

3) *Till the end of Śrī Rāma's forest life.* The sons of Daśaratha married the daughters of Janaka, King of Mithilā. Śrī Rāma married Sītā, Bharata, Māṇḍavī, Lakṣmaṇa, Ūrmilā and Śatrughna, Śrutakīrti.

Daśaratha made arrangements to crown Rāma as King and then leave for the forests and lead an ascetic life. At that time Bharata and Śatrughna were in the country of Kekaya with their uncle, Yudhājī. When the day of coronation was drawing near Kaikeyī demanded of Daśaratha the execution of two boons which were once promised by Daśaratha to her long ago during a battle between the devas and asuras. One of them was to crown her son, Bharata, as king and the other to send Rāma to the forests for a period of fourteen years. Daśaratha was shocked to hear that. But, without any hesitation, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa accompanied by Sītā went to the forests and Daśaratha overcome with immense grief caused by this unpleasant turn of events fell down dead. Messengers were sent then to Kekaya to bring Bharata and after travelling for three days Bharata and Śatrughna reached Ayodhyā. Though they were not informed of the death of their father they were worried all the way because of the several bad omens which they saw. On entering Ayodhyā they were shocked to find all the roads desolate and arriving at the palace they found it silent and gloomy. Kaikeyī then told him all that had happened and when Bharata knew that his mother was at the root of all this calamity his rage knew no bounds. Forgetting himself he drew from the sheath the glittering sword and stood before his mother with the drawn sword wavering to strike or not to strike and mused to himself "No, Not a woman and not one's own mother, No, it should not be done". Immediately after this was decided, he swung the sword straight to his throat. But adroitly Śatrughna intervened and swept away the sword before it fell at its aim. This strong move of Śatrughna brought Bharata to his senses and he looked at his mother so fiendishly that at his stare his mother turned pale like a flower brought near a burning flame. Bharata immediately changed into the dress of a Sannyāsī and started to go to the forests. Śatrughna followed his brother. Vasiṣṭha also started. The news spread like wildfire and people began to crowd at the palace eager to follow the brothers. Very soon a huge procession was seen moving towards the forests. Vasiṣṭha and Arundhatī in a chariot in the front, Kausalyā and Sumitrā in another next to it and Bharata and Śatrughna closely following the chariots, walking. People joined the procession from behind. The great crowd of people reached the banks of the river Gaṅgā. Guha coming to know of the great exile of people from Ayodhyā through spies went and saw Bharata, at first in disguise, and later as himself made his acquaintance. He then took Bharata and Śatrughna across the river to the presence of Śrī Rāma at Citrakūṭa.

When they reached Citrakūṭa only Bharata-Śatrughna, Vasiṣṭha and Arundhatī, Kausalyā and Sumitrā entered the āśrama of Śrī Rāma, all the others remaining outside. When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were told about the death of their father they were filled with grief. All the sons, then, Vasiṣṭha officiating, performed the obsequies of their father. Rāma and Bharata then discussed the future. Śrī Rāma persisted in his vow and said he would return to his country only after fourteen years

and insisted that Bharata should rule the country during that period. Bharata accepted the arrangement saying that if his brother did not come back after fourteen years he would give up his life by jumping into the fire. Śrī Rāma then gave his sandals to Bharata who accepting the same with due respect returned home followed by others. On reaching Ayodhyā Bharata did not go to the royal palace which he considered as empty because of the absence of his brother, Rāma and abhorrent because of the presence of his mother, Kaikeyī. Instead, he went to a nearby village called Nandi and installing the sandals there lived there and ruled the country.

4) *Return of Śrī Rāma.* Śrī Rāma when he came back to Ayodhyā after fourteen years was crowned King. Bharata got two sons of his wife Māṇḍavī, Subāhu and Śūrasena. While they were thus living happily in Ayodhyā, message was sent through an ascetic by Yudhājī from Kekaya that some gandharvas were creating trouble in that country. It was the state of Sindhu in Kekaya which was subjected to this molestation and on the advice of Rāma Bharata went and subdued the trouble, killing the gandharvas. He then created two small states on either side of Sindhu and made his two sons the Kings of those states. When Śrī Rāma gave up his life in Sarayū river and rose to heaven as Viṣṇu Bharata and Śatrughna also gave up their lives and took the forms of the conch and the wheel which adorn the hands of Viṣṇu. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).

BHARATA III. A son of Rṣabha.

1) *Genealogy and birth.* Descending in order from Viṣṇu-Brahmā - Svāyambhuvamanu - Priyavrata - Agnīdhra-Nābhi-Rṣabha-Bharata.

Emperor Priyavrata partitioned his empire to his eight children. Agnīdhra got Jambudvīpa. Agnīdhra had nine sons: Nābhi, Kimpuruṣa, Harivarṣa, Ilāvṛta, Rāmya, Hiraṇyan, Kuru Bhadrāśva and Ketumāla. On the death of the father Jambudvīpa was divided into nine states and Nābhi got the land called Hima. Nābhi married Merudevī and got a son, Rṣabha. Rṣabha had a hundred sons and Bharata was the eldest. (Chapter 1, Arīṣam 2, Viṣṇu Purāṇa).

2) *Marriage, administration and entry into Āśrama life.* Bharata took over the administration of the kingdom at the death of his father, Rṣabha. He married Pañcajanī daughter of Viśvarūpa. They had five sons, Sumatī, Rāṣṭrabhṛt, Sudarśana, Āvaraṇa and Dhūmraketu. The Pañcama Skandha of Bhāgavata contains a statement to the effect that India got the name Bhārata from this king. (It is worthwhile remembering at this juncture a previous statement that the name Bhārata was obtained from Bharata, son of Duṣyanta). Bharata like his forefather was very erudite and affectionate and always respected his duties. He always meditated on Brahmā and in his heart there shone the Paramapuruṣa in the figure of Vāsudeva adorned with Śrīvatsa, Kaustubha, Vanamālā, Śaṅkha, Cakra, Gadā and Padma. He ruled the country for a crore of years and after that dividing the country among his sons went to the āśrama of Pulaha Maharṣi to spend the rest of his life there. On the rocks lying in the river flowing in front of the Āśrama were the marks of Cakra on one side and Nābhi on the other and the river therefore came to be known as Cakranābhi. Bathing in this river