

FOREWORD

In the early fifties, when I was a student of Lucknow University, I had occasion to attend a lecture on ‘Antiquity and Modernity’ by the well-know historian, late Prof. R.S. Tripathi in which he cited the famous verse from *Visnupurana*, a text datable to circa 3rd/4th century A.D. glorifying India.

गायन्ति देवाः किल गीतकानि, धन्यास्तु ते भारतभूमिभागे ।

स्वर्गापवर्गास्पदमार्गभूते, भवन्ति भूय पुरुषाः सुरत्वात् ॥

- (विष्णुपुराण, २/६/२४)

Prof. Tripathi, if I correctly remember, told during the course of this talk that whatever may be the concept of nationhood today, the author of *Visnupurana* treated India as a great nation whose glories were sung even by gods who desired to be born here, in this hallowed land, known for providing access to heaven (Svarga) and final liberation (moksa). The Puranic accounts are also clear about the location of the country, a vast mass of land, called *Bhratavarsa* consisting of nine *khandas* (regions), situated south of Himalaya and north of the seas:

उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य, हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम् ।

वर्षे तद् भारतं नाम, भारती यत्र सन्ततिः ॥

The earliest epigraphical reference to Bharatavarsa is found in the famous Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela, inscribed by the powerful monarch of Kalinga (Orissa), to commemorate his conquest. This indicated that Bharata, irrespective of its later boundaries, was already known as one single country before first century B.C.

The author of *Surya-Siddhanta* The author of *Surya-Siddhanta*, an ancient text on astronomy, includes even Lanka (Srilanka) situated at equator near India (...याम्यायां भारते वर्षे लङ्कातद्वन्महापुरी.... ।)

What is surprising is that even well educated Indians hardly know as to why our country came to be known or called as Bharata and what its origin is. Our present Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayi, was surprised at the ignorance of majority of our people on this issue and desired, during a function in Delhi, that some one should make a detailed investigation about the origin of the name Bharatavarsa for enlightening the

general public. Dr. Prem Sagar Jain of Baraut (U.P.) took up the challenge and produced the present book *Bharata and Bharata*'after indepth study and considerable research of Brahmanical, Jaina and other related ancient texts and tradition- This work, which was originally written in Hindi, clarifies the position and sets aside all the confusion about the origin of the term Bharata. However, for the general knowledge of lay reader we have attempted to discuss varied opinions of historians on the subject, briefly, in the present context.

Late Dr. A.D. Pusalkar, a famous Indologist, held the view that India was named as Bharata after the Vedic tribe (Jana) of Bharatas who are stated to have lived in the region of Sarasvati (eastern Punjab - Harayana extending upto the western bank of Yamuna). The view cannot be accepted as it is neither supported by the Vedic or Puranic traditions nor by historical reasoning. Had the term Bharata or Bharatavarsa originated from Bharatas, the area which was once occupied by them should have been known traditionally as Bharataksetra, or Bharata-janapada or Bharata-bhumi or simply Bharata in some phase of our history, like Kuru, Madra, Pancala or Matsya

territories. As yet we do not know any such reference in which Sarasvati region (Sarasvata-ksetra) has been styled as Bharata-bhumi or Ksetra.

Certain scholars following a single reference available in some versions of the *Mahabharata* feel that India was named as Bharata, after Bharata, the son of Sakuntala and Dusyanta, as he was a strong paramount monarch, who is stated to have ruled for several years. Dausyanti-Bharata belonged, according to the tradition, to lunar dynasty and was the nineteenth descendant from the founder of lineage. Traditions recorded in most of the Brahmanical Puranas do not associate the terms Bhadrata as a country with the son of Dusyanta. In fact all the main Puranas like the *Visnu*, *Agni*, *Markandeya*, *Brahmanda*, *Skanda*, *Linga Purana*, etc., unanimously, record that India came to be styled as Bharata after Bharata Cakravarti, a supreme ruler and a great victor, the son and successor of the mighty and enlightened paramount monarch and the first Jaina Tirthankara Adinatha or Rsabhanatha of the solar dynasty. Keeping in view the Puranic chronologies, Bharata, who was sixth in line from Svayambhuva Mann, the founder of the house (Suryavamsa) seems to belong to

an earlier age than Bharata-Dausyanti. According to ancient Indian traditions, the family of Bharata (son of Rsabha) was a dynasty which produced Kulakaras, Prajapatis and upholders of Rta (Order) at a time when the natural way as life of the primitive man depending on forest produce. Resources had already deteriorated and were disturbed. These rulers, particularly Rsabha, is stated to have established a new system and improved the lot of his people. It is on this account the Indian tradition preserve their memory as a sacred lore. Jina Rsabha has been called in the Brahmanical texts as an incarnation of god Visnu, and Bharata, a Cakravarti and a Mahayogi, who carried on his body the marks of Visnu's attributes. Thus, the Puranic accounts clearly justify as to why Ajanabhavarsa (i.e. older name of India after Bharata s grandfather) was renamed as Bharata.

I am very happy to record that Dr. Jain has placed all the references, earlier and later, modern and ancient together in this work and proved beyond doubt that it was only with Bharata Cakravarti, the son of the first Tirthankara, that the origin of the name Bharata could be linked. I congratulate Dr. Prem Sagar Jain for such a

venture. I am sure that the book *Bharata and Bharata* will be useful for both the specialists in the field of history and culture and the general public.

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