

The glories of Subhadra devi - the wife of Arjuna of the Pandavas.



Subhadra devi was born to Rohini and Vasudeva when Shree Krishna rescues Vasudeva and Devaki after the death of Kamsa in Mathura, making her the sister of Lord Balarama and half sister of Shree Krishna. According to the Mahabharata, she was the favourite daughter of Vasudeva. Shree Krishna parents are Nanda Maharaja and Yashoda. Yogamaya (incarnation of Adi-Para-Shakti, sister of Lord Vishnu) was born to Yashoda and Nanda. Subhadra (Subhadraa) was the princess of the coastal Vedic city Dwaraka which is mentioned in the epic Mahabharata. The Sanskrit name Subhadra is made up of two words: su and bhadra. The prefix su denotes goodness, while bhadra is translated as fortune or excellence. The name means 'glorious', 'fortunate', 'splendid', or 'auspicious'. Subhadra is referred to as Bhadra, literally 'fortunate', when she is introduced to Arjuna in the Mahabharata.



The three siblings - Lord Krsna, Subhadra devi and Lord Balarama.

Proof from Vedic Shastras

Harivamsa Purana chapter 35, verses 5-6 - "Vasudeva begot from Rohini eight sons and a daughter by name Citra. O descendant of Kuru, it was Citra who passed by the name of Subhadra.

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.2.9 - Lord Vishnu said "O all-auspicious Yoga-maya, I shall then appear with My full six opulences as the son of Devaki, and you will appear as the daughter of mother Yashoda, the queen of Maharaja Nanda.

The Harivamsa Purana, further detailed description on Yogamaya's instructions by Lord Vishnu before appearing on Earth is given. Even in the Srimad Bhagavatam, Lord blessed Devi with various other auspicious names but nowhere mentioned Subhadra.

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.2.11 "Lord blessed Devi by saying: In different places on the surface of the earth, people will give you different names, such as Durga, Bhadrakali, Vijaya, Vaishnavi, Kumuda, Candika, Krsnaa (female form - the "a" is long), Madhavi, Kanyaka, Maya, Narayani, Ishaani, Sharadaa and Ambikaa".

Yogamaya and Subhadra were distinct personalities in Dwapara yuga and both of them were sisters to Lord Krishna. Subhadra was much younger than both the brothers while devi Yogamaya was born before Shree Krishna. Subhadra Devi was married to Arjuna of the Pandvas whereas Devi Vindhyavasini (Yogamaya) is unmarried according to Harivamsa Purana.

The wives of Arjuna: Arjuna had four wives namely Draupadi, Subhadra, Ulupi and Chitrangada. Draupadi's beauty have been described in Mahabharata. She was said to be one of the beautiful women in her time. She had stunning looks. There is not much written about Subhadra in the entire epic, but presumably Subhadra was indeed very beautiful as her beauty made the mighty Archer go beyond his boundaries. Arjun was captivated by her absolutely stunning looks. It may seem vain that looks and beauty means a lot to a man, however it has been like this since the dawn of time.

'While wandering around they saw the most beautiful daughter of Vasudeva, Bhadra by name, decked with every ornaments in the midst of her maids as soon as Arjuna beheld her he was possessed by the god of desire, then O Bharata the tiger among men, Krishna observed Partha's contemplate her with absorbed attention. Arjuna was engrossed in the thoughts of her, became initially attracted towards her, notice how Arjuna was intently gazing at her if Subhadra was ordinary looking then he wouldn't had pay such attention to her, then Lord Krishna snapped at Arjuna, asking whether he wanted to marry her if he does then He would talk to His father Himself".

Srila Prabhupada's lecture on BG 1.16-19 -- London, July 16, 1973:

Arjuna had another wife Subhadra. That Subhadra, you know, sister of Krsna. Sister of Krsna. So Subhadra, Balarama, elder brother, Krsna, younger brother. Krsna wanted to hand over Subhadra to Arjuna, and Balarama wanted to hand over Subhadra to Duryodhana. So Krsna could not say anything. The elder brother has decided. Therefore Subhadra Krsna advised Arjuna to kidnap Subhadra. Just see how much Krsna was affectionate to Arjuna that Arjuna liked also to marry Subhadra, and Subhadra also liked, but the elder brother did not agree. So they made a plan that Arjuna kidnap Subhadra.

Arjuna replied: "She is the daughter of Vasudeva and sister of Krishna; endued with so much of beauty whom can she not fascinate? If your sister, this maiden of Vrishni race becomes my wife truly may I win prosperity in every thing, O Janardhana tell me by what means I could obtain her to get her I will achieve anything that is achieved by a man'.

Subhadra's complexion was said to be as fair as melting gold. Vidura (the paternal uncle of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas) described her beauty when Pandavas and their wives were visiting Kunti, Gandhari and Dhritarashtra in the Ashram "she who sits besides her is possessed the complexion of pure gold, who looks like the embodied rays of moon in the midst of other ladies, ye foremost of generated ones, the sister of unrivalled hero'. Vidura had said that Subhadra's beauty lurked in the night out of all the ladies like the radiant rays of moon. That itself speaks volumes regarding her beauty.

Subhadra's eyes were blue which resembled 'Blue Lotus' and soft and large as a lotus petal. Her other facial features were described as 'faultless'. There's not much detailed description about her physical features but for sure to allure Arjuna she was physically attractive as well. Subhadra's other name is Rocha which means lustre or beauty.

Once after the Mahabharata Draupadi jokingly asked Kunti to rate her daughter in laws by attractiveness and thus Kunti ranked

1st) Hidimba (wife of Bhima). Kunti said that Hidimba used her illusion powers to transform herself into the most beautiful women she have ever seen.

2nd) she ranked Subhadra, and

3rd) she ranked Draupadi.

Srila Prabhupada's lecture on BG 4.7 -- Montreal, June 13, 1968:

Srila Prabhupada: What is that?

Devotee: Well, I don't fully understand in this... Something about Subhadra.

Srila Prabhupada: Subhadra? Subhadra is the sister of Kṛṣṇa, and she is incarnation of Durga.

Devotee: Subhadra is the external, external energy? Is Subhadra in the spiritual world? Is Subhadra in the spiritual world?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Devotee: She's in the spiritual world?

Srila Prabhupada: No. In one sense, she is also in spiritual world because she is energy of Kṛṣṇa. So Kṛṣṇa's energy is also eternal. So wherever Kṛṣṇa is there, His energy is there. But her activities are in the material world. Just like a king is there, and he has got all kinds of officers with him, but some officer is engaged in the government house. Other officers, they are engaged outside the government house. The officers who have got engagement outside the government house they may be sitting with Kṛṣṇa, may be sitting with the governor or the king, but he has no business within the government house. In the government house there is a particular secretary, particular man in charge.

Subhadra married Arjuna, and they had a son named Abhimanyu.



Subhadra and Abhimanyu

The marriage of Subhadra and Arjuna.



Subhadra's marriage with Arjuna is first narrated in the section Subhadraharana Parva of Adi Parva, the first book of the Mahabharata.

Subhadra was at least 25 years younger than Arjuna. According to the Mahabharata, Arjuna was in the midst of self-imposed pilgrimage, for breaking terms of the agreement he had with his brothers regarding private time with their common wife Draupadi. After he reached the city of Dwaraka (coastal West Bharat, Gujarat) and met his maternal cousin Krishna, he attended a festival held at Raivata mountain. There Arjuna saw Subhadra and was smitten by her beauty and wished to marry her. Krishna revealed that she was Vasudeva's and Rohini's child, and His half-sister. Krishna stated that he could not predict Subhadra's decision at her svayamvara (groom selection ceremony) and advised Arjuna to elope with Subhadra. After receiving agreement to a letter sent to Yudhishtira for permission, Arjuna drove a chariot to the hills and took Subhadra with him. After Subhadra's guards unsuccessfully attempted to stop them, the Yadavas, the Vrishnis, and the Andhakas held a meeting to discuss the matter. After Lord Krishna comforted them, they agreed, and thus, Arjuna married Subhadra with proper Vedic rituals.

The Bhagavata Purana describes Subhadra's role in choosing Arjuna. It also adds a detail about Balarama having picked Duryodhana—one of the Kauravas—as Subhadra's groom, without her consent. Knowing that after getting the news of Subhadra's having eloped, Balarama would wage a war against Arjuna, Krishna decided to be the charioteer for

Arjuna. Arjuna proceeded to take Subhadra and with Krishna in tow, they left. After getting the news that Subhadra had eloped with Arjuna, Balarama consents and conducts the marriage of Subhadra with Arjuna in Dwaraka.

Upon Arjuna's return from exile to Indraprastha (modern day Delhi)—the capital of the Pandavas—with Subhadra, he received a warm welcome. Inquiring about his first wife Draupadi, his brothers revealed her reluctance to meet anyone due to anger. Arjuna, in an attempt to reconcile, presented Subhadra to Draupadi disguised as a simple cowherd. Subhadra, portraying herself as a cow-herder and Krishna's younger sister, entrusted Draupadi with her belongings, expressing herself as her maid. This gesture cultivated trust and affection, prompting Subhadra to humbly declare her reluctance to replace Draupadi. Touched by this display of love, Draupadi embraced Subhadra, embracing her as a younger sister and acknowledging her as Arjuna's wife.

Subhadra stayed with Arjuna in Indraprastha where she gave birth to Abhimanyu. After the Pandavas were forced to spend thirteen years in exile by the Kauravas, Subhadra and Abhimanyu moved to Dwaraka. After the exile period ended, Subhadra went to the marriage ceremony of Abhimanyu which was held in the city of Upaplavya (North north-west Bharat). When Abhimanyu perished in the Kurukshetra War, Subhadra lamented over his death. Post-war, she was present in the Ashvamedha Yajna organised by Yudhishtira.

After Maharaja Pariksit was seated on the throne, while leaving for heaven, Yudhishtira gave the responsibility of keeping both the kingdoms Hastinapura ruled by her grandson and Indraprastha being ruled by Vajranabha, great-grandson of her brother Krishna in harmony. There is no specific mention in the epic about how and when she left this mortal world but it is believed that after the Pandavas along with Draupadi reached heaven, Subhadra and her daughter-in-law (Uttarā) went to the forest to dwell the rest of their lives as hermits.

Jagannath-Baladeva-Subhadra in Jagannath Puri (East Bharat, south of Kolkata)

Subhadra is one of the three deities worshipped at the famous Jagannath temple at Puri, along with Krishna (as Jagannatha) and Balarama (or Balabhadra). The murti of Subhadra is a carved and decorated wooden stump with large round eyes and a symmetric yellow coloured face, contrasting Jagannath's black complexion and Balabhadra's white complexion. What do the three deities represent? Lord Jagannatha: represents consciousness, Subhadra devi: represents energy and Baladeva: represents knowledge.



From left to right - Lord Baladeva, Lady Subhadra and Lord Jagannatha

She is decorated with red and black garments and has iconographical elements similar to that of goddess Bhubaneswari which includes a lasso (pasha) and an elephant goad (ankusha). One of the chariots in the annual Ratha Yatra (during July) is dedicated to her and is called Dwarpadalana, symbolising destruction of evil.



Goddess Bhubaneswari

Why is Subhadra worshipped?

Subhadra, is the divine force of delusion. She is worshipped as the activating esoteric energy of the Supreme Lord, the Eternal Cause of creation, preservation and destruction of the vast universe.

When is the appearance day of Subhadra devi?

Only recently has Her appearance day being officially observed. During 16th November 2012 marked a historic moment in the Hare Krsna Movement. It was the first-ever official commemoration of the Appearance Day of Srimati Subhadra Devi in ISKCON. A grand Festival was arranged at the Jagannath Mandir at Rajapur to honour this auspicious day.

Her appearance day is set aside on Tritiya Tithi Shukla Paksha of Kartika Maas - meaning the 3rd day of the bright moon in Kartik Month, roughly three days after Diwali (Kartik Amavasya).

How is the festival celebrated?

- Bhajans: Devotees sing bhajans to honor Subhadra Devi
- Bhoga-offering: Devotees offer bhoga to Subhadra Devi
- Raj-bhoga arati: Devotees perform raj-bhoga arati to honor Subhadra Devi
- Subhadra-katha: Devotees listen to talks about Subhadra Devi

Below is a simple puja procedure to follow...

Lord Ganesh Prayer Procedure.

At the prayer place, place a Lord Ganesh murti or photo. Firstly offer an agarbatti, lamp (with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor) and a flower (or all three on a tray) to Shree Ganesh (turn seven times clockwise around the murti or photo), and pray to Shree Ganesh, praying to him to remove all obstacles in the path of your prayer. Pray to Lord Ganesh asking him to please accept your prayers.

Now chant the following:

Hold your palms in the Namaste position and chant:

1) Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Ganesha-ye namah
(Swagatam means "O Lord Ganesh I welcome you")

Then offer flower (pushpam) or flower petals by turning it seven times clockwise around Lord Ganesha's deity/photo.

2) Om idam pushpam - Om Ganesha-ye namah

Then offer one or three incense sticks (dhoopam) by turning it seven times clockwise around Lord Ganesha's deity/photo.

3) Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami - Om Ganesha-ye namah

Then offer a clay or brass lamp (deepam) with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor by turning it seven times clockwise around the deity/photo.

4) Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami - Om Ganesha-ye namah

Then offer cut fruit/laddo/sweet meats or sweet rice (Naivedyam). It should be in a small bowl with a teaspoon. Turn the bowl seven times clockwise around the deity/photo and bring the bowl near the lips of Lord Ganesh suggesting he partakes the food offering. Then leave this in front of the deity/photo. This is later consumed by the family as the Lord's Prashad.

5) Om naivedyam samar-payaami - Om Ganesha-ye namah

6) Then in a cup (lota/chumbhu) which has only milk turn the lota seven times clockwise around the deity/photo and bring the lota near the lips of the Lord suggesting he drink the milk offering.

7) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha papani janmaantara kritaani cha
taani sarvaani nashyanti pradakshina pade pade //

Then offer your personal prayers to Lord Ganesh. Ask Lord Ganesh for whatever you desire (within reason) and the Lord being so merciful will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for.

Subhadra devi's Prayer Procedure.

DO NOTE: Subhadra devi is always worshipped together with Lord Baladeva and Lord Jagannatha. She is generally not worshipped alone.

At the prayer place, place a Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra devi's murti or photo.

Now chant the following:

Hold your palms in the Namaste position and chant:

1) Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Jagannatha devaye namah
Om Baladevaye namah
Om Devi Subhadra-yai namah

(Swagatam means "O Lord's Jagannatha, Balarama and Devi Subhadra I welcome you all".)

Then offer flower (pushpam) or flower petals by turning it seven times clockwise around Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra devi's murti or photo.

2) Om idam pushpam - Om Jagannatha devaye namah
Om Baladevaye namah
Om Devi Subhadra-yai namah

Then offer one or three incense sticks (dhoopam) by turning it seven times clockwise around Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra devi's murti or photo.

3) Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami - Om Jagannatha devaye namah
Om Baladevaye namah
Om Devi Subhadra-yai namah

Then offer a clay or brass lamp (deepam) with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor by turning it seven times clockwise around Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra devi's murti or photo.

4) Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami - Om Jagannatha devaye namah
Om Baladevaye namah
Om Devi Subhadra-yai namah

Then offer cut fruit/laddo/sweet meats or sweet rice (Naivedyam). It should be in a small bowl with a teaspoon. Turn the bowl seven times clockwise around the deity/photo and bring the bowl near the lips of the deities suggesting They partake in the food offering. Then leave this in front of the deity/photo. This is later consumed by the family as Prashad.

5) Om naivedyam samar-payaami - Om Jagannatha devaye namah
Om Baladevaye namah
Om Devi Subhadra-yai namah

6) Then in a three cups (lota/chumbhu) which has milk turn the lota seven times clockwise around the deity/photo and bring the lota near the lips of each Deity suggesting They drink the Milk offering.

7) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha papani janmaantara kritaani cha
taani sarvaani nashyanti pradakshina pade pade //

Then offer your personal prayers to Jagannatha-Balarama-Subhadra. Ask the Deities for whatever you desire (within reason) and They being so merciful will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for.

Optional: Now hear the Jai Jagannath Jai Baldev Jai Subhadra Bhajan.

Kindly click (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVRS95M_RN0).

Jai Jagannatha
Jai Baladeva
Jai Subhadra devi

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