

6. Rukmini Kalyanam

The story of Rukmini and Krishna is found in the Mahapurana Srimad Bhagavatham. Rukmini is a Vidarbha Princess. Her father Bhishmaka was never tired of listening to Narada's descriptions of Lord Krishna. He was convinced that He was the perfect husband for his daughter, but his son Rukmi treated the "cowherd" with contempt and did his best to prevent the marriage. "Kalyana Rukmini" is the story of Rukmini's single-minded devotion to Krishna which finally united them.

Scene-1:

The princess Rukmini is shown through a veil (yavanika) in typical Kuchipudi tradition. She sees Krishna in peacock feathers, hears his flute in her imagination and dances in ecstasy to his music.



Scene-2:

Sri Krishna is surrounded by His devotees, the gopikas, who sing the glory of all His Incarnations. They speak about Rukmini's devotion and love for Him. Krishna listens since Narada has already acquainted him with these facts.

Scene-3:

In this scene, Rukmini is seen spurning the portraits of different heroes like Jarasandha and others. She openly displays Her adoration for Krishna. Her brother Rukmi becomes furious and insists that she marry his friend Shishupala, whose virtues he extols. Rukmini remains adamant and Rukmi's anger explodes.

Scene-4:

Shishupala is enjoying himself in the company of courtesans. Rukmi seeks him out and talks about his sister's infatuation for Krishna. Shishupala assures him that he alone will marry Rukmini despite all obstacles.

Scene-5:

Rukmini becomes dejected when she finds her wedding arrangements being finalized. She neither eats nor sleeps. Finally, on the advice of her companions, she composes a letter to Sri Krishna where she pours out her heart. She pleads with him to come and save her from a fate worse than death. Agnidyothisa is her courier to Dwaraka.

Scene-6:

Krishna is in the midst of his Leelas when he has a premonition of Rukmini's suffering. He hears her call out to him to rescue her. Just then, her letter is delivered to Him. He replies with a reassurance that He will save her.

Scene-7:

Rukmini is being prepared for her marriage to Shishupala. She reluctantly submits to these torments. Her spirit continues to yearn for Sri Krishna, her Redeemer. The old Brahmin returns with his answer.

Scene-8:

The wedding day. Rukmini proceeds to the temple of Parvathi to offer the customary prenuptial prayers. She has already arranged with Krishna to abduct her on the way.

Scene-9:

Rukmi and Shishupala rush in to intercept the fleeing couple. A duel follows where they are both humbled and disgraced. Rukmini saves her brother from death at Krishna's hands.



Scene-10:

Krishna and Rukmini proceed to the kingdom of Dwaraka as man and wife. There they reside in divine fulfillment as the Lord and His Consort. They radiate peace and happiness among their devotees.

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