

## Chapter-I

### NABHIKHANDA : AJANABHAVARSA

वृषभोऽसि जगज्ज्येष्ठः पुरुः पुरुगुणोदयैः ।

नाभेयो नाभिसम्भूतेरिक्ष्वाकुकुलनन्दनः ॥

-(भगवज्जिनसेनाचार्य, आदिपुराण, 25/75)

In the most ancient age, King Nabhi was ruling this Aryabhumi. He was the last of the 14 Kulakaras.<sup>1</sup> In spite of his being the last Kulakara, he was blessed with long life, elevated body, unique form and beauty, immense power and valour. Owing to these abundant qualities he was the foremost of all.<sup>2</sup> In ‘Sri-mad-bhagavata’ he is accepted to be the great grandson of Adimanu ‘Svayambhuva’, the grandson of Priyavrata, and the eldest of the nine sons of Agnidhra.<sup>3</sup> King Nabhi was called ‘Kulakara’ or ‘Manu’ on account of his tremendous knowledge, generosity and supreme glory and grandeur. It was he who, for the first time, gave the thorough knowledge of separating the umbilical cord of new-born babies by surgical operation.’ Probably, that must have been the secret of his name ‘Nabhi’. One cannot say how many ages have passed since he is gone.

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1. प्रतिश्रुति, सन्मति, क्षेमंकर, क्षेमंधर, सीमंकर, सीमंधर, विमलवाहन, चक्षुष्मान्, यास्वान्, अभिचंद्र, चंद्राभ, मरुदेव, प्रसेनजित् और नाभिराय । -(त्रिलोकसार, ७९२-९३)
  2. पूर्वोक्त-कुलकृत्स्वन्त्यो नाभिराजोऽग्रिमोऽप्यभूत् ।  
व्यावर्णितायुरुत्सेध-रुप-सौन्दर्य-विभ्रमः ।। - (महापुराण, १२-९, पृ. २४९)
  3. प्रियव्रतो नाम सुतो मनोः स्वायम्भुवस्य यः ।  
तस्याग्नीधस्ततो नाभिः ऋषभस्तत्सुतः स्मृतः ।। - (भागवतपुराण, ११/२/१५ )
  4. तस्मिं काले होदि हु बालाणं नाभिणालमइदीहं ड  
तक्कत्तोवदेसं कहदि मणू ते पकुव्वंति ।। - (तिलोयपण्णत्ति, ४/४९, ६ )  
नाभिश्च तन्नाभिनिर्कर्तनेन प्रजासमाश्वासनहेतुरासीत् । - (महापुराण, ३/२३७)

His age was one of a transitional period. When he ascended the royal throne, it was Bhogabhumi where Kalpavrksas bore fruit. Criminality was unknown. All enjoyed mutual goodwill. Everyone got what he desired, from Kalpavrksas. So the question of viciousness did not arise at all. But during his life-time itself 'Bhogabhumi' came to an end. Kalpavrksas were totally extinct, leading to the beginning of Karmabhumi. There were new problems which needed new solutions. Nabhiraya solved them courageously. He, himself, became the saviour. He was called 'Ksatriya'. The expression 'Ksatriyastranasahah' acquired a meaning in him. In course of time, the word 'Ksatriya' became a conventional

word in the sense of 'Nabhi'. The author of Amarakosa has written 'Ksatriye Nabhih"<sup>5</sup> Acarya Hemacandra also has written 'Nabhisca Ksatriye' in 'Abhidhana Cintamani'.<sup>6</sup> He with his prowess gave birth to 'Satayuga' (the golden age of perfection). The subjects became happy and they got all the facilities which they had while in Bhogabhumi. King Nabhiraya himself became Kalpavrksas. Acarya Jinasena has written in 'Mahapurana' - "Like the moon, he was the supporter of many arts, like the sun he was brilliant, like Indra he was glorious, and like Kalpavrksas he was the giver of desired fruit."<sup>7</sup> He was a pioneer of an age. Today, even the thick layers of time could not erase his name out of existence. He remained engraved on the Chest of Time as if with the heated spoke, and kept glimmering like the dust of mica, particles-like the sun in directions and like the polar star in the sky. Nobody could efface him. He is alive not only among the Vaidikas but in the Muslims as well. 'Nabi' is an Arabic word, which means 'the messenger of God', 'Paigambara' and 'Rasula'.<sup>8</sup> This is nothing but Arabic transformation of the Sanskrita word 'Nabhi' and the Prakrta word 'Nabhi'. His name not only survived but

also became more radiant in the form of the ‘The Messenger of God’.

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5. अमरकोश, ३/५/२० ।

6. अभिधान चिंतामणि, १/३६ ।

7. शशीव स कलाधारः तेजस्वी भानुमानिव ।

प्रभुः शक्र इवाभीष्टफलदः कल्पशाखिवत् ।। - (महापुराण, १२/११ )

8. उर्दू-हिंदी कोष, रामचंद्र वर्मा द्वारा संपादित, हिंदी ग्रंथरत्नाकर कार्यालय, बंबई,  
चतुर्थ संस्करण, अगस्त १९५३, पृष्ठ २२४ ।

After his name itself Aryakhanda was also named as ‘Nabhikhanda’ or ‘Ajanabhavarsa’. Nabhi was also called ‘Ajanabha’. In ‘Skandapurana’ we find the line हिमाद्रि-जलधेरन्तर्नाभिखंडमिति स्मृतम्.<sup>९</sup> While analysing this line Dr. Avadhbihari Lal Avasthi wrote in his famous book प्राचीन भारत का भौगोलिक स्वरूप: “Jambudvipa was the most famous territory in the earth having seven islands. The first Prajapati Svayambhuva’s son Priyavrata was the father of ten princes. Three of them had become ascetics and the remaining seven acquired supremacy in seven mahadvipas. The eldest son Agnidhra became the king of Jambudvipa. Later his nine sons became the kings of Jambudvipa. Out of the nine vast tracts of land of Jambudvipa, the territory lying between the Himalayas

and the sea was called ‘Nabhikhanda’ after ‘Nabhi’, the son of Agnidhra.<sup>10</sup> Nabhi was also called Ajanabha. That is why ‘Nabhikhanda’ was also called ‘Ajanabhavarsa’. Vasudevasaran Agrawal writes in one of the footnotes of the book ‘Markandeya Purana’ : “Svayambhuva Manu’s son was Priyavrata, Priyavrata’s son was Nabhi, Nabhi’s son was Rsabha and Rsabha had hundred sons, the eldest among whom was Bharata. This Nabhi was also called Ajanabha, who was very glorious and after whose name this country was called This Nabhi was also called Ajanabha, who was very glorious and after whose name this country was called Ajanabhavarsa.”<sup>11</sup> In Sri-mad-bhagavata also, it is written : अजनाभंनामैतद्वर्षं भारतमिति यत् आरभय व्यपदिशन्ति <sup>१२</sup> which means that in course of time Ajanabhavarsa itself came to be known as ‘Bharatavarsa’. Acarya Jinasena has mentioned in Adipurana that “At the time of Kalasandhi in this Jambudvipa itself, Aryakhanda which was to the north of Vijayardhaparvata was ruled by Nabhiraja after whose name this continent was called ‘Nabhikhanda’”.<sup>13</sup>

Many Acaryas called King Nabhiraja as ‘Udayadri’ and Queen Marudevi as ‘Pracidisa’, because to them was born Tirthankara

9. स्कन्दपुराण, १/२/३७ /५५ ।
10. प्राचीन भारत का भौगोलिक स्वरूप, डॉ. अवध बिहारीलाल अवस्थी, कैलाश प्रकाशन, लखनऊ, सन् १९६४, पृष्ठ १२३, परिशिष्ट २ ।
11. मार्कण्डेयपुराण: सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन, डॉ. वासुदेवशरण अग्रवाल, पादटिप्पण संख्या-१. पृष्ठ १३८ ।
12. श्रीमद्भागवत, ५/७/३ ।
13. महापुराण, ६२/८ ।

**Rsabhadeva who was as bright as the sun. Acarya Jinasena has written in Adipurana**

यो नाभिराजः सत्यं त्वम् उदयाद्रिमहोदयः ।

देवी प्राच्येव यज्ज्योतिः युष्मत्तः परमुद्बभौ ।। १४

It means that, “O Nabhiraja ! It is true that you are Udayacala and Marudevi is the East, and this supreme flame in the form of a son is born out of you only.” At some other place Jinasena has written that, “Nabhiraya is the most righteous man and Marudevi is the most righteous woman in this universe, because an absolute son like Rsabha will be born to them only.”<sup>15</sup> Rsabhadeva was matchless and a mother like Marudevi alone could give birth to him. Only the East can bear the sun, none else. Acarya Manatunga in-his ‘Bhaktamara Stotra’ has carved this picture in a poetic manner—

स्त्रीणां शतानि शतशो जनयन्ति पुत्रान् ।  
नान्या सुतं त्वदुपमं जननी प्रसूता ॥  
सर्वा दिशो दधति भानि सहरारश्मिं ।  
प्राच्यैव दिग्जनयति स्फुरदंजुजालम् ॥ १६

In this couplet, the devotee-poet has scattered his flower-like veneration at the feet of Mother Marudevi. The parents who give birth to Tirthankaras are not less reverent. The world bows with reverence at the feet of those married couples whose sons bestow mundane as well as ultra-mundane happiness with their -manliness and valour. Rsabhadeva was born at the period of conjunction of two periods- the end of Bhogabhumi and the beginning of Karmabhumi. King Nabhiraya who was the last in Bhogabhumi period or, in the viewpoint of Jayashankar Prasad, Devasrsti (God's creation) solved the problems more or less, but new problems continued to arise. When he found that Rsabhadeva was quite capable of solving them all, he began to refer his

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14. आदिपुराण, १४/८१ ।

15. स एव पुण्यवांल्लोके सैव पुण्यवती सती ।

ययोरयोनि जन्मासौ वृषभौ भवितात्मजः ॥ - (महापुराण, १२/६७ )

16. भक्तामरस्तोत्र, २२वां श्लोक ।

subjects to Rsabhadeva for solutions.<sup>17</sup>

With the extinction of Kalpavrksas livelihood posed insurmountable problems. Nobody knew how to produce food. For the first time, Rsabhadeva taught them the use of sugarcane and how to extract juice from it. Sugarcane was Svyamprasuta (self-born). Its use was easy. Perhaps, owing to this only, he was called ‘Iksvaku’. It is written in Mahapurana—

आकानाच्च तदिक्षूणां रससंग्रहणे नृणाम् ।

इक्ष्वाकु रित्यभूद् देवो जगतामभिसम्मतः ॥ १८

‘Avasyakacurni’ says- अकु भक्खणे ।<sup>१९</sup> Thus इक्खु and अकु come together and the Prakṛta word इक्खागो and the Sanskrit word इक्ष्वाकु is formed. We find सक्को वंसद्धवणे इक्खु अगू तेण हुंति इक्खागो ।<sup>20</sup> written in Avasyaka Niryukti. Besides this, Rsabhadeva provided technology of farming or cultivation,<sup>21</sup> which solved the main problem of Aryans. Aryans began to be called Kṛṣi-jīvi (professional farmers). It made them rich and prosperous. The main means of



cultivation was ‘Vrsabha’ (a bull). Its status was highly emphasised so much so that Rsabhadeva considered his name ‘Vrsabhadeva’ as a matter of honour. In course of time the word ‘Vrsabha’ became synonymous with ‘Srestha (Superior). Well, even if according to Kalpasutra, the original basis of the name ‘Rsabhadeva’ of the Lord is Marudevi’s dreaming and the sign of Vrsabha marked amidst the hair in his thighs, 22 I would

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17. तत्प्रहाणान्मनोवृत्तिं दधाना व्याकुलकृताम् ।

नाभिराजमुपासेदुः प्रजा जीवितकाम्यया ॥

नाभिराजाज्ञया स्रष्टुस्ततोऽनितकमुपाययुः ।

प्रजाः प्रणतमूर्धानो जीवितोपायलिप्सया ॥ - (महापुराण, १६/१३३-३४, पृ. ३५८ )

18. महापुराण, १६/ २६४ ।

19. आवश्यकचूर्णि, पृ. १५२ ।

20. आवश्यकनिर्युक्ति, गाथा १८६ ।

21. प्रजापतिर्यः प्रथमं जिजीविषुः ।

शशास कृष्यादिषु कर्मसु प्रजाः ॥ -(स्वयंभूस्तोत्र, श्लोक २ )

22. पूर्वस्वप्नसमये वृषभस्य दर्शनात् पुत्रस्योभयोर्जडघयो रोम्णां  
आवर्तभ्रमणावलोकाद् वृषभस्याकारस्य लांछनाद् नाभिकुलकरेण ऋषभ इति नाम  
दत्तम् ।

-( कल्पसूत्र, व्याख्या कल्पद्रुमकलिका ७, पृ. १४२)

like to credit this to his Krsi-darsana (science of agriculture). Cultivation alone provided a means that accomplished 'Karmabhumi'. Rsabhadeva might have looked through the reality and realised its importance with his prudence and sagacity. In those days the only vehicle of farming was a bull (Vrsabha), respectable and gave it respectability, he named himself 'Vrsabhadeva'. Today, archeologists can identify the idols of Rsabhadeva with the sign Vrsabha. And, till date, the prosperity of the country is traceable in cultivation only.

Bhagavajjinasenacarya has remembered Lord Rsabhadeva using the word पुरुः पुरुगुणोदयैः । It means that he was called 'Puru' on account of his having more virtues. Actually, the name 'Puru' of Rsabhadeva had meaning, as the virtues namely "पालन" and पूरण were combined in him.

He was the first pioneer of Ksatradharma (Martialling duty). 23 Protection of subjects is Ksatradharma. Both the two quantities, namely, protection from evil and providing subsistence through the device of livelihood' were present in Prajapati Rsabhadeva.<sup>24</sup> This was the significance behind his name

**‘Purudeva’. He showed his subjects the way to prosperity by preaching the six types of device for livelihood, namely, असि, मसि, कृषि, विद्या, वाणिज्य, शिल्प ।<sup>25</sup> He taught his two daughters - Brahmi and Sundari Aksaravidya and Ankavidya.<sup>26</sup> Even today, Brahmi script is considered to be most ancient one in the world. The similarity found in almost all the scripts in Bharata (India) and the Asian**

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२३. आद्येन वेधसा सृष्टः सर्गोऽयं क्षत्रपूर्वकः । - (महापुराण, ४२/६)

क्षत्रो धर्मो ह्यादिदेवात् प्रवृत्तः पश्चादन्ये शेषभूताश्च धर्माः ।

- (महाभारत, शांतिपर्व, १२/६४/२०)

२४. ऋषभं पार्थिवश्रेष्ठं सर्वक्षत्रस्य पूर्वजम् । - ( ब्रह्माण्डपुराण, २/१४ )

23. (क) कृष्यादि कर्मषट्कं च स्मृष्टा प्रागेव सृष्टवान् ।

कर्मभूमिरियं तस्मात् तदासीत्तद्व्यवस्थया ॥ - (आदिपुराण, १६/२४९)

(ख) असिर्मणिः कृषिर्विद्या वाणिज्यं शिल्पमेव च ।

कर्मरणीमानि षोढा स्युः प्रजाजीवनहेतवः । - (आ.पु. १६/१७९)

24. लेणं लिवीविहाणं जिणेण बंभीए दाहिणकरेण ।

गणियं संखाणं सुंदरीए वामेण उवड्डं । ।

-( अभिधान राजेन्द्र कोI, भाग २, उसभ प्रकरण, पृ. ११२६)

**continent have their roots in Brahmi script .<sup>27</sup>**

**Bharata was the eldest of all the hundred sons of Rsabhadeva. He was also modest, generous and possessed the qualities of a Ksatriya. According to Sri-mad-bhagavata, he was Parama Bhagavata (a devotee of God). Prajapati Rsabhadeva entrusted him with the responsibility of upbringing and nourishing the earth. Firm in the discipline of his father, he married ‘Pancajani’ an unparalleled beautiful woman .28 Bharata was the first Cakravarti. He conquered the earth having six khandas and became समुद्रपर्यन्तायाः पृथिव्याः एकराट् सम्राट्. He always cared for his subjects. He did everything with a feeling of affection as his father and grandfather did. He was great, virile, conversant with the nature of religion, veridicious, firm in his vows, a scholar in military science and scriptures, capable in restraint and well-wisher of all living beings in the world. He remained detached from worldly pleasures even amidst magnificence and wealth. And, the moment he was initiated into Digambara munihood,29 he attained Kevala-jnana. He established such an ideal of Raga (attachment) and Viraga (detachment), Bhoga (enjoyment) and Yoga (moral power derived through continuous meditation, concentration and contemplation), Sarirsara (circuit of worldly existence)**

and Moksa (salvation) that no one else could do it again in this world. He was unique. This country derives its present name 'Bharatavarsa' in place of 'Ajanabhavarsa' earlier, after Bharata's name.'

'Satasrnga' the son of Bharata had eight sons and a daughter called 'Kumarika'. According to 'Varahapurana', after the names of these nine progenies, Bharata had nine divisions, which are also called 'Navadvipa'. The ninth island itself was 'Kumaridvipa' of 'Kumarikakhanda', which was also called Bharata according to the

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25. देखिए, कन्नड़ साहित्य का इतिहास सिद्ध गोपाल काव्यतीर्थ, पृ. ६ ।

26. भरतस्तु महाभागवतो यदा भगवतावनितल-परिपालनाय  
सच्चिन्तितस्तदनुशासनपरः पाञ्चजनीं विवरुपदुहितरमुपयेमे ।

According to Jaina-sastras the name of Bharata's principal queen was Subhadra. - (Bhagavata, ५/७/१)

27. षट्खंडाधिपतिश्चक्री परित्यज्य वसुन्धराम् ।

तृणवत् सर्वभोगांश्च दीक्षा दैगम्बरी स्थितः ॥-(आचार्य कुलभद्र, सारसमुच्चय, १३६ )

book प्राचीन भारत का भौगोलिक स्वरूप.<sup>30</sup> It thus appears that 'Bharatavarsa' was a greater Bharata and Kumaridvipa or the present Bharata was only a territory of it. Scholars have been reflecting on the question of the number of countries included in this territory. The inescapable truth, however is that 'Bharatavarsa' from 'Ajanabhavarsa' and 'Bharata' from 'Bharatavarsa' as the names of this country, are all based on the names of glorious descendants of King Nabhiraya.

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28. भारत का भौगोलिक स्वरूप, डॉ. अवध बिहारीलाल अवस्थी, कैलाश प्रकाशन, लखनऊ, १९६४, परिशिष्ट २. पृष्ठ १२३-१२४ ।