

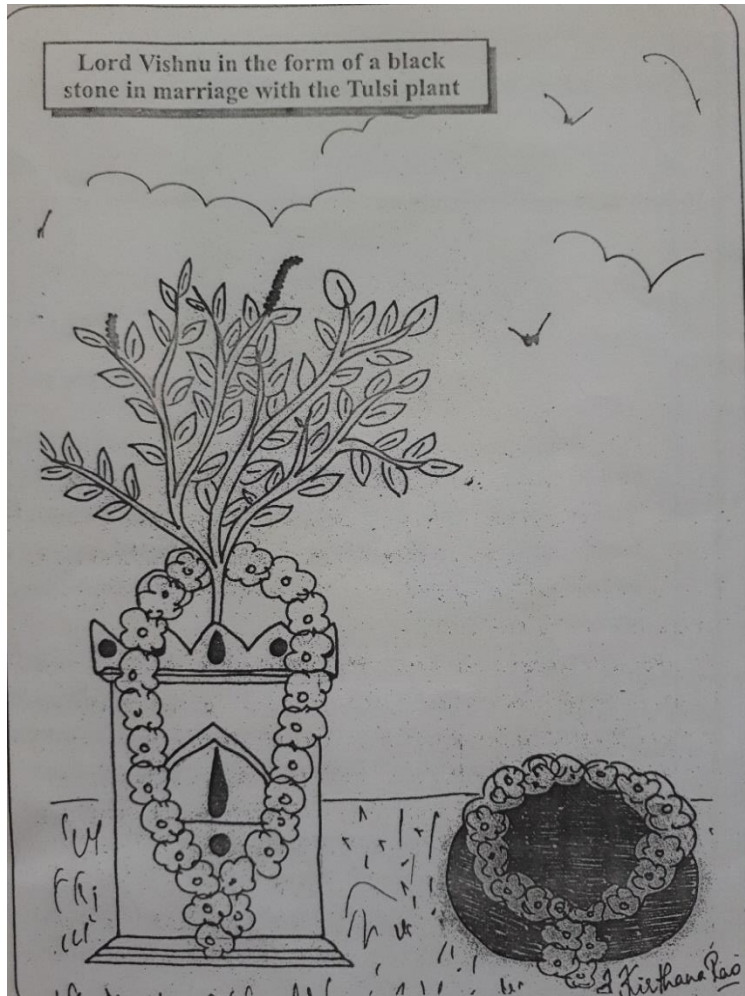
UTTHANA DWADASI

This is the most sentimental and also an important festival. It falls on Karthika suddha dwadasi. On this day, Lord Vishnu married Tulsi, which in her former birth was "Vrinda". Devout Hindu women worship the tulsi plant with flowers and milk and also conduct a mock marriage on this day. There is a belief that those who perform this pooja get the credit of making "Kanyadan".

Pooja Procedure : In every Hindu household, there is a "Tulsi Brindavan". On this day, the floor around it is cleaned. Colorful rangolis are drawn. An "AVALA" (Indian gooseberry) branch with fruits is planted along the tulsi plant, decorated with flowers and in the evening, a picture of Lord Krishna is placed and literally a mock marriage is performed between Tulsi and Krishna. Later, the function closes with Haldikumkum.

Story of Utthana dwadasi

The story from Padma Puraana revolves round Tulsi. Tulsi in her former birth was Vrinda, the daughter of a demon, Jaldhar, so called because he was born of water. He claimed suzerainty over the oceans and demanded all the 14 treasures churned out of



the milky ocean. Because of a boon that he would be free from death till his daughter Vrinda is chaste, he antagonized all the Gods. At their request, Vishnu took the form of Vrinda's husband to test the chastity of Vrinda. The latter, got angry, cursed Lord Vishnu and turned Him into a black polished stone, which we now call "SALIGRAMA". In retaliation and at the same time in admiration of her impeccable chastity, he turned her into a Tulsi plant and promised to marry her every year on Karthik suddha dwadasi. This festival is also called "UTTHANA DWADASI".
