CHAPTER – III

Enumeration of the female characters of each of the dramas – An appraisal

Bhāsa has very cleverly and meticulously delineated the characters in his dramas. We are discussing the female characters in his plays. We have found that out of the thirteen plays written by Bhāsa the following dramas have female characters Abhiseka, Avimāraka, Bālacarita, Cārudatta, Dūtaghatotkaca, Madhyamvyāyoga, Pratimānāṭaka, Pratijñāyaugandharāyana, Svapnavāsavadatta, and Uṇībharāṅga.

The Abhiseka consists of three female characters viz. (i) Sītā – wife of Rāma, (ii) Tārā – wife of Vāli and (iii) Rākṣasīs.


The Pratimānātaka has eleven female characters viz. (i) Śītā – wife of Rāma, (ii) Kauśalyā – wife of Daśaratha, (iii) Kaikeyī – wife of

The Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa consists of three female characters viz. (i) Devī – Amgaṛavatī, queen of Mahāsena, (ii) Vijaya – waitress in the house of Yaugandharāyaṇa and (iii) Vasavadattā – daughter of Mahāsena.


The Karnabhāra, Dūtavākyā and Pañcarātra have no female characters.
We shall try to apprise the characters individually in the following pages.

1. **THE ABHIŞEKANĀTAKA**

The Abhiseka consists of six acts. This drama is a nāṭaka among the ten rūpakā's. This drama refers to three coronations of Sugrīva at Kīśkindhā, Vibhīṣaṇa at Lāṅkā and Rāma at Ayodhā. The drama ends with Rāma's coronation. Bhāsa shows his dramatic excellence in depicting the story of Vālivadha. Every characters of this drama is vigorous and they have own speciality. Bhāsa's expression is short and languages is simple. The main sentiment is Vīra (heroic). The wailings of Sugrīva, Aṅgada etc. and Sītā's miserable condition supply us Karuṇa Rasa. Śṛṅgāra is totally absent in the drama.

In the Abhiseka we find only three female characters. They are Sītā, Tārā and Rākṣasī. Among them Sītā and Tārā are most prominent. Rākṣasī is a minor character.

**Sītā**: Sītā, the wife of Rāma is the heroine of the drama. She is the living example of goodness and chastity. She possesses all the best qualities of Goddes Lakṣmī.

"Imāṁ bhagavatiṁ Lakṣmīṁ Jānihi janakātmajāṁī."
In a word, she is the embodiment of chastity, honesty, tolerance etc. All the time she is well-behaved and good-natured. She is patient in weal and woe. She remains cheerful in adversity and has faced with courage. She is devoted to her husband Rāma, the incarnation of Lord Nārāyana. She has shown her courage by defying the request of Rāvaṇa. She has full faith in her chastity and honesty. In the last part of Act V of the play she states if she is chaste, she will win and her husband too, will win. And this is evident in the following lines –

“iśvarāh! ātmanah Kulasadṛśena cāritrena
yadyahamanusrāmyāryaputram āryaputrasya vijayobhavatu.”

(Abh – V act)

She mounts on the burning fire, puts up a spiritual defence and proves her chastity. Though she mounts on the burning fire, she remains unhurt and unblemished. A series of unfortunate events or adversities she crop up and times without number she has to go in fire and water, but she overcomes them (these hurdles) valiantly and patiently. A woman of integrity, she has always been able to prove herself sinless, virtuous and righteous. She has been portrayed throughout the play as an ideal wife and chaste woman.
An ideal wife, she is shining and sparkling in the whole drama. The spark of her honesty, chastity, purity, uprightness, courage, goodness and tolerance is discernible all through the play. She has the patience of job. Her bewitching beauty, great courage, patience and her devotion to her husband have been artistically and dexterously portrayed. Bhaṣa, the dramatist, has delineated Sītā as Lakṣmī incarnate. Sītā has won the hearts of all and thus has been adored by all. She is Sviyā type of heroine. The characteristics of Sviyā is quoted.

"vinayārjavādiyuktā grhakarmaparā svīyā.
sāpi kathita tribhedā mugdā madhyā pragalbheti." (SD. III)

Sviyā nāyikā is a married consort of the hero and a chaste lady devoted to domestic duties modest in behaviour, straight forward in her dealings, she is a partner both in times of weal and woe of her husband.

Tārā: Tara was the wife of Vāli. She is seen in the very first act. She has a great beauty. Sugrīva invites Vāli for fight but Tārā vehemently dissuaded Vāli from the fight. It clearly indicates that Tārā is a speaker of justice. She entreated Vāli not to venture out to the fight and helplessly clutched his cloths and besieged him uncontrollably. But Vāli refused her wailing.
She has deep reverence for her husband and was always his well-wisher. She believed that where there is dharma there is success and where there is adharma there is only defeat is indicated. She believed this and for that reason her fear of Vāli’s imminent defeat. The dramatist in his drama Abhiṣeka painted the character of Tārā as an orater of righteousness and full of religiousity.

2. **THE AVIMĀRAKA** :

The Avimāraka is a rūpaka of Prakaraṇa class. It is a perfect comedy. The subject matter of this drama is imaginary. In this drama the poet narrates the love affair of Sauvīra prince Avimāraka and the princess Kuraṅgi the daughter of Kuntibhoja. Their love begins with Hastisambhrama and ends with attachment to each other. Bhāsa skillfully and proficiently make favourable all the opposite situation culminating into their marriage. Through various action and reactions the poet becomes successful to make the happy conclusion of this fancied story. Kuntibhoja arranges for Kuraṅgi’s marriage with Kāśīrāja’s son and Nārada suddenly appeared at that place, Nārada speaks some mysterious word and as a result Kuraṅgi’s marriage performed with Avimāraka.
Sṛṅgāra and Hāsyya are the main sentiments and occasionally there is employed Karuna (the description of Kuraṁgi and Avimāraka in separation).

Bhāsa always impartial of hard words and used simple language. So it is not difficult to perform his plays on the stage. This drama is a full indication of scriptures and applied knowledge. In short Avimāraka is one of the best and excellent drama of Bhāsa.

In this drama we find the following female characters. They are Kuraṁgi, Devi, Sudarśaṇā, Vilāsinī, Māgadhikā, Vasumitrā, Hariṇikā, Ceṭī, Dhātri, Pratihāri, Nalinikā and Saudāmini. Among them the most important is Kuraṁgi and others are subordinate.

Kuraṁgi: Kuraṁgi is the heroine of the play Avimāraka and the daughter of Kuntibhoja. The characteristics of a Nāyikā is quoted here—

“atha nāyikā tribhedā svānyā sadhārani stṛiti.

nāyakasāmānyagunairbhavati yathāsambhavairyuktā.” (SD. III)

She is depicted as very beautiful. Giving the description of her beauty Avimāraka has said the following words :

“urah stanatatālaṁ jaghanabhārahinnā tanu
mukharṁ nayanavallabham prakrtīmrabimbādharāṁ.

bhaye’pi yadi tādṛsaṁ nayanapātraeyam vapuḥ
Kurāṅgī is full of the milk of human kindness. She is a lively woman but her hands and limbs are quite slim and slender. Her face is brighter by her beautiful and lovely eyes. She had a full red lipped mouth. At times of agitation, this enchanting demeanour of her fully attracted and magnificently drew towards her, anyone whose gaze fell on her, so it was anybody’s guess, how much more beautiful and attractive she would be in the act of love-making.

Her bodily features and appearance are the cynosure of all youthful males. At the very first sight, she was able to attract the attention of Avimāraka. Avimāraka was magnanimous and valiant. He had the rare quality of taming wild elephant by his sheer skill and ingenuity. He had rescued the princess from the clutches of the elephant. The princes, therefore, selected as her lover. She was deeply in love with Avimāraka. She wanted to have her lover close to her, blind as she was in love. She felt bounded with this lover of unknown heritage. She had no concern for herself and full of the sickness of love she utters—“ko nu khalu abhūtapurbo rogacintyamāno mamunmadayati / Sumanāvarṣakaṁ neechati / na tuṣyati goṣṭyā / idamatra dāruṇaṁ manoharāṁ ca / nalinike! kimetat.” (Avi- Act – II). But in the pursuit of her lover, her frail
and delicate body made her loveliness more enhancing. Avimāraka makes himself incognito by the help of the magic ring of the Vidyādhara and stealthily entered the Kaṇyāpura and espied Kuraṅgi and told Viduṣaka—

"rogādkālāgurūcandanārdrā

vimuktabhūṣā gatahavabhāvā

vibhati nirvyājamanoharāṅgi

vedaśrutirhetuvivarjiteva.

(Avi – Act V, sloka – 1)

The two natural virtues of woman i.e. fear and bashfulness are visible in her when Avimāraka entered into the Kaṇyāpura and embraced sleeping Kuraṅgi, then awoke and said with shame and fear – ha hināṁ cāritram bhītāsmī (Avi – Act III). Her character became touchinable by her incomparable beauty, charm, fear, shame, feelings of love and love for her friends. She is a heroine of Mugdhā type. The characteristics of Mugdhā is quoted here—

“pradhamavatirnmayauvanamadanavikara ratau vama.

kathita mrdusca mane samadhikalijavati mugdha.” (SD. III)

D evī: Devī is the queen of Kuntibhoja and the mother of Kuraṅgi. She is very kind-hearted lady. Like all the common mother she thinks about her daughter’s marriage and wait in expectation to see the face of her son-in-
law. Hearing from the king that Avimāraka is low-born youth she said thus “mahārāja! akulinaḥ kathameva sāṅukroṣo bhavet” (Avi – act I) (Maharaja! How can the low caste person be so kind hearted). It shows from this speech she appears to be a very sharp witty lady.

**Sudarśanā**: Sudarśanā is the mother of Avimāraka and the queen of king Kāśirāja. She is very affectionate and honest. She thinks about the marriage of her son. She feels happy at the sight of descending Nārada from heaven and said thus – Sanātha idāṁi me putrakasya vivāha saṁvṛttah / bhagavān! vande.” (Av – Act – VI)

She was delighted and when Nārada said thus –

“evameva mahābhāge! nityam pritimavāpnuhi.
kuntibhojaśca bhupālo nityam syāt pritipiditaḥ. (Act VI)

She felt comfortable to embrace the son and blessed him. The dramatist has depicted her as a beautiful, attractive, gentle and unpretentious lady.

**Vilāsinī and Māgadhikā**: Vilāsinī and Māgadhikā were the two maid servants of princess Kuraṅgī. They were very faithful, witty and clever servants. They perform their duties very skillfully. Although they were
minor characters in this drama still they played an important role in the drama. They help according to their abilities in developing the plot.

**Vasumitrā and Hariṇikā**: Vasumitrā and Hariṇikā were another two maid servants of queen Devī. They were very dutiful and active and worked in accordance with the queen. They were always conscious with their self responsibilities.

**Ceṭī**: Ceṭī is the attendant of princess Kuraṅgī. Her name is Candrikā. She is very waggish by nature. She deceived voracious Vidyāśaka in the second act and disappeared with a ring from his hand. When Vidyāśaka said that a Brāhmīn was rare who knew the letter and the meaning of the word. Then Ceṭī showed him a stone coin and asked the meaning of the coin. Vidyāśaka said that the letters in the coin were not in his book. Hearing this she said – “If you did not know the meanings of the letters you can not eat with Dakṣiṇā.” She felt very happy in cheating Vidyāśaka. Bhaṣa painted her as waggish and imposter.

**Dhātri and Nalinikā**: Dhātri is the foster mother of Kuraṅgī. Her name is Jayadā. She is very careful, loving and dutiful lady. Nalinikā is the friend of Kuraṅgī. They were eloquent and skilled to do the appropriate
work at the right time. They did a great work to unite Kurāṅgī and Avimāraka and drove away Vidoṣaka from that place. They were always sharing the weal and woe of Kurāṅgī. In this play we find their kindness and cleverness.

**Saudāmini**: Saudāmini is the wife of the Vidyādhara. Her name is only mentioned in the drama. She is not so important from the dramatic point of view.

**Pratihāri**: She is the door-keeper of king Kuntibhoja. She do her duty very sincerely. There is no any fault for her duties. She is depicted as a faithful and dutiful lady.

3. **THE BĀLACARITA**:

The Bālacarita is a nataka, based on a famous story. The poet narrates the child-hood activities of Śrīkṛṣṇa in Bālacarita. The hero of the drama is of Dhīrodātta type. Though there are some female characters there is no any heroine and no smrīgara rasa. In showing the struggle, fight and death on the stage, the Bālacarita contravenes the directions of prohibition of Bharats′s Nātyaśāstra. The main sentiment is Vīra. Abdhūta is also found in some places (the appearances of various
weapons, as also some of the supernatural feats of Kṛṣṇa). Karuṇa is also found in Devala’s lamentations. Raūdra and bhayānaka is also found in Kaṁsa’s visions, terrible explosions etc. Hāsyya is found in the old cowherd’s speech. Śānta and Bhakti is found in the general devotion of Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu etc. It may be stated that excepting Śṛngāra all other sentiments are present in this play. The language of this play is very simple.

We find ten female characters in this play. They are – Devakī, Kātyāyanī, Pratiharī, Dhātrī, Sarvā, Rājasī, Sarvā, Pratiharī (door-keeper of Kaṁsa named Yaśodhara), Madhukarikā and Kaumodakī. Among them Devakī is the prominent and others are non-essential. All the characters helped the development of the drama as well as the plot.

**Devakī**: Devakī is the mother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the wife of Vasudeva. She is depicted as a loving mother in the Bālacarita. Kaṁsa killed her sons. So she is afraid of his gruesome character. After the birth of each child her only concern was that how to hide her son in secret place. She broke down with deep sorrow after sending her son with Vasudeva and did not want to be separated from her child. She prays Kaṁsa on every occasion not to kill her son. She possessed unlimited patience. Infact Vasudeva also praised her patience thus – “the patience is great of that
woman, who bearing in her womb the respectable child whose eyes are like the lotus and abstract like Vindhya and the Mandara mountains. "

The life of Devakī is full of sorrow and sufferings. The major portion of her life, she has to spent in the jail of Kaṁsa. The subject matter of the drama proved that she was living a very sorrowful life. Expecting a bright future, she bore the burden of painful life.

**Katyāyanī (Devī) :** Kātyāyanī is the Devī Bhagavatī. Vasudeva brought the girl child from Yosodā, the wife of Nandagopa to the jail of Kaṁsa, where they were imprisoned. They have handed over the girl to Kaṁsa when he wanted in the morning and Kaṁsa tried to smash to the girl by throwing her on a stone slab and instantly the girl was divided into two parts, and one half of the baby falls down on the ground and the other half flew in to the sky and became an armoured Goddess and entered on the stage in the form of Devī Katyāyanī. She killed the powerful arrogant Asuras. Devī Kātyāyanī protect the noble and restrains the demons.

**Sarvā (the Cāndāla girls) :** They lived in the kingdom of Kaṁsa. Their figure was as like as blue lotus and as black as collyrium. At the moment when Kṛṣṇa was born, some inauspicious sign are visible in the court of
Karna. Candala girls also enter the court of Karna and proposed him for marriage. They rebuked the king with disgraced words.

**Pratihārī (Madhukarikā and Yasodharā)**: Madhukarikā and Yasodharā are the door-keepers of Karna. They do their duties very sincerely. The king never find any fault of their duties. Although he (the king) is an oppressive one but they respect him very much. The dramatist depicts them as a faithful and dutiful servants.

**Sarvā (maidens of cowherds)**: The girls of the gopagrama were innocent and pure. They loved and worshipped Kṛṣṇa. They all were the well-wisher of Kṛṣṇa. Their voices were very soft, eyes were bright and beautiful. Dāmodara narrates in the following words –

"etā mattacakoraśāvanayanāḥ prodbhinnakamrastanāḥ
ekāntāḥ prasfuritādharoṣṭharucayo visrastakeśasrajaḥ.
sambhrāntā galittoṭaryavasanāśrāśākulavyāḥṛtā—
srastā māmanuyānti pannagapatiṁ śṭvaiva gopāṅganāḥ.

(Bāl–Act IV)

**Dhātri (Upamata)**: Dhātri regularly lived with Devakī, because Devakī is bearing a child. When Karna asked about the child of Devakī, she
gave the child to Kaṁsa and she wepted due to her motherly affection to the baby. So she said Kaṁsa—“śānaiḥ śānaiḥ bhartāḥ.”

**Rājaśrī (the presiding deity of the country):** Rājaśrī is the goddess of Kaṁsa’s kingdom. She lived in Kaṁsa’s state. She gave up Kaṁsa’s state by Viṣṇu’s order.

**Kaumodakī:** Kaumodakī is the club of Lord Viṣṇu. In the battle-field she churns the dānavas. She fights with the danavas in accordance with the order of Viṣṇu and killed them. She plays in the reverse of Dānavas blood.

4. **The Cārudatta:**

The Cārudatta belongs to the nāṭaka type of rūpaka. It is divided into 4 acts. The Cārudatta is the last play out of the 13 plays. Scholars are of opinion that the drama is incomplete. The language of the drama is very simple and lucid. Characters are also active. We find an honest hero like Cārudatta and a dishonest villain like Sajjalaka in the drama. The theme of the drama is poet’s own invention. All the characters are ordinary people of the society. Love is the main sentiment of this drama. There are two heroine one is Kulajā and other is Veśyā.
We find in this drama there are seven female characters. They are — Gaṇikā, Brāhmaṇī, Radanikā, Madanikā, Caturikā, Bicchittikā and Naṭī. Among them Gaṇikā (Vasantasena) is the prominent and others are subordinate.

**Gaṇikā (Vasantasena)**: Gaṇikā is the heroine of the drama Cārudatta. Her name is Vasantasena. She is very wealthy and very graceful ganika of the city Ujjainī and kindness, affection, compassion etc. are qualities of her character. Though she is a ganika but her importance only in love and not in wealth. Her engagement only for Cārudatta. She is occupying a prestigious position in the society and in the state. She is highly enamoured with the qualities i.e. virtue and beauty of Cārudatta and she loves him very much. Śakāra says about their love that one day Vasantaseṇā went to the festival of Kāmadeva and saw the beauty of Cārudatta and she was highly attracted to Cārudatta.

Although she is a prostitute she has no desire for wealth, when the Čeṭī indicated her that mother say to wear this ornaments and go away. She tells Čeṭī thus — when I go to Cārudatta’s house, I wear ornaments myself.

Though she is a lady she does not afraid of any situation, when Śakāra and Biṭa follow her she does not surrender herself with fear. She
tells that I will surely save myself – “atra svayamevātmā rakṣitavyah”.

(1\textsuperscript{st} Act)

Vasantasenā is affectionate for the poor. When Sambāhaka requests her for shalter she gives him shalter. She gives him wealth and rescued from the gambler. She consoles him and says that you do not think about this wealth because Cārudatta has given this wealth.

When Sambāhaka says that he will teach her family the Sammardana art then she replied him thus – for which you teach this art? You serve only for him “Yasya krte iyam kalā sikṣitā, sa evāryenopsthātavyo bhaviṣyati.” (2\textsuperscript{nd} Act)

Vasantasenā is very noble in her manners and behaviour. She entrusted Madanikā to her lover Sajialaka and this fact proved her highest excellence of loftiness. Vasantasenā was an ideal woman. Once Madanikā said that Cārudatta was poor then she replied thus – “atahkhalu kāmyate atidaridrapuruṣasakā gaṇikā avacaniyā bhavati.” (1\textsuperscript{st} Act)

From the above discussion it may perhaps be said that her character is full of loveliness, loftiness and full of charity which are the glory of womanhood. The gaṇikā, who is the heroine of the drama is well portrayed by the dramatist.
Brāhmaṇī: Brāhmaṇī is the wife of Cārudatta. The dramatist has portrayed her as an ideal Indian woman. She is accompanied with her husband in his weal and woe. She is not envious with her husband when she knows Vasanta senā is in love with her husband nor she asks her husband about this affair.

When Sajjalaka has stolen suvarṇabhāṇḍa which was kept with Cārudatta the wife of Cārudatta sent Vīduṣaka with her valuable ornaments to give Vasanta senā to escape her husband from defamation. She knew that her husband will not agree with this action. She said that she was observing the śaṣṭīvrata and she wanted to give some gift to the Brāhmaṇa and so she sent Vīduṣaka with this ornaments “Patireva gatiḥ strīnām” – this was her ideal.

Madanikā: Madanikā is the maid servant of Vasanta senā. She has won the heart of Vasanta senā by her artful action and behaviour and as a result she became her faithful. She was able to know the love story of her mistress with Cārudatta. She loved Sajjalaka. Once Sajjalaka stole the golden casket from Cārudatta’s house to release Madanikā from her master. When Sajjalaka gave her the casket full of gold, she advised him to return the ornaments to Cārudatta. She is a woman of noble demeaner.
Madanikā is very pious and noble lady. She was distressed when she knew that Sajjalaka stole the casket of ornaments, she said him that he was a disgraced person to be censured. Your body and character both are doubtful to me –

“ḥā dhig mama krteobhayaṁ sarīṣayitaṁ samvṛtaṁ – tava sarīraṁ cāritaṁ ca.” (Cāru act IV)

She is very simple and honest woman. She thought that the life of a house wife is more honourable than the life of a prostitute, when Vasantasenā committed the charge of Madanikā to Sajjalaka then she was very happy and accepted the life of a house wife without any question. In this drama Bhāsa delineates Madanikā as the well-wisher of her husband, her friend and her lover.

Radanikā: Radanikā is a maid servant of Cārudatta. She is very poor, but faithful to her master. She is very cautious about herself and her duties. When Śakāra touches her hand by mistake, she kicks Sakara by her feet and said Viduṣaka thus – “Ārya maitra this is insult for me”. She is very simple and good natured maid and devoted to her master.

Caturikā and Bicchittikā: Caturikā and Bicchittikā both are the maid servants of Vasantasenā. Bicchittikā is a beat dull while Caturikā is
intelligent and eloquent. She expresses happiness when Sajjalaka takes away Madanikā (Priyam me amṛtānātakam samvṛttam) (4th act). She is a woman full of honour and wit.

Naṭī: Naṭī is the wife of Sutradhāra. She is very polite and simple. She always waits for her husband. She is pious and religious woman. She maintains vow with great respect. She is devoted and obedient to her husband. She always done something in accordance with her husband’s direction.

5. THE DŪTAGHOTKACA:

Dūtaghōtkaça is an one act play of Vyāyoga variety of the rūpaka. Some other rehtorician opine that Dūtaghaṭotkaca is an Utsṛṣṭikānka variety of Rūpaka. The main sentiment is Karuṇa which is revealed in the speeches of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and Duḥṣalā. Ghaṭotkaca is depicted in the drama as an emissary from the Pāṇḍavas to the Kaurava. This episode is not found in the Mahābhārata instead it is a new development of the dramatist.

We find there are three female characters in Dūtaghaṭotkaca. They are Gāndhārī, Duḥṣalā and Pratihārī. Among these three female
characters Gāndhārī is the most important and others two are not so important.

Gāndhārī : Gāndhārī is the wife of Dhṛtāraṣṭra and the mother of Duryodhana. She is very intelligent and religious. Seeing the family strife between Kaurava and the Pāṇḍavas she is very sad and unhappy. She becomes distressed on hearing the death of Abhimanyu at the battle-field. Abhimanyu was killed in an unlawful way, and Gāndhārī apprehends that surely this fight will destroy the whole family. So she said Dhṛtāraṣṭra in the following words – “Mahārāja! I think that this family strife will annihilate our sons.” (Mahārāja! asti punarjnayate kevalam putra samkṣayakārah kulavigraho bhaviṣyatiti.)

She is truthful and perfectly chaste wife and devoted to her husband. A lots of qualities have been observed in Gāndhārī’s character such as out spoken, wise, uprightness and sagacious etc. In this drama we see Gāndhārī as supporter of truth and justice. She is the heroine of Svastī sviyā. The characteristics of Sviyā is –

“Vinayārjavādiyuṭa grha-karmaparaśa pativratā sviyā.” (SD. III)

Duḥsalā : Duḥsalā is the sister of Duryodhana and the wife of Jayadratha. She becomes unhappy on hearing the death of Abhimanyu
and as soon as possible she wants permission from her father Dhṛtarāṣṭra to see Uttara. She properly knows that she too will face the same fate that Uttara has fallen now. Some qualities like politeness, honesty, modesty, piousness etc. are visible in her character. She apprehends terrific truth which is ominous to happen in future. She is unhappy by thinking about the impending danger. When Gāndhārī consoled her, she told her mother—“who is the person” who hope to live happily to do unjust act with Kṛṣṇa. She always told the truth whatever she thought. Like this way a lots of qualities such as uprightness, out-spoken etc. are reflected in her character.

**Pratihārī** : Pratihārī is the gate keeper of king Dhṛtarāṣṭra. She did her duty very carefully. She is not so important from the dramatic point of view.

6. **THE MADHYAMAVYĀYOGA** : Madhyamavyāyoga is an one act play. Collecting a few well-known episodes of the Mahabhārata and a small episode from the Aitereya Āraṇyaka the poet has developed a very interesting story. The main sentiment is vira and various other sentiments are also employed to enhance its effects. We find Bhayānaka rasa (in the meeting of the Brāhmaṇa with Ghaṭotkaca). Karuṇa (when each member
offers his life for the sake of the whole family). The dialogues in this play are short, crisp, direct and forcible and at the same time couched with simple language. So it is suited for a stage play. There are two female characters in the drama. They are Hīḍimbā and Brāhmaṇī Hīḍimbā is the prominent character. She is the sister of Hīḍimbā.

Hīḍimbā: The story of the Madhyamavyāyoga is reflected Hīḍimbā’s deep love for her husband Bhīma and her strong desire to meet him after a long time. Though she appears to be cruel Rākṣasī even she is virtuous. She sent her obedient son to fetch a young man for her morning meal. She is really a gentle woman, a chaste and loving wife of Bhīma. This is revealed only towards the end of the play and Bhīma rightly remarks—“Jātyā rākṣasī, na samudācārena.” You are rākṣasī by birth but not in behaviour. Her son is very obedient who has been well brought up her. Bhīma gets much relief from the boring life in the forest and compliments her for bringing about such a union.

“asmākaṁ bhraṣṭarājyānāṁ bhramatāṁ gahanevane.
Jātakāruṇyāya devī! saṁtāpo nāśitastvayā.” (MV 1st Act)

Hīḍimbā is an affectionate and sensible mother to her son. She has taught him obedience and devotion to the parents, respect for the Brāhmaṇas, pride in all his noble family and his great heroic father and
self-confidence. She has also trained him in warfare and has brought him up in such a way that he would become a great hero like his father. The wisdom and cleverness of Hīḍimbā are revealed in the way in which she deiced to bring Bhīma to her residence on that day when other pāṇḍavas are away. She is confident that Bhīma would not punish a young hero like Ghaṭotkaca even his identity is not known. But he is ready to meet his mother when he says that he is fetching a man at the order of his mother. Her inferences and calculations have been proved correct. She treats her husband like a deity. Seeing Bhīmasena she said her son thus – “he is the god of our both (unmattaka! daivatam khalvayam). It may perhaps be presumed that Hīḍimbā though a Rākṣasī, she is an honest, devout, kind loving and benevolent lady. The manners and behaviour of Hīḍimbā is very well reflected in the drama. Though a Rākṣasī she is portrayed like a Kṣatriya lady.

**Brāhmaṇī**: Brāhmaṇī is the wife of Kesavadāsa. Like all the common woman she is also fearful. She offers herself instead of her son and husband. She is very sad to part with her youngest son. She is portrayed in the drama like a simple and ordinary woman of the society. Her motherly love is well depicted in the drama. It appears that the dramatist has successfully depicted the female characters in the drama.
7. **THE PRATTMĀNĀTAKA**: The pratimā is one of the important works of Bhasa. It is divided into 7 acts. The poet has introduced several new things of his own in the development of the plot. He has introduced his originality in characterization and changes the whole drama in a new form. He applies style and language in accordance with the character and the situation of the plot. The story of the drama is brought from the Rāmāyana. The main sentiment of this drama is Karuṇa. In this drama we find eleven female characters. They are Naṭi, Sītā, Kausālyā, Sumitrā, Kaikeyī, Avadātikā, Cetī, Pratiharī, Vijayā, Nandinikā and Tāpaśi. Among them Sītā and Kaikeyī are the most prominent and others are subordinates.

*Sītā*: In the portrayal of Sītā Bhāsa has mostly followed the epic but has improved her character by representing her as a simple and guileless woman with tender feelings of love, devotion and pity and never swayed by wild emotions. She is the embodiment of good conduct “Śilam vigrahvat sthitam” and a replica of Arundhati in chastity – “dvidhābhūtamarundhātīcāritraṇī”. Even Rāvana is forced to speak of her chastity with surprise – “aho! Prativrataḥ tejalḥ”. At the very beginning of the drama she exhibits a high sense of righteousness, when she asked Avadātikā to return the Valkala to the woman in charge of the dressing.
room. She desires to wear the bark garment and see whether it suits her, only shown her simple nature and curiosity that is common with other woman. The respect and devotion to her father-in-law is also great. First of all she enquires about the health of Daśaratha the moments she hears about the coronation of her husband. Only when she is told that the king is quite healthy and he himself is performing the ceremony. Again, when she was told that Daśaratha proposes to retire to the forest after instituting Rāma as heir-apparent she is not happy and remarks — “yadyevaṁ na tadabhiṣekodakam, mukhodakam nāma”. She shares Rāma’s views regarding the coronation which makes Rāma to compliment her with the words — “alpam tulyasilani dvandvani srjyante.” She bears sympathy and affection for Lakṣmaṇa and pleads with Rāma for granting his request to serve him in the forest. Bharata’s supplications draw her sympathy and she intervenes on his behalf — “Āryaputra, nanu diyate khalo prathamayacanam bharataya.” Rāma agrees to give his sandals to Bharata in his sojourn, she treats Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata with motherly affection.

Sītā is loved by ascetic women of Janasthāna, both young and old. She addresses them affectionately as “śākhati sīleti ca jānaketi yathāvayah snigdhataram snuṣetī.” As a result of her adaptability she is quite happy in the company of the ascetic woman and with them, she tends the plant
with great care, offers worship to the gods with the materials available in the forest and does other duties. She is “avasthākutumbini”, one who shares the pleasures and woes of her husband all through her life. Her timid nature is revealed when she is left alone in the presence of the mendicant when Rāma goes in pursuit of the golden deer. She waits piteously when forcibly she was taken away by Rāvaṇa.

Bhāsa has painted Sītā in better colours by omitting and changing certain incidents of the original story. Sītā becomes angry and accuses Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, when Rāma tries to persuade her to remain in the palace and not to follow him by pointing out to the danger to be faced in the forest. She, in a fit of anger, calls him a woman in the form of a man – “strīyaṁ puruṣavigraham”. She also accuses him of wishing to hand her over to others like an actor – “sailūṣa eva parebhyo dātumicchasi.” Here in pratimāṇaṭakya, the dialogue between Rāma and Sītā covers a few short crisp sentences spoken in a dignified manner and Rāma agrees to take her to the forest on the request of Lakṣmaṇa “vrajatu caratu dharmam bhartṛnātha hi nārīyyah”. Again when Lakṣmaṇa refuses to leave her alone in the cottage and go in search of Rāma who had pursued the golden deer she became furious and charges him with evil intention. This awkward scene is avoided in Pratimā by sending Lakṣmaṇa away for receiving the Kulapati returning from a pilgrimage. Sītā is as Bharata says, really a
devine luster risen from the lap of the earth as the fruit of Janak’s presence. Bhāsa is more successful in depicting the character of Sītā. Her simplicity, the sweetness of disposition, her devotion to her husband, her deep reverence to her father-in-law are delineated with skillful touches.

She is said to be the Sviyā type of heroine. Because she is consort of Rāma. She is associated with Rāma as his legally wedded wife and in such case she is the Sviyā Nāyikā. It seems perhaps the author has successfully depicted Sītā in the Pratimā.

Kaikeyī: Bhāsa has portrayed the character of Kaikeyī in the Pratimā as different from her character in the original epic where she is an avaricious, virago, cruel and shameless woman. Here she is a virtuous lady who suffers patiently and silently the public reproach and the worst possible treatment from her own son Bharata only to keep her husband to be true to his words and thus prevent him from committing a sin in his old age. Bhāsa has shown his partiality for woman who are capable of making any sacrifice and suffer silently for a noble cause and Kaikeyī is an example in this respect. But the extent of the sacrifice she has suffered and her pure motive is disclosed only towards the end of the drama. Till then she is the same as in the Rāmāyaṇa in the public eye though she does not show herself as such so prominently.
Kaikeyī demands the bride’s price stipulated at her marriage just when the consecrating water of coronation is about to be poured on Rāma’s head, as a result the coronation is stopped. Every one is unhappy and the public censure of Kaikeyī is voiced by the chamberlain who accuses her for greed and tales Rāma who defends her action not to attribute his own straightforwardness to the wretched mentalities of woman. The next demand Kaikeyī is to send Rāma for banishment makes Daśaratha to curse her as a sinner and speak of her as a tigress. Lākṣmaṇa is so angry that he resolves to rid the world of young woman. Even the maids of Kaikeyī whisper about her greed for the kingdom and power which ended in her own widowhood and call her as a heartless sinner – “nirghṛṣṇa khalo bhattini Pāpakam kṛtam”.

She received the worst treatment from her own son Bharata who hates her the moment he hears that his dear father died as a result of her demand of the “Śulka”. She is disowned by him and condemned for treachery to her Lord. The explanations given by Kaikeyī for demanding the Śulka does not satisfy Bharata because she does not explain the reason for sending Rāma to the forest which is not stipulated in the Sulka. He isolates her and taunts her whenever he gets an opportunity to do so. She bears the reproach and taunts of Bharata without a word of protest. Her pure motive in sending Rāma to the forest is revealed only in act VI
and Bharata is immediately convinced of her noble purpose and begs her pardon. When her purpose is achieved, she gladly asks Rāma to accept the coronation.

The poet thus wants to show that Kaikeyi is not a wicked, selfish woman. But the poets defense of Kaikeyi’s conduct though ingenious is weak. The portrayal of Kaikeyi as a step mother and dealings of her to her stepson is well depicted.

Kauśalyā: Kauśalyā, the mother of Rāma is the Mahiśī of king Daśaratha. Though the original source of the Pratimānātak is the Rāmāyaṇa, yet the character of Kauśalya is different from the epic. The heart of Kauśalyā is full of affection. In one side she is a devoted wife and in another she is an ideal mother. In the Rāmāyaṇa Kauśalyā is distressed at the treatment of Kaikeyi and vehemently said Bharata in the following words :-

“Bharataṁ pratyuvācedaṁ Kauśalyaṁ bhṛṣaṁduḥkhhitā.
idam te rājya-kāmasya rājyaṁ praptamkantakaṇāṁ.
sampratam bat kaikeyyaṁ sīghram krūreṇa karmaṇāṁ.
prasthāpya ciravasanaṁ putraṁ me vanavāsinaṁ.

kaikeyiṁ kaṁ guṇaṁ tatra paśyati krūraḍarśini.” (Rāmāyaṇa – Adhyāya – 55, Kāṇḍa –110, śloka – 10)
But in the Pratimānāṭaka Kauśalyā said thus — “Bharata control your grief “— jāta! nisantāpo bhava.” She despatches Bharata to touch his mother’s feet and said — “my son you know the modesty and courtesy why do you not treat your own mother? (Jāta! sarvasamudācāramadhyastha kim na vandase mātaraṁ?)

The character and quality of Kauśalyā is very great. When Daśaratha laments at the departure of Rāma then Kauśalyā appeased the king. Kauśalyā’s character exhibits the sweet combinations of womanly qualities like chastity, charity, affection, kindness, love, sacrifice and benevolence and so on. Kauśalyā represents the motherly affection to her children, devotion to his husband and the people of the state.

Sumitrā: The character of Sumitrā is also well portrayed in the play. She is the mother of Lakṣmaṇa. She is devoted to her husband and an ideal mother of her son and stepsons. King Daśaratha praised her thus –

“tavaiva putraḥ satputro yena naktāndivāṁ vane.
raṁo raghukulaśresthaschāyevānugamyate.” (Prat – act II)

She served and appeased the fainted king at the time of separation from Rāma. She never envies Bharata the son of Kaikeyī. She is very affectionate to Bharata and she blessed him to become famous.
All the great qualities of a woman like kindness, love, compassion, sacrifice, service, benevolence and affection etc. are created the sweet connection in her character. In fact, Sumitrā’s sacrifice is greater than Kauśalya and Kaikeyī. She never opposed Lakṣmaṇa from going to the forest with Rāma. Her self sacrifice makes her character great and very much appealing.

**Nalinikā and Vijayā:** Nalinikā and Vijayā are the two maid servants of Kaikeyi. Both of them are dutiful and they do not like Rāma’s exile. They can not tolerate the actions of Kaikeyī. They became curious when Bharata returns from his maternal uncles’ house. Vijayā censure Kaikeyī as greedy for the throne. They are very honest and devoted to the Royal family. They are loyal and distressed at the calamity of Royal family. Both Nandinikā and Vijayā’s heart is full of charity, kindness and affection.

**Avadātikā:** Avadātikā is the attendant of Sītā. She is very obedient and never refuses the order of Sītā and deeply loved her. She is not only a woman of witty nature but also faithful servant. Bhāsa delineates her as simple loyal truthful, honest and virtuous woman.
Ceti: Ceti is the companion of Sita. She is proficient in witty dispositions. She is one of the ideal servant. She never deny any order of Sita. She felt very glad on hearing the Rama’s coronation. She is faithful and a good natured woman.

Pratihari: Pratihari is the door-keeper of King Daśaratha. She is very loyal and faithful to her master. She always obey the order of her master. She keeps a careful watch to the royal court and vigilant in doing her duties.

Tapasi: Tapasi is a female ascetic. She is as like as other companions of Sita and guard always. She is the well-wisher of Sita.

Natī: Natī is the female companion of the Sūtradhāra. She always helps him from the first to the last in conducting the drama. In Pratīmānāṭaka she sings a song in describing the śaratkāla.

It may perhaps be said that the dramatist has successfully portrayed the female characters in this drama.
8. **THE PRATIJÑĀYAUGANDHARĀYĀNA**: 

The Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa consists of four acts. The theme of the drama is poet's own conception. Pradyota, the king of Ujjayini wanted to perform the marriage of his daughter Vāsavadattā with Udayana. Pradyota captured Udayana when he was out for hunting. Pradyota appointed Udayana to teach music to his daughter. Yangandharāyaṇa the minister of Udayana vows to restore Udayana and bring his king with Vāsavadattā to the Vatsa kingdom. So the play is named after the solemn vow of the minister Yangandharayana.

In this drama we find four female characters. They are Naṭī, Pratiḥārī, Aṅgāravatī and Vāsavadattā. Among them Aṅgāravatī is the prominent and others three are subordinate.

**Aṅgāravatī**: Devī Aṅgāravatī is the wife of Mahāsena Pradyota. She is the mahisi of the king. She is a devoted lady. Her character is full of the quality of an ideal woman. Like other Indian mother she has consulted with her husband about the marriage of her daughter. She said Mahāsena about Vāsavadattā's marriage and suggested – to give her to a groom where she becomes happy and there is no pain for us (yatā datvā na santāpyamahe, tatra diyatām) (2nd act). The heart of the queen is also full of affection. She agrees to give her daughter in marriage but her
separation becomes full of sorrow (abhipretam me pradānāṁ, viyogo māṁ sāntāpayati, ata kasmāi punardattā). (Pratijñā – act II)

She is highly attracted to Udayana for his good quality. She thinks that only Udayana is suitable for her daughter. But when she knows that Udayana eloped with Vāsavadattā she was extremely afflicted. Udayana begs her pardon and consoles her and she became happy. Undoubtedly she is affectionate and devoted woman. We find in the character of the queen a true and affectionate mother and a dutiful and responsible wife who knows her duties and responsibilities.

**Pratihārī** : Pratihārī is the door-keeper of Vāsavadattā. Her name is Vijaya, she is very loyal and dutiful lady. She works according to the order of Yaugandharāyaṇa. Dutifulness is the great virtue of her character. She is very much aware of her duties and responsibilities.

**Vāsavadattā** : Vāsavadattā is the daughter of Mahāsenā and queen Amgāravatī. In her child-hood she is interested in songs and music. She learns the art of playing lute with her would be husband Udayana. She is one of the devoted lady and well-wisher of her husband.
9. **THE SVAPNAVĀSAVADATTAM**: The Svapnavāsavadattam is a noble creation of poet’s wisdom. It is divided into six acts. It depicts the conjugal love in a most exalted form. The poet has depicted all the characters male and female with great care. The main sentiment in the drama is vipralambhaṅgāra (love in separation) and associated with Karuṇārasa (the sentiment is pathos). This drama is undoubtedly the poet’s master piece and fruits of his matured genius.

In this drama we find nine female characters. They are Āvantikā (Vāsavadattā), Padmāvati, Tāpasi, Dhatrī, Padminikā, Madhukarikā, Vasundharā (Dhatrī), Amgāravati and Pratihārī. Among them Vāsavadattā and Padmāvati are prominent and others are subordinate.

**Vāsavadattā (Āvantikā)**: Vāsavadattā (Āvantikā) is the queen of king Udayana and the beloved daughter of Mahāsena. She is a beautiful young woman endowed with many virtues of an ideal Hindu wife. She commands respect, even in her disguise as Āvantikā, from all people who meet her. She is always accustomed to enjoy a special status. She feels humiliated when the servants of Magadha princess are asking the people to clear the path.

As an ideal Hindu wife she is prepared to undergo any amount of sufferings and humiliation for the good of her husband. She agrees to live...
in separation and work for the marriage of her husband with another lady
in the form of Padmāvatī and even prepares the wedding garland for
Padmāvatī for her marriage. This is really a great sacrifice on the part of a
Vāsavadattā. Her silent sufferings draws sympathy of the people.

Love is the very life-blood of Vāsavadattā, as it were the depth of
her love for Udayana is revealed, as she herself remarks, by the fact that
she eloped with her lover leaving her parents and kinsmen. The pen-
pictures draws by Udayana in the verses –

“bahuso’pyupadesesu yayā māmīkṣamānāyā.

hastena sraṣṭakoneṇa kṛtanākāsasvāditam. (5th act)

smarāmyavantyādhipateh sutāyaḥ

prasthānakāle svajanaṁ smaran反而ḥ.

baspāṁ pravṛttāṁ nayanāntalagnāṁ

snehanmamaivorasi pātayantyāḥ. (Sv – act V)

It shows how ardently she loved him. Though she has reconciled
herself for the marriage of her husband with another lady she bears her
love more ardently than herself. She is very eager to know what change
the marriage with Padmāvatī, has made in her love towards her. She is
satisfied only when she overhears his statement that Padmāvatī has not
yet succeeded in diverting his mind from her. Her thought are always
centered round Udayana. She enquires about his health when she hears
the news of Padmāvaṭi’s betrothal. On seeing Udayana in the garden from the hiding place her first re-action is “distya prakṛtisthasārīrah āryaputraḥ”. She is delighted to hear the king expressing greater love for her and remarks – “dattāṁ vetanamasya parikhedasya. aho ajñātavāso’pyatra vahugunāḥ sampadyate”. The dream scene brings out her love for Udayana more than any other scene in the play. The dream scene is the epicenter of the drama and the author has named the drama on the basis of the dream scene.

(Vāsavadattā) Āvantikā in disguise is a woman of gentle nature and pleasing manners. Padmāvaṭi and every one in her palace love and admire Āvantikā. She exclaims in a moment of sorrow of separation from her husband – “aho atyāhitam, āryaputro’pi nāmaparakiyah sanivṛṭth”. On the other hand she is happy that this marriage may help the king to forget his grief for his wife.

Vāsavadattā also has got some of the weaknesses that are common to a woman. When she hears from the Brahmācarin that the account of the miserable plight of the king, she exclaims “sakāma idānim āryayaugandharāyaṇo bhavatu”, showing the true nature of devoted lady to her husband. She is upset when she hears Padmāvaṭi’s betrothal to Udayana but is calmed only when she is told that Pamāvaṭi’s hand was
offered by her parents to Udayana who came to Rajagṛha on some other business.

Vāsavadattā is a very intelligent and ready-witted lady. Addressing Padmāvatī as “bhaviṣyanmahāsenavadhu” and saying “abhita iva te adya varamukhān paśyāmi” she extracts information very cleverly from the maid that Padmāvatī wishes to marry Udayana and not Gopalaka. She often puts herself of her partiality by her ready wit on account of Udayana and intensity of feeling of love. In the act II she inadvertently says that Udayana is very handsome and when Padmāvatī asks how she knows it, she says that people of Ujiayini say so. It appears to be convincing exclamation to Padmāvatī. In act IV when she says that Vāsavadattā loved Udayana more than Padmāvatī did, Padmāvatī asks how she knows that and here again we find her shrewdness thus – “had her love been less, she would not have forsaken her people”. There are many such instances showing her ready wit and intelligence.

She is said to be the mixture of “Madhyā” and “Pragalbhā” nāyikā. She is “dhīrā” type of heroine. The characteristics of Madhyā and Pragalbhā nāyikā are–

“madhyā bicitrasuratā prarūḍasmarayauvanā.

िःत्रप्रगलभवाकानाः madhyamvṛṣṭिति matā.

smarāṇधाः gāḍatārūṇyaḥ samastaratakoviḍā.
bhavonnatā darabrīḍā pragalbhakrāntaṁyaka. (SD. III)

Dhīrā is derived thus –

“dhīrā kalapragalbhasamanyanāyikā.” (SD. III)

**Padmāvatī**: Padmāvatī is a princess endowed with personal beauty and high virtues. The Tapasi and Vāsavadatta in the act I and Udayana in act IV and V play very high tributes to her personal charm and noble traits of character.

“nahi rupameva vāgapi khalvasyāḥ madhurā / abhijānānurūpaṁ khalvasyā rūpaṁ / (act I) / “Padmāvatī vahumatā yadyapi rupāśilamādhuryaiḥ / (4th act) kāmaṁ dhīrasvabhāveyaṁ strīsvabhāvasta kātaraḥ”/ (4th act) “rūpasriyā samuditam guṇatasca yuktaṁ” / etc. (5th act) Yaugandharāyaṇa recognizes her merits and says that she is bold and virtuous – “dhīrā kanyeyāṁ dṛṣṭadharmaprācārā” (1st act śloka 9) and hence she is capable of safeguarding the chastity of his sister. In the first act even she impresses as a generous woman with a strong will power. She has great respect for ascetics and expresses her desire to acquire religious merits by giving charities of whatever is needed by the foresters. When the kanchuki points out the difficulties in safeguarding a trust, Padmāvatī says that she must keep her words at any cost. This shows her firm determination and her readiness to take responsibility.
She loves Udayana for his virtues as revealed in the report of the student and not for his physical charm about which she has no personal knowledge. She herself says that she loves him because he is sāṅukroṣa (kind hearted). She feels that Udayana will love her in the same manner as he loved Vāsavadattā. There is an element of childishness in her character which revealed in her play with a ball. The maid and Vāsavadattā freely cut jokes with her. Her simplicity and innocence are revealed by the unsuspecting way in which she accepts the explanations and tears in the eyes of Vāsavadattā.

One striking feature in the character of Padmāvaṭī is the complete absence of jealousy and a clear understanding of Udayana’s feelings. She does not feel envious when Udayana expresses his greater love for Vāsavadattā and says that the king is fair-minded who even now remembers the virtues of the noble lady Vāsavadattā. When the Viduṣaka reminds the king that Vāsavadattā is long dead, she feels consoled: and “ramanīyaḥ khalu kathāyogo niṣāṁsena visarṇaviditaḥ / (4th act) when both the king and the Viduṣaka give a false reason for the tears of the king, she knows the true cause of tears. It is not possible for a woman to be more generous and considerate. Padmāvaṭī is absolutely free from the common feminine weakness of jealousy. Her frankness is revealed when she says that she has already requested Udayana to teach Viṇā and that
he, being reminded of Vāsavadatē did not say anything, but heaved a deep sigh and remaind silent.

Pādmāvatī exhibits a good sense of decency and propriety, in all her actions and behaviour. She hesitates to sit along with the king while receiving the Kāñchukī and the Nurse coming from Ujjayinī because they may feel delicate to convey the massage to Vāsavadattā’s people as her own people expresses her desire to pay her respects to Vāsavadattā in the portrait. After the identification of Vasavadatta she begs her pardon for treating her as a mere friend till then. The way in which she decides whether Āvantikā is Vāsavadattā by calling her Udayana’s portrait and comparing him with the likeness is a good example of her intelligence which is equal to that of Vāsavadattā.

To sum up in the words of Vasantaka, Pādmāvatī is taruṇī, dārśaṇīyā, akopanā, anahaṁkārā, madhuravāk and sadakṣiṇyā. In addition she is also dhīrā and drṣṭadharma-prācārā as stated by Yaugandharāyaṇa. Though we hear of her headache, she does not even go to the room arranged for her. She does not want to make a fuss of small things and trouble others. She has been made the victim of a political strategy and yet she is happy in securing a tender husband in the king and a loving friend in Vāsavadattā.
Before marriage she is reflected as like as the heroine of “parakīyakamīyaḥ”. After marriage she is present as the wife of Udayana. In this condition she is the mixture of “mugdha” and “madhya”.

**Tapasi** : Tapasi is the female hermit of Magadh. She is simple, gentle, evenminded, reserved and wise. She is affectionate and hospitable. She never disappoints any one and became friendly to others. Her heart is full of motherly affection and so she thinks about the marriage of Padmavati. She is judicious, when she sees Vāsavadattā and remarks thus – “since her form is such, she too is a prince, I guess”. (yadr̥ṣyasyāḥ ākṛtirīyamapi rājadariketi tarkayāmi) she is an impartial and ideal ascetic. Kindness, charity, compassion, serving and benevolence are present in her character. The dramatist portraits her as a virtuous and unpretentious ascetic lady.

**Dhātri** : The foster mother of Padrmati is the Dhātri. Although she is foster mother she loved Padrmati as her own child. She loved Udayana also. She is religious and dutiful. She knows the manners and customs prevalent at that time.
**Padminikā and Madhukarikā**: Padminikā and Madhukarikā are the two female servants of Padmāvati. They are very careful in their duties and responsibilities. They can not bear the sorrows of Padmāvati. They are very kind hearted servant. They are benevolent, simple and dutiful. Kindness, affection, love etc. are visible in their characters. They are represented as loving friends though they are maids of Padmāvati.

**Aṃgāravati**: Aṃgāravati, the queen of king Pradyuta and the mother of Vāsavadatta. In the drama she is formless (asārīri). We find her name only in the act VI. She loved Vāsavadatta very much. On hearing Vāsavadatta’s death she never hate Udayana. She send a citrafalaka for performing their marriage. She sends information to Udayana through Vasundhari thus – “Uparatā mama vā mahāsenasya va yadṛṣḍaḥ gopālakapālakau, tādṛṣḍa eva tvam prathamamevabhīpṛetau jāmāteti / etannimittamujjayinīmānītaḥ / anagniraksikaṁ vīnāvyapadesena dattā / ātmamāścapalatayānirvṛttavivāhamangala eva gataḥ / atha cāvābhyaṁ tava ca vāsavadattāyāśca pratikīrtim citrafalakayamālikhya vivāho nirvṛttaḥ / esa citrafalaka tava sakasam preṣītaḥ / etaṁ dṛṣṭvā nirvṛto bhava.”
From the above discussion it may perhaps be said that she is loving, soft-hearted and noble minded woman. So Udayan said about her—

“ahō atisinigdhamanurūpanām ca bhīhitāṁ tatra bhavatyā / 
vākyametāt priyataram rājyalabhaśataśdapi / 
aparāddheśvapi sneho yadasmāsu na vismṛtaḥ.”

(Sv Act VI, sloka 12)

Vasundharā: Vasundharā is the foster mother of Vāsavadattā. She is reliable and her heart is full of love and charity. An act of courteous behaviour is seen in her character. So she goes to inquire about Vāsavadattā. She gives the citraflaka to the king to perform their marriage (Udayana and Vāsavadattā).

Pratihārī (Vijaya): Vijaya is the door-keeper of king Vatsarāja. She is dutiful servant and is sincere to her duties. If anyone asked that who is in the door then she spidily replied – ārya! I am Vijaya what I can do for you? She is very loyal and sagacious woman. She does something to know the mental state of the king. She is very intelligent. She acts according to the proper time and place. So she hesitates to announce the
arrival of Rabhya (chamberlain) and nurse to the king. She said – ārya!
adesakālaḥ pratihārasya. (6th act)

10. **THE URŪBHANGA**: The Urūbhanga is an one act play of
Vyāyoga class. A vyāyoga is defined by Viśvanātha thus –

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“Khyātītīvṛtto vyāyogah svalpastriṇaṃsaṣṭṣnyutah /
hīno garbhavimāraśāḥbhyaṁ naraibahubhirāśrītṛaḥ /
ekānkaśca bhavedstriṇimittasamarodayah /
kaśīkivṛttirahitaḥ prakhyātastatra nāyakaḥ /
rajasiratha divyo vā bhaveddhīroddhātaśca saḥ /
hāsyaśṛṅgāraśantebhya itareatrāṅgino rasāḥ. (SD. 6th ch.)
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The story of the drama is taken from the Gadāparva of the
Mahābhārata. Bhāsa has composed the drama with his own imagination.
We have seen the sentiments such as – Vibhatsa, adbhūta vīra etc and
feelings like krudha, dainya, ḍaṛṣṭa, dayā, vātsalya and vairāgya etc. are
depicted without any conflict among them. The characters are delineated
in a lively way and represented as possessing true traits of human
characters. In the variety and number of characters and in their
delineation Bhāsa can be compared with dramatist like Shakespear.

Originality and skill in the construction of the plot; selection and
delineation of characters, development of sentiments and emotions,
simple and graceful style and insight into the depth, goodness and weaknesses of human characters and behaviour are all well manifested in the development of the plot. Apart from all these merits, the dramatist has observed the three unities – time, place and action – in the Urūbharṇa which are really observed by Sanskrit dramatists. Moreover, the Urūbharṇa has the credit of being the only tragedy in the whole of Sanskrit literature.

The dramatist has delineated only three female characters in Urūbhanga. They are Gāndhārī, Pauravī and Mālavī. Among them Gāndhārī is the prominent and two are subordinate.

**Gāndhārī**: Gāndhārī, mother of Duryodhana and the wife of Dhṛtarāṣṭra has played the pivoted role in the development of the drama. Bhāsa portraits her as a righteous, chaste, glorious, holy and great hearted lady. She knows properly that “where there is virtue there is success” (Yathā dharmastathā jayah). She is a very intelligent lady. Although her patience is unlimited but she becomes afflicted when her son’s thigh was broken. She advised Pauravī and Mālavī to search their husband (aṇyeśāṁ bhartāram). Duryodhana addressed his mother when he is on death bed thus – “if I can earn only a little act of piety then you will be my mother on the following birth –
“Yadi puṇyaṁ mayā kṛtam, anyasyāmapi jātiyām me tvameva janaṁ bhava” (Uṛū śloka 50) Love, charity, affection, liberality etc. are the qualities are manifested in her actions like other mothers.

**Pauravī and Mālavī**: Pauravī and Mālavī are the wives of Duryodhana. They are equally sharing the weal and woe of their husband. Pauravī loved her husband very much, and she wanted to die with him at the same funeral pyre. The dramatist portrayed them as a chaste and virtuous women and devoted wives.

Bhāsa has delineated the female characters in the drama as living being. All the female characters of Bhāsa are so much clear and excellent that they will be immortal in the Sanskrit drama.

The dramas Dūtavākyā, Karṇabhāra and Pañcarātra have no female character.

11. **THE DŪTAVĀKYA** : According to Mm. T. Ganapati Sastri the drama Dūtavākya is a Vyāyoga. In a Vyāyoga there is no sṛngāra, the subject matter will be historical and the hero will be Garvī. All the characteristics of a vyāyoga are present in Dūtavākya. It is an one act play and it is filled with strife and battle, the sṛngāra is totally absent. So the drama Dūtavākya has perhaps no female character.
12. **THE KARṇABHĀRA** : The drama Karṇabhāra cannot be said a vyayoga. Because there is no fight seen in the Karṇabhāra. It is a play of Utsṛṣṭikāṁka class. According to Dr. A.B. Keith the act Utsṛṣṭikāṁka is a single act piece, whose longer style serves to discriminate it from an act of a normal drama. Its subject is taken from legend, but may be developed by the poet. The sentiment is pathos. The laments of woman should accompany the description of battles and fights, but these should not take place on the stage. (A.B. Keith, page 347)

Utsṛṣṭikāṁka is defined in the Daśārūpaka as –

“.utsṛṣṭikāṁka prakhyātam vṛttam prapañcayet.
rasastu karuṇaḥ sthāyi netāraḥ prākṛtā narāḥ.
bhānavatsandhiḥvyāntaryuktāḥ striparidevitaiḥ.
vacā yuddhāṁ vidhātavyam tatha jayaपarājayau. (Daśārūpaka – III)

All these characteristics is seen in the Karṇabhāra. So Bhāsa has not delineated any female character in the Karṇabhāra.

13. **THE PAṆCARĀTRA** : According to Dr. A.B. Keith Paṇcarātra is a samavakāra type of drama. Viśvanātha in his Sāhityadarpaṇa give the definition of samavakāra as –

“vṛttair samavakāre tu khyātaṁ devāsurāśrayam.
sandhayo nirvimarṣastu trayoṅkāstatra cādime. (SD. VI)

The precise duration of each of its three acts is given, at twelve, four, and two nāḍikās (of forty-eight minutes). The subject must be taken from a tale of the gods and demons. The junctures, pause is omitted and the expansion (bindu) as an element of the plot. The members of the heroes may each twelve, each pursuing an object which he attains. The heroic sentiment dominates. Each acts exhibits one type of cheating, tumultuous action and loves the graceful manner is excluded or but faintly developed; the usnīṣh and anustubh meters are appropriate. The description fits but loosely in Bhāsa's Pañcarātra, the only old drama to which that name may plausibly be applied.

"Prādhānyena vyapadesa bhavanti" believing this receptacle this is a samavakāra but Bhāsa doesnot follow the rules of Nāṭyaśāstra. According to some scholars this is one of the vyāyoga. The principal rasa of the drama is vira and the sṛṅgāra rasa is totally absent. So there is no any female character in the pañcarātra.

The poet attentively portrays his dramatic personal in his dramas with great care. He does not invest the characters with superhuman. Every character in his dramas is strongly marked with its own peculiarity and has made to help the development of the plot in its culmination.
We have seen that all the characters placed with human feelings and characteristics. The divinities such as Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā etc. are also the Rākṣasīs and Vāṇaras such as Rāvana, Vāli, Sugrīva etc. are placed before us with human feelings and characteristics.

The 3rd act of Svapna provides a brilliant psychological study and throws further light on the character of Udayana, Padmāvati and Vāsavadattā. The self-sacrificing nature of Vāsavadattā is admirably shown and the tragic irony touches the hearts of readers and audiences.

In the Mahābhārata plays, Bhāsas characters is completely different from the original epic. Duryodhana and Karṇa are presented here in a favourable light. The poet treating Duryodhana as a hero. In Madhyamamavyāyoga the character of Hiḍimbā is portrayed like a Kṣatriya lady.

The Pratimānāṭaka shows all the characters in a more elevated atmosphere than their portrayal in the Rāmāyaṇa. All the characters are delineated a human aspect. We found Sītā an ideal wife, having deep respect for the elders.

In the legendary plays, Bhāsa was presented before us an astonishing variety of personalities. At his hand, the Viduṣaka has lost his stereotypes gluttony. In Svapna, the co-wives, both Vāsavadattā and Padmāvati are free from jealousy and they sacrifice for the sake of their
husband. Udayana also though agreeing to marry again, cherishes the sweet memory of his dead wife (Vāsavadattā) and he never disclosed his painful thoughts before his second wife (Padmāvaṭī). Yougandharāyaṇa is a clever minister ready to give his life for his king.

In Avimāraka, the poet depicted a young hero who falls in love at first sight, which is of course, pure love and at great risk, he meets his beloved who interchange his love.

In Čārudatta, the character of all the ladies are portrayed as a noble, ideal courtesan and their devotion to their husbands.

His every character serves some purpose. There is not one character whom we would depise. Even the minor characters, such as chamberlains or maids are also invested with special individuality.

No doubt Bhasa achieved supreme position as the greatest dramatist in the Indian tradition.

**Foot note:**

1. Nāṭakam khyātavrṇtam syatpancasandhisamanvitam.
   vilāsaddharyādīguṇavadyuktam nānāvibhutibhiḥ.
   sukhaduhkhasamudbhuti nānārasanirantaram.
   pañcādhikā daśaparastātraṇāṁkah parikirtitāḥ.

2. “tāre! vimūṇca vastramaninditāṅgi.”
prasastavaktranayane! kimasi pravṛttā.
sugrīvamadya samare vinipātyamānānam
tam paśya sōṇitapariplutasarvagātraṇ.

(Abhiśekanāṭaka, Act – I, Page 323)

3. bhavetprakarane vṛttam laukikam kavikalpitam

srngāro’ngi nāyakastu vipro’ṃātyo’thavā vaṅk.
sāpāyadharmaṃārthaparo dhīrapaśāntakaḥ.
nāyikā kulajā kvāpi veśyā kvāpi, dvayāṃ kvacit.

4. Vindhyamandarasaro’yam bālah padmadaleksaṇa.
garbhe yayā dhṛtāḥ śṛṅmāṇahoho dhairyā hi yoṣitah.

(Bala – Act I, Sloka – 12)

5. Utsṛṣṭikānka ekāṅko netārahprākṛṭā narāḥ.

raso’tra karupāḥ sthāyi bahustriparidevitam.
prakhatamitiuvrttan ca kaviruddhaya prapancayet.
bhānavatsandhīṛtyanganyasminjayaparājayaū.
yuddhāḥ ca vācā kartavyāḥ nirvedavacanaḥ bahu. (SD. Ch. – VI)


sāpi kathita tribhedā mugdha madhyā pragalbheti.

(SD. Ch – III)