the peacock we can see the crest that indicates the tuft of divine knowledge. How natural it is that the peacock shaped *Māya tattva* with all the above said divine features happens to be the vehicle of *Kumārasvāmi*! This is not just a description borne out of our imagination. **This is a matter that was expounded by Śrīgurubhagavān who was endowed with the realization of tattvas. Salutations again and again to Subrahmaṇya the Śikhivāhana.**

Question 12:- Why is *Kumārasvāmi* called by the famous names viz. *Skanda*, *Guha* and *Śarajanmā*?

When the effluence of Lord *Rudra* slid (*skanna*), it assumed the form of *Kumārasvāmi* and so, he is called *Skanda*. As he is (mystically) (hidden) in the caves of the hearts of the *yogis*, he is called ‘*Guha*’ by *yogis*. Ordinarily the name ‘*Guha*’ is explained as ‘the one who guards his

army (i.e. who guards from the attack of the enemies) in his capacity as *Devasenāpati*. (गृह संवरणे, गृहति रक्षति सेनां इति गृहः)

The word *Śarajanmā* means the one who was born in the *darbhas*. The *purāṇas* say that *Shaṇmukhasvāmi* incarnated in the forest of *darbha* grass on the banks of river *Gaṅgā*. For this reason he is also called *Śaravaṇabhava*.

This forest of *darbha* is not the phenomenon of the external world. It is, in fact, a description of the *yogabhūmi*. The incarnation of *Subrahmaṇya* the ‘*Yogīśa*’ can be in this *yogabhūmi* only. Which is this *yogabhūmi*? That *yogabhūmi* is the place of the inner heart, which is a refuge for hundred of *nādis* that resemble reeds heaped together. “शतं चैका च हृदयस्य नाड्यः” (*Kaṭhopanishat*). Thus, the *yogis* call that form of *Tejas* which incarnated in the distinct *yogabhūmi* as ‘*Śarajanmā*’ and ‘*Śaravaṇabhava*’.

Question 13:- Why does *Chandogyopanishat* call *Skanda Subrahmaṇya* as ‘*Sanatkumāra*’ also?

Answer: - “तस्मै मृदितकषायाय तमसस्मारं दर्शयति भगवान् सनत्कुमारः तं स्कन्द इत्याचक्षते तं स्कन्द इत्याचक्षत इति”. To the fortunate person who has shed all the blemishes, *Bhagavān Śrī SanatKumāra* shows the shore which is beyond *tamas*. That ‘*Sanatkumāra*’ is also called ‘*Skanda*’.

Question 14; How can *Sanatkumāra*, who is well known in the *purāṇas* as the *mānasaputra* of Lord *Brahma* become *Skanda* the son of *Rudra*?

Answer: The name *Subrahmaṇya* which stands for the one who is a *Brahmanishṭha* and well disposed to *Brahman*, applies to both *Sanatkumāra* the son of *Brahmadeva* and *Skanda* the son of *Rudra*. *Śrī Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda* in his *Brahmasūtra Bhāshya* states that *SanatKumāra*, the son of *Brahmadeva* himself incarnated as *Skanda* also according to the grant of a boon.

“सनत्कुमारोऽपि ब्रह्मण एव मानसः पुत्रः स्वयं रुद्राय वरप्रदानात् स्कन्दत्वेन प्रादुर्बभूव” (*ŚaṅkaraBrahmasūtra bhāshya Adhyāya* (chapter 3, *Adhikaraṇa* 19, as related to *sūtra* 32)

Question 15:- You have earlier described that *Kumārasvāmi* appears with a radiant face, hands, feet and weapons to *yogis* in meditation and also that the *darśana* of serpent shaped effulgences occurs some times. In what state does this happen?

Answer: ***Śrī Raṅga Gurudeva* the preeminent among *yogis* has stated that those who meditate in the *Shaṇmukhī mudra*, the *darśana* of the**

effulgent lights in the form of a serpent in place of the forms of *devatās* happens.

Salutations to *Brahmacāri BālaSubrahmaṇya*, who received the *samskāraseva* from *Brahmarshi Viśvāmitra*. Salutations to the young *Subrahmaṇya* who is together with *Devasenā* and *Vallīdevī*, and is served by *Devendra* and others. Salutations to the valiant commander *Subrahmaṇya* who gaily killed *Tāraka* and other wicked demons who were inviolable as a playful sport and protected the world. Salutations to *Subrahmaṇya* who has the greatness of preaching *Ātmajñāna* even to *Nārada* and others and who is the form of *SanatKumāra* who in turn is *Ātmajñānabhāskara*, the *mānasaputra* of *Brahma* and who is the foremost among the *avadhūtas*.

“स्मृतिलम्भे सर्वग्रन्थीनां विप्रमोक्षः, तस्मै मृदितकषायाय तमसस्पारं दर्शयति भगवान् सनत्कुमारः, तं स्कन्द इत्याचक्षते तं स्कन्द इत्याचक्षत इति”

"When the *dhruvadhyāna* of the true form of (*paramātma* is accomplished, all the knots of the heart get untied. *Bhagavān SanatKumāra* shows the shore which is beyond *tamas*, to the one who has shed all the blemishes. He is the one who is called *Skanda*". Salutations first to that *SanatKumāra Skanda Subrahmaṇya* who manifests in the heart of the Guru, (who is a) *Śrī Guruparañjyoti*,

who is *turiya* and *turiyātīta* as declared by *Chandagyopanishatdevi*.

Question 16:- On the day of *Subbrāyana Shashṭhī*, the invited *Brahmacāri* is served with some food items of the *Śrāddha* ceremony, like blackgram *vada* etc. There is a rule that both the *Brahmacāri* and the host householder should follow *Ekabhukta*. So, is there any relation between this *Parva* and *śrāddha* which is a *pitṛkarma*?

Answer: - Yes. They are related from two view points.

A) It is proper that people desirous of progeny worship the *Pitṛ devatas*. It is the *pitṛdevatas* only who are worshipped on that day of the *Shashṭhiparva* for progeny and for the protection of progeny. Therefore some rules pertaining to *śrāddha*, like the preparation of food items of *śrāddha* are being followed.

b) *Kārtikeya (Kumārasvāmī)* is considered as one of the Gods who grants salvation to the *pitṛs*. The following *śloka* which is chanted during the *śrāddha* ceremony, is the proof for that.

ईशान-विष्णु-कमलासन-कार्तिकेय-वह्नित्रयार्करजनीश गणेश्वराणाम् ।
सभ्यावसथ्यदधिकण्वमतङ्गजानां क्रौञ्चामरेन्द्रकलशोद्भवकाश्यपानाम् ।
पादान् नमामि सततं पितृमुक्तिहेतून् ॥

Therefore it is natural that the special *niyamas* of *Pitr karma* are being observed on the day of worship of the Lord, who bestows *Mukti* to the *pitrs*.

Question. 17:- Which is the dwelling place of *Kumārasvāmī* in the human body?

Answer: - There are seventeen different forms of *Kumārasvāmī*. Among them the *Dhyānasthāna* of 'Guhāsubrahmaṇya' is "Anāhatacakra" - the place of the heart.

Pramāṇa śloka:-

चतुर्भुजं त्रिनेत्रं च हेमरत्नकिरीटिनम् ।

शूलवज्रधरं सव्ये वरदाभयमन्यके ॥

श्वेतवस्त्रधरं देवं सर्वेषां रक्षणोन्मुखम् ।

जायया वामपार्श्वे तु कल्याणोत्सवविग्रहम् ।

पादाम्बुजं हृदि ध्यात्वा गुह्यरूपं समाश्रये ॥ (शैवागम शेषखर)

It has been already stated that *saravana* the birthplace of *Kumārasvāmī* is the heart, which is the beginning place of the heap of *nādis*. So, just as *Mūlādhara* is the place for *Gaṇeśa*, the *Anāhata cakra* is the place for *Kumārasvāmī*.

But *yogis* may visualise some of his other forms in other places also. For example: - The place of *DeśikaSubrahmaṇya* is 'Ājnācakra sthāna' The story of *DeśikaSubrahmaṇya* sitting in the place of a *Guru* and expounding the meaning of *praṇava* to Lord *Śiva* has been narrated earlier.

The description of *DeśikaSubrahmaṇya* is given in the following *śloka*.

षड्भुजं चैकवदनं करण्डमुकुटान्वितं ।

शक्तिहस्तद्वयं चैव जपमालाधरं शिवम् ॥

मयूरवाहनारूढं वराभयकराम्बुजम् ।

इत्येवं विधिवद्ध्यायेत् शिवदेवस्य देशिकम् ॥ (शैवागम शेषखर)

It is appropriate that the place of the *Guru* is *Ājnācakra* and the place of *GuruSubrahmaṇya* also happens to be the same.

Question 18:- Many of The famous *Subrahmaṇya Kshetras* are in South India only. Therefore is South India exceptionally suitable for the worship of *Subrahmaṇya*? (For example: Like the western sea coast of *Bhārata* which is specially suited for worship of *Gaṇeśa*).

Answer: It has been stated earlier that there are some pilgrimage centers of *Subrahmaṇyasvāmī* in North India as well. It is true that there are more pilgrimage centers of *Subrahmaṇya* in South India. But, merely on these grounds, we do not have the power or authority to say for certain that South India is more commendable for the (worship of) *Kumārasvāmī*.

