

4) *Birth of Tulasī*. Dharmadhvaja and Kuśadhvaja did penance to propitiate Mahālakṣmī. Kuśadhvaja had a wife named Mālāvati. She bore a daughter named Vedavati. Sītā, wife of Śrī Rāma, was a rebirth of this Vedavati.

King Dharmadhvaja had a wife named Mādhavī. Mahālakṣmī entered her womb as an embryo and after a hundred years Mādhavī gave birth to a daughter. Even at the time of birth the child looked like a matured girl and was extremely pretty. She was therefore, called Tulasī, meaning matchless. (Tula = match). This Tulasī abandoning all worldly pleasures went to Badarikāśrama and started doing penance there with the prayer that Mahāviṣṇu should become her husband. She did penance for twentyfour thousand years sitting amidst fire in the hot season and sitting in water in the cold season and taking only fruits and water as food. Then she did penance for another thirtythousand years eating leaves only, another forty thousand years taking air only as food and another ten thousand years without any food. At this stage Brahmā appeared and asked her the object of her Penance. She replied she wanted Mahāviṣṇu to be her husband. Hearing this Brahmā said thus—“Devī, you know the cowboy Sudāmā born of a part of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That brilliant cowboy has now been born on earth, due to a curse of Rādhā, as a demon named Śaṅkhacūḍa. He is matchlessly eminent and has once fallen in love with you seeing you at Goloka. You will become his wife and later you can become the wife of Nārāyaṇa. At that time a part of your divine body will remain on earth as a plant named Tulasī. Tulasī will become the most sacred of all plants, dear to Viṣṇu, and all worship without using Tulasī leaves would be ineffective.”

5) *Marriage of Tulasī*. Due to a curse of Rādhā, Sudāmā, the cowboy, was born on earth as a demon named Śaṅkhacūḍa. He did penance sitting at Badarikāśrama and obtained Viṣṇukavaca. Another object of his was to marry Tulasī. He obtained a boon from Brahmā that his death would occur only when the Viṣṇu Kavaca was removed from his body and the chastity of his wife was lost. At that time Śaṅkhacūḍa and Tulasī met each other in the forests and were married. Śaṅkhacūḍa, brilliant and majestic, went about with Tulasī in amorous sports creating jealousy even among the devas. His arrogance gave innumerable troubles to the devas and they along with Brahmā and Śiva approached Mahāviṣṇu for a remedy. Viṣṇu then sent Śiva with his spike to kill Śaṅkhacūḍa and he himself started to molest the chastity of his wife Tulasī. Śaṅkhacūḍa took leave of Tulasī to go and fight with Śiva. When Tulasī was thus left alone, Mahāviṣṇu in the form of Śaṅkhacūḍa approached Tulasī and after some preliminary talks entered into sexual acts. Tulasī found some difference in the usual sexual methods and suspecting foul play jumped up to curse the impostor. At once Mahāviṣṇu appeared in his true form and said “You have been doing penance for a long time to get me as your husband. Your husband Śaṅkhacūḍa was the chief of my Pārśadas, Sudāmā. It is time for him to go back to Goloka getting himself released from the curse. By this time Śiva would have killed him and he would have gone to Goloka as Sudāmā. You can now abandon your body

and come with me to Vaikuṇṭha to enjoy life as my wife.

Your body will decay and become a holy river named Gaṇḍakī; your hair will become Tulasī plant the leaves of which will be held sacred in all the three worlds.”

Tulasī then changed herself into the form of Lakṣmī and went to Vaikuṇṭha with Mahāviṣṇu. (9th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

6) *The greatness of Tulasī*. Everything of the Tulasī plant, leaves, flowers, fruits, roots, twigs, skin and even the soil around is holy. The soul of a dead one whose dead body is cremated using Tulasī twigs for firewood would attain a permanent place in Viṣṇuloka. Even great sinners would be absolved of their sins if their dead bodies are cremated with Tulasī twigs. If at the time of death one thinks of God and mutters His name and if his dead body is later cremated with Tulasī twigs, he would have no rebirths. Even he who has done a crore of sins would attain mokṣa if at the time of cremating his dead body a piece of Tulasī twig is placed at the bottom of the funeral pyre. Just as all waters become pure by the union with Gaṅgā water, all firewood is made pure by the addition of a small piece of Tulasī twig. If the dead body of one is cremated using Tulasī twigs alone, one's sins for a crore of Kalpa years would be washed away. Yamadūtas would keep away from one whose dead body is cremated with Tulasī twigs and servants of Viṣṇu would come near. If a light is burnt for Viṣṇu with a Tulasī stick it would be equal to burning several lakhs of lights for Viṣṇu. If one makes the Tulasī leaves into a paste and smears it on one's body and then worships Viṣṇu for one day, one would be getting the benefit of a hundred ordinary worships and also the benefit of doing a hundred godānas. (gifts of cows). (Chapter 24, Padma Purāṇa).

TUMBURU I. A Deva Gandharva. He was the best musician among the Gandharvas.

1) *Birth*. Tumburu was the son of Kaśyapa, son of Marīci and grandson of Brahmā, born of his wife Pradhā. Of the sons of Kaśyapa the four Gandharva sons, Tumburu, Bāhu, Hāhā and Hūhū were noted for their sweet and pleasant conversation.

2) *Tumburu and the Pāṇḍavas*. Mahābhārata states about several occasions when Tumburu has shown a special and deep interest in the Pāṇḍavas. The following few are of special mention—

(i) Tumburu attended the Janmotsava of Arjuna. (Śloka 54, Chapter 122, Ādi Parva).

(ii) Once this Gandharva gave Yudhiṣṭhira a hundred horses. (Śloka 24, Chapter 52, Sabhā Parva).

(iii) Tumburu welcomed Arjuna when the latter went to Devaloka at the invitation of Indra. (Vana Parva, Chapter 43, Verse 14).

(iv) Once when the Pāṇḍavas were living incognito in the country of Virāṭa the Kauravas carried away the cattle of the King. Arjuna in disguise then fought against the Kauravas and Tumburu watched the fight with interest. (Śloka 12, Chapter 56, Virāṭa Parva).

(v) Tumburu was present at the Aśvamedhayāga of Yudhiṣṭhira. (Śloka 39, Chapter 88, Aśvamedha Parva).

3) *How Tumburu was born as Virāḍha*. When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were in the forests in exile a demon named