

# Lord Kartikaya

Aum hrim shrim kraum kumaram Karikaya namah

SHIVA-PARVATI KUTUMBH: GANESH PRIYA KARTIKSWAMI

**Dedicated to KanchanBen; Toronto, Canada**

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Aum SarwanaBhavavaya Namah

Kartikaya is the scientist of Devas; he is the architecture, the warrior, the killer of poisonous wretched demonic serpents. Kartikaya has 32 names. Kumar, Gaurava, Murugana, etc. are few. Kartikaya was born of the six Goddesses the Krttikas [aka Pleiades]. Hence, Kartikaya moved in six directions to make all six goddesses happy, and also he was fated to kill the demon Taraka [who had the boon of immortality from all devas born of one mother, except Kartikaya because Kartikaya was born out of six mothers]. Kartikaya stands for the Lord's aspect that is



conqueror of “All” evil in the universe. Consequently, He was sought after for His help to conquer demons (representing evil) persecuting the universe. The ability to conquer all evil presupposes all knowledge. Consequently, Swami\_Kartikay is appropriately considered as Lord Shiva's son. Shri Kartikaya Swami is also known as Shri Murugana. The Lord, when invoked as Kartikaya Swami, blesses devotees giving protection and destroys all enemies within (in ones psychological makeup). In truth, the composite deity Skanda-Murugana is two gods combined in one or, rather, two deities yet one indivisible God. As such, he is a perplexing god of paradox and apparent contradictions, and this is how Murugana destroyed evil.

In Skanda or Murugana, we see a metaphor for India's magnificent diversity within national unity, a marriage of Dravidian and Aryan linguistic, and cultural traditions. Indeed, this god is a fitting symbol of India's multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic heritage.

As an amalgam of peoples sharing a proud heritage, India, like Murugana Himself, enters the new millennium filled with ever-youthful confidence, vigour, intellectual vitality and unflagging hope.

Sanskrit scholars have long known this same Skanda Kumara or Kartikaya as the Vedic personage mentioned in the Chandogya Upanishad by the name *Sanat Kumara*. The *Taittiriya Aranyaka* mentions both Sanmukha and Maha Sena. There cannot be any doubt that at the time of the composition of the *Budhaaya Dharma Shastra*, many of Skanda's popular names were well known. The testimony of this work shows that the worship of Skanda was practiced well before 400 B.C.

At the same time that Karttikeya's popularity was on the rise in North India, far to the South *Murugana* or *Ceyon* the Red God had already long been established as the *Tamil Katavul*, the patron and symbol of Tamil language and culture.

For Tamils, however, Murugana was regarded not as a celestial divinity but as the personification of courage, the antidote to distress in the form of *ananku* and the victor over Cur or Terror personified. His triumph over terror and fear is immortalised in his *Surasamharam*, symbolizing the ultimate victory of courage over fear and love over hatred. For Murugana does not destroy his foes but transforms them and raises them to become forces working on behalf of all humanity. This age-old lesson continues to be celebrated to this day wherever Tamils worship Murugana.

By the time the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana were compiled, Skanda or Murugana had become a favourite god of Indians both North and South. This is proven by the repeated references to his exploits in various places in the Epics. Indeed, except for Visnu and Siva, more verses have been devoted to Skanda Kumara in the Mahabharata than to any other god.

It appears from the Mahabharata XII.153.76 that Kartikaya was regarded as one of the four principal gods, namely Rudra, Kumara, Brahma, and Visnu. The Ramayana has two chapters on Karttikeya's birth in the Bala kanda (chapters 36-37). The stories of Salya, Anusasana (86th chapter in Mahabharata) and Bala kanda consistently make Kartikaya the son of all five deities: Siva, Agni, Ganga, Uma, and the Krttikas.

It appears that the authors of these accounts were not sure about the parentage of Skanda and, therefore, thought it prudent to give the honour of parenthood to all five deities. In the later period the question of Skanda's parentage became almost an enigma, as shown by a sloka from the Adiparvan of the Mahabharata (cited in Asim Kumar Chatterjee,

*The followers in southern India of Skanda-Kartikaya in Ancient India, p. 13-14):*

*Agneyah Krttikaputro Raudro Gangeya ityapi  
sruyate bhagavan devah sarvahuhyamayo Guhah*

"Some call him the offspring of Agni, some of the Krttikas, some of Rudra and some of Ganga. The illustrious Guhah who combines in his composition the portions of other deities is of a lineage unknown."

In both the epics and the Puranas, Kartikaya is repeatedly compared with the Sun god. In the Vana-Parva (chapt 224) we are told that, the child Kartikaya 'shines like the sun rising in the midst of red clouds'. This association of god Skanda with the sun, the dawn, and red clouds has obvious affinities to the ancient Dravidian god Ceyon, the Red God who is none other than Murugana. Indeed, the imagery of Skanda and Murugana continue to play a role in the popular imagination of Tamil people right down to the present day.

Ancient Indians of both North and South noticed the similarities from the very beginning and readily identified Skanda with Murugana. Over the centuries, pundits and devotees have spoken with one voice in agreeing that these two are one and the same god. Nevertheless, there are real difference between North and South, Skanda and Murugana, Tevayanai and Valli Amma. These differences are inescapable and undeniable. Yet, they do not detract from the god's undying popularity and mystery. Rather, they add dimensions of complexity that are often lacking in simpler deities. Murugana is a god of romantic love. He is the husband of not one wife but two. Yet, in the Northern recession, Kartikaya is an austere bachelor god.

In certain respects, both ancient and modern traditions about this god point to similar conclusions. Wherever one looks, Kumara is a brilliant undying youth. His character reveals an underlying streak of playfulness that often borders upon mischief. It may be said that Skanda is a prankster among deities, rivalled only perhaps by his 'older brother' Ganapati.

This playful quality, combined with His propensity for assuming disguises and his inscrutable ways, has earned for Guhah 'the Mysterious' both the respect of his devotees and their bewilderment at His activities.

*Cemman Makalai Tirutum Tirutan*, 'the Thief Who Stole the Red Deer's Daughter', was already considered as a scampi, roguish character as early as the composition of the Atharva Veda, where the section called the *Skanda Yaga* is also entitled *Dhurta Kalpa* or 'Rogue Ordinance'. This term *Dhurta* in Sanskrit can only mean 'rogue'.

Even today, the god of Katirkamam in Sri Lanka is widely regarded as a rogue or rascal who knowingly colludes with thieves, poachers, the criminal underworld, politicians, and all classes of people. Sri Lankan Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims alike share this view. Yet, all agree that he is a beneficent god, a granter of boons and all good things, from health and wealth and happiness to the *sammam bonum* of human existence, *mukti* or release from the bondage of ignorance.

Muruguna is regarded as the war god not only of Tamils but also for people all over the Indian subcontinent including Sri Lanka, Southern India, and Indonesia. Skanda-Murugana commanded the respect and allegiance of entire kingdoms. Today we are witness to the fact that the god has, as it were, crossed the dark waters to become at home in nations like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Fiji, Mauritius, Reunion Island and South Africa, not to mention the western nations of Europe, Australia and North America. Among His devotees today, one may also see many ethnic Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore. Black African Christians and others lift the *kavati* and dance in his honour in Mauritius and elsewhere. In addition, not a few Western scholars who study him have become his admirers. In fengshui: Peacock feathers ward off evil influences when kept at the entrances.

### ***“Aum hrim shrim kraum kumaram Karikaya namah”***

A proven 'Vedic upayana' – one who recites the above mantra 125,000 shall not be subjected to snakebite, or evil eye. This is a very powerful protection mantra of Vedas. Furthermore, ***“Aum hrim shrim SarVanaBhavanaYa Skanda-Kartikaya-Muruganayan Hari Aum namoh Narayanayaah Aum Tat Sat”*** is a divine mantra of emancipation from the curses of malefic evil in the birth charts. Kartikaya is also a God in its own right for the proliferation of children and young soldiers. May the Great Murugana Lord auspiciously shower like the peacock spreading beautiful colours, many divine colourful blessings to the children all over the world. Aum Tat Sat.

I am grateful for the Inspiration from Kanchanben of Toronto; Canada.

Jyotikar Pattni @ [www.hanss.co.uk](http://www.hanss.co.uk) October 10<sup>th</sup> 2007