

and doing pūjā Bharata lived there oblivious of the world outside. (Pañcama Skandha, Bhāgavata).

3) *Bharata and the deer.* Bharata led a purely ascetic life performing everyday the rites laid down by scriptures and muttering the mystic formula of Brahmākṣara. One day a thirsty pregnant deer went to drink water in a nearby pond. As it was drinking it heard the loud roar of a lion nearby. Frightened the poor animal without even waiting to quench its thirst ran into the forest and on its way delivered a child and the deer-babe fell into the river. The deer exhausted and tormented by fear ran into a cave and fell down dead. Bharata happened to see the new-born deer floating on the river and took it to his āśrama. From then onwards Bharata's mind was diverted from the spiritual to the mundane effort of taking care of the young deer. The deer followed him wherever he went and if it did not turn up in time in the evening after grazing Bharata went about in search of it weeping. Years went by and Bharata became old and died with the name of the deer on his lips. (Pañcama Skandha, Bhāgavata).

4) *Rebirths of Bharata.* Because he died with the thought of the deer in his mind he was reborn as a deer. The deer was aware of his previous birth and regretted that he spent the life of a man for the sake of a deer. The deer, therefore, left the house of his mother in the mountain of Kālāñjara and went to the āśrama of Pulaha. The pious animal daily bathed in the river and died there on the bank of that river. So in its next life the deer was born as the son of a brahmin in the line of Aṅgiras. That brahmin had two wives and got nine sons of his first wife and one of the second. The son born to the second wife was none other than Bharata. In due course the brahmin died and his second wife jumped into the funeral pyre and ended her life. Thrown an orphan Bharata became a puppet in the hands of his brothers. Bharata was asked to look after the cattle and fields of his brothers for his living. With great forbearance Bharata did all he was told. One day Bharata was keeping watch over the fields of his brothers. It was midnight. In the neighbourhood the Caṇḍālas were making merry over the birth of a child to one of the women. Some of them were bringing a man bound by ropes to be given as 'Narabali' to the goddess Kālī. (Narabali is the offering of a human being with his head cut off to propitiate a deity). On the way the man escaped and the disappointed Caṇḍālas were roaming about in search of a substitute when they came across Bharata keeping watch over the fields. Immediately he was bound by ropes and taken before the idol of Kālī. The effulgence of the brahmin astounded Kālī and getting angry for bringing such a pious brahmin for sacrifice she devoured the Caṇḍālas and allowed the brahmin to go free.

Escaping from there Bharata reached a village walking all the way. That village was being ruled over by a king called Rahūgaṇa and that king was going to see Bhagavān Kapila Mahārṣi along the banks of the river Ikṣumatī in a palanquin. The palanquin had not enough

bearers and so the brahmin was asked to join the team of bearers. As they were moving the palanquin shook because of the wrong steps kept by Bharata. The king reprimanded Bharata and Bharata then gave the king fitting replies based on the etlics of Vedānta. The erudition of Bharata greatly impressed the king and he stepped down from the palanquin and bowed to Bharata.

Bharata went from there to the forests singing devotional songs in praise of Viṣṇu and at last attained salvation. (Pañcama Skandha, Bhāgavata).

BHARATA IV. A sage and the famous author of Nāṭyaśāstra. He was a critic who lived around the year 400 B.C. His book on Nāṭyaśāstra (Histrionics) is world famous. Kālidāsa in the second act of his drama, Vikramorvaśīya states that this Bharata used to coach the devas in the art of acting. Nāṭyaśāstra is a book comprising thirtyseven chapters dealing with the art of dance and music. He has written in detail about the four Alanikāras, Upamā, Dīpaka, Rūpaka and Yamaka and also about the ten requisites of a Kāvya. He has not forgotten to write about the defects and demerits of Kāvya also. Commentaries on Nāṭyaśāstra have been written by lions in the profession: Mitrugupta, Harṣavardhana, Śaṅkuka, Udbhaṭa, Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta. Of these 'Abhinavabhārati' the commentary written by Abhinavagupta is the only one freely available now.

BHARATA V. The Mahābhārata speaks about a few other Bharatas who were sons of Agni. Śamyu is a son of Agni known as Bharata. This Bharata has got another name, Ūrjja. (Śloka 6, Chapter 219, Vana Parva, M.B.). There is an Agni of name Bharata with a son named Bhārata. When this Agni is propitiated one gets healthy and strong and so this Agni is called Puṣṭimān also. (Śloka 7, Chapter 219, Vana Parva, M.B.). There is another Bharata son of an Agni called Adbhuta. It is this Agni that burns dead bodies. As this Agni lives permanently in Agniṣṭoma Yajñas; it gets the name of Niyata also. (Śloka 6, Chapter 222, Vana Parva, M.B.).

BHĀRATA (MAHĀBHĀRATA). An epic written by Vyāsa.

1) *General information.* The Mahābhārata is an epic. Bharata is acclaimed as the first emperor of Bhārata. The theme of this great epic is the fight between the two lines of princes belonging to the dynasty of Bharata. That is why the book is called Mahābhārata. The great size of the volume and the greatness of the wisdom contained therein have contributed much to its getting the name, Mahābhārata. Once the devas put the Mahābhārata in one pan of a balance and the Vedas in the other pan. Then the devas were convinced that the Mahābhārata weighed more than all the Vedas put together. (Ślokas 269-271, Chapter 1, Ādi Parva, M.B.).* This book contains over a lakh of verses. There is no subject on earth which is not dealt with in the Mahābhārata. None of

* Purā kila suraiḥ sarvaiḥ sametya tulayā dhṛtam
Caturbhyah sarahasyebhyo Vedebyo hyadhikam yadā
Tadā prabhūti loke'smin mahābhāratamucyate
Mahatve ca gurutve ca dhriyamāṇam yaśo'dhikam
Mahatvād bhāravatvāc ca Mahābhāratamucyate.