CHAPTER TWO

CATEGORISATION OF FEMALE FIGURES IN THE PLAYS OF BHĀSA AND KĀLIDĀSA

Drama has often been accepted as the mirror of the society. Character and characterisation bear a significant role in a dramatic piece. Perhaps it will not be an exaggeration to say that the success and popularity of a play depends mostly on its characterisation. As the drama belongs to the class of Drṣṭyakāvya, so the dramatists attempt to present before the audience the plot of the drama solely through the performance of the characters. Thus it may be said that characterisation play a vital role in the play, among the various branches of literary composition. The dramatists, in the whole range of Sanskrit literature, showed profound skill in depicting the characters, where importance has been given not only in the delineation of male characterisation but in the female characterisation also. In Sanskrit plays the female figures have been depicted as having vital role in the development of family as well as society.

With reference to the dramatists in Sanskrit literature, the name which possibly comes first in our mind is of Bhāsa, the pioneer of the Sanskrit dramatic literature. A leading role of characterisation is there in the successful handling of Bhāsa’s dramatic art. In his act of picturising the dramatic characters Bhāsa has reached a degree of perfection. A large variety of characters both male and female, are met
with in the thirteen plays of Bhāsa, which are not probably depicted by any other dramatist in the field of Sanskrit dramatic literature.

Another great name in the realm of Sanskrit dramatic literature is Kālidāsa, who probably comes next to Bhāsa, has been often acclaimed as the best of Indian dramatists. In the creation of characters, Kālidāsa showed his extra-ordinary skill. Kālidāsa’s characterisation exhibited in his three plays, is vivid and extensive. All the characters are handled with great care by him. Male and female figures, from every sphere of life have been given proper importance and justice by Kālidāsa.

In this chapter on humble attempt have been made to survey the categorisation of female figures in the plays of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa.

CATEGORISATION OF FEMALE FIGURES IN THE PLAYS OF BHĀSA

In the thirteen plays of Bhāsa, we come across a large variety of characters occurring as many as two hundred and thirty four in number. Such a large number of characters have not been taken from one category only. Full justice has been given by Bhāsa to the people from every strata of society. Not only human beings but other classes such as the Gods, the Vidyādhāras, the demons, the nāgas, the animals, the birds etc. also find a place in the plays of Bhāsa.

Bhāsa exhibits his great skill in depicting the female figures also. Female figures from the upper to the lower strata of society have their respective roles in the plays of the great dramatist. So far
as the number is concerned, a number of sixty female characters under eighteen categories are there in the ten plays of Bhāsa. It may be noted in this context that the remaining three plays of Bhāsa, viz., Pañcarātra, Dūtavākya and Dūtaghaṭotkaca are devoid of female characters. However, the categorisation of these characters may be given under the following heads:

1. Devapatnī (wife of the God).
2. Raksasī (demoness).
3. Rājamāta (mother of the king).
4. Rājapatnī (queen).
5. Rājakumārī (princess).
7. Dhātri (nurse).
8. Gaṇikā (prostitute).
10. Vānarī.
11. Vidyādharī.
13. Pratihārī (door-keeper).
15. Brāhmaṇī.
17. Adhidevatā (presiding deity of the kingdom).
18. Astra (weapon in which personification have been imposed).

The category, number and name of the female characters which occur in the ten plays of Bhāsa, may be shown in the following chart:
| group | svapnavā | pratiṣṭhā | avināśā | cānudatta |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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The plays of Bhāsa show a very extensive classification of the female figures. It seems that the character taken from a particular class has been mostly attributed with the qualities of that particular class. In this context, the name of Sītā in the Pratimānāṭaka may be cited, who belonging to the group of Devapatnī has been fully attributed with divinity. In a like manner, the character of Hidimbā coming under the 'Rākṣasī' group, has been shown by Bhāsa with all the devilish flaws and merits.

It appears that, while classifying and characterising the female figures in his plays, Bhāsa more or less has followed the rules of dramaturgy. In this connection, an example may be cited. In the character of Vāsavādattā, the heroine of the play Svapnavāsavādatta, the features of the Prośitabhartrkā heroine can be met with. Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra, defines the Prośitabhartrkā type of heroine as a love-lorn wife, whose husband resides at a distant place for accomplishing various works¹. King Udayana, the husband of Vāsavādattā has gone out side, so the term Prośitabhartrkā is used to designate her².

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1. Nāṭya, 22, 219.
2. iyam me svasā prośitabhartrkāmīmīmicchāmyatrabhayatā kañcit kālaṁ paripālyamānām- Svap, Act I.
One of the important aspects of Bhāsa's female characterisation is the attribution of womanhood. So the quality of an ideal and devoted wife can be met with in both the characters of Vāsavadattā and Tārā, in spite of the fact that the latter belongs to the group of monkey. In the Svapnavāsaavadatta it may strike the mind of the readers, when Vāsavadattā spends a long valuable period of her life in exilement and faces boundless sufferings only to bring about the marriage of her husband Udayana with Padmāvatī. Vāsavadattā sacrifices all her personal happiness including her husband only for the well being of her husband and his kingdom. Tārā in the Abhisekanāṭaka also, leaves before us the impression of an ideal wife fully devoted to her husband. When Sugrīva along with Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān, has invited Vālīn for fight; Vālīn accepting the challenge become ready to exit. Then Tārā apprehending danger for her husband again and again requests him not to go. But Vālīn turns a deaf ear to her requests and asks her to go inside. Then Tārā goes away regretting over her destiny alone.3

Another significant feature of female characterisation, which we come across in the plays of Bhāsa is the idealisation and elevation of the characters. So probably for this purpose, Bhāsa goes for bringing a change in the original popular story even. The name of Kaikeyī in the Pratimānāṭaka may be referred to in this connection. In the popular story of the Rāmāyaṇa it is found that Kaikeyī, only with a motive of

3. Tārā-eṣā gacchāmi mandabhāgā- Abhi, Act I.
self-interest i.e., to extol Bharata on the throne, demanded Rama’s exilement in to the forest. But Bhāsa, only to expel her ill-reputation and with the sole interest to elevate her, gives some other reasons behind the demand of Kaikeyī, where it is shown that Kaikeyī wants such a boon only in order to operate the curse of a sage⁴.

Another aspect of Bhāsa’s characterisation of female figures is that women are found in their various roles, such as the mother, the wife, the maiden and the like. And all of them are unique and ideal in their respective fields. Thus we find Aṅgāravatī as a perfect mother, Vāsavadattā as a perfect wife and Kuraṅgī as a perfect maiden. As for instance the case of Kuraṅgī may be cited. It is true that now a days there is no king or kingdom. So, Kuraṅgī as a princess seems irrelevant in the present society. But as a maiden or as a lover, she is still relevant.

Love is universal. It knows no limit. Irrespective of rich or poor love can have its influence on any one. Thus it is seen that, Kuraṅgī in spite of being a princess, falls in love with a caṇḍāla youth Avimāraka (though in reality he is the accursed prince Viṣṇusena). In her path of love she faces various obstacles. But ultimately she wins the laurels: Here Kuraṅgī has not been depicted as a princess, but as a common girl of our society.

⁴ Pratimā, VI, 15.
With regard to the most appealing aspect of female characterisation of Bhāsa, is the desire to sacrifice. Here, the role of Vāsavadattā, the heroine of the play Svapnavāsavadatta can be cited. Vāsavadattā has been depicted by Bhāsa as a female figure, who does not hesitate to sacrifice everything and even her dearest one for the sake of the greater interest, which is very rare in our society even in the present century also.

To comprehend the various aspects of Bhāsa’s characterisation of the female figures, it requires a thorough analysis of the female roles occurring in the plays of the dramatist. Here we would like to analyse the female characters coming under different categories, as depicted in the plays of Bhāsa.

**THE SVAPNAVASAVADATTA**

Vāsavadattā :- Vāsavadattā, the dear wife of Vatsraya Udayana is the heroine of the play Svapnavāsavadattā. In her character the ideal Indian womanhood, a lovely picture of unique beauty and love is found in one hand and self-sacrificing nature on the other.

Vāsavadattā is born of a royal family. She is the beloved daughter of king Pradyota Mahāsena and queen Aṅgāravatī. So, it is quite natural that she is beautiful like any other maiden of an aristocratic family. This is evident from the statement of Udayana - “With the burden of wedlock come upon me again, in course of time, I brood over that
laudable (Vāsavadattā), the worthy daughter of a worthy sire, whose slender frame was consumed by the fire at Lāvānaka, like a lotus-plant blasted by the frost” ⁵

In Vāsavadattā we can met with the characteristic features of various kinds of heroines such as the Abhyantarā, Mahādevī, Proṣitabhartrkā etc., as depicted in the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata. According to Bharata the heroine born of an aristocratic family is known as the Abhyantarā nāyikā⁶. Vāsavadattā is born of a royal family and so she can be termed as an Abhyantarā⁷. That lady is known as a Mahādevī who is coronated with the king, who belongs to a high race and having a good nature, possesses all the qualities, having installed in a high position, devoid of anger and envy, equal in happiness and sorrow, wishes the well-being of her husband, calm and quiet, chaste and busy in doing the welfare of the inner apartment⁸. In the character of Vāsavadattā most of the qualities of a Mahādevī can be met with. Vāsavadattā belongs to a high lineage. She is devoid of envy. When for the first time she meets Padmāvatī, she feels sisterly affection for her⁹. Vāsavadattā is a devoted wife who always desires

5. Udayana- ślaghyāmavantinipateḥ sadṛśiṁtanujāṁ kālakrameṇa punarāgataśarabhārah/ lāvānake hutavahena ārtaṅgayastīṁ tāṁ padminerī himahatāṁiva cintayāmi/& Svap,V,1.
7. Tāpas-ya īḍṛśyāsā ākṛtiḥ, iyamapi rājadāriketī tarkayāmi- Svap, Act I.
9. Vāsavadattā- rājadāriketī śrutvā bhaginikāsneho’pi me’tra sampadyate – Svap, Act I.
the well-being of her husband. She is also gentle and kind-hearted\textsuperscript{10}. All these can make Vāsavadattā entitled as a Mahādevī. The character of Vāsavadattā also conforms to the title of a Prośītabhartṛkā heroine, which has been discussed earlier in the present chapter.

Vāsavadattā is not only beautiful but she is also endowed with many good qualities. She has a sisterly affection for Padmāvatī, her co-wife. From the very first sight of Padmāvatī, Vāsavadattā feels in her heart sisterly affection and love for her\textsuperscript{11}. This friendship does not fade up even after Padmāvatī’s marriage with Udayana. Vāsavadattā praises Padmāvatī’s beauty and speech also\textsuperscript{12}.

It seems that Vāsavadattā is at home in stringing garlands, for which she has been instructed with the task of wreathing the wedding-garland of Padmāvatī\textsuperscript{13}. Vāsavadattā is also at home in playing the lute, which she learnt from her husband Udayana. She is kind to her husband’s near and dear ones and has faith on them. It is because of her trust on Yaugandharāyaṇa that she makes up her mind to help

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{10}]
  Yaugandharāyaṇa- prakṛtyā sānukroṣṭā me bhaginī- Svap, Act I.

  \item[\textsuperscript{11}]
  Vide, Ref. no. 9.

  \item[\textsuperscript{12}]
  Vāsavadattā- abhijānānurūparāṁ khalvasyā rūpam; na he rūpameva vāgapi khalvasyā madhurā- Svap, Act I.

  \item[\textsuperscript{13}]
  Cetā- asmākaṁ bhaṭṭinī bhaṇatī mahākulaprasūtā snigdhā nipuṇeti imāṁ távat kautukamālikāṁ gumphatvāryā- Svap, Act III.
\end{itemize}
him in his plan of action. Vāśavadattā is modest too. When her acquaintance has come to light at the end of the play, Padmāvatī makes obesience to her because of her treating Vāśavadattā as a friend due to her ignorance. To this Vāśavadattā says that if Padmāvatī begs pardon to her, then her body belonging to a suppliant would be guilty to Padmāvatī\textsuperscript{14}.

Vāśavadattā possesses intelligence and ready-wit also. Addressing Padmāvatī as the "would be daughter-in-law of Mahāsena"\textsuperscript{15} she, very cleverly, gathers information from the maid that Padmāvatī desires to marry Udayana and not Gopālaka. Because of her extraordinary love for her husband, she often puts herself in very delicate situations but extricates herself by her ready wit. In one place she inattentively says that Udayana is quite handsome, and when Padmāvatī asks how she knows it, she says that the people of Ujjayinī say so,\textsuperscript{16} thereby appearing to be a convincing explanation. Again when she says that Vāśavadattā loved Udayana more than Padmāvatī, Padmāvatī asks how she knows that and here also she shows her ready-wit by her reply- "Had her love been slight she would not have forsaken her relatives"\textsuperscript{17}.

\begin{itemize}
\item[14.] Vāśavadattā- arthisvarh nāma Śarīram aparādhyaśi Svap, Act VI.
\item[15.] Vāśavadattā- esāśmi tūṣṇikā bhaviṣyanmahāsenavadhūḥ - Svap, Act II.
\item[16.] Vāśavadattā- nahi nahi ī darśāḥya eva ī.
Padmāvatī- īryel' kathāṁ tvaṁ jānāśi?- Vāśavadattā- evamūjjayiniyo jano mantrayate- Svap, Act II.
\item[17.] Vāśavadattā- yadyalpah snehāḥ sā svajanaṁ na parityajati! Svap, Act IV.
\end{itemize}
But the self-sacrificing nature of Vāsavadattā surpasses all her merits and beauty. Vāsavadattā is beautiful in form and merit but singular in her sacrifice. For the well-being of her husband and his kingdom she sacrifices all her happiness and spends a long period of time in disguise. Vāsavadattā has intense love for Udayana, her husband. He is dearer to her life even. That is why hearing the mournful condition of Udayana, at the false rumour of Vāsavadattā’s death, she cannot control her tears\textsuperscript{18}. Although Vāsavadattā accepts Padmāvatī as her co-wife, she cannot make her mind to believe that Udayana, her dearest husband would belong to another lady. Time and again she is regretting over her fate. As a devoted wife Vāsavadattā can not think even for a moment that, her husband would be attached to another woman\textsuperscript{19}. When Udayana confesses to his jester that though he loves Padmāvatī for her beauty and character, still she is unable to win his heart set on Vāsavadattā, she becomes supremely happy and feels as if she has regained the salary of her sufferings and sacrifice\textsuperscript{20}.

Vāsavadattā’s thoughts has been found as always centred on Udayana. She feels very sorry on hearing that Padmāvatī has fallen ill, because her husband, distressed with separation, lost thereby a

\textsuperscript{18} Ceti-bhartṛdārike, roditi khalviyamāryā- Svap, Act I.

\textsuperscript{19} Vāsavadattā- aho atyāhitarn  āryaputo’pi nāma parakīyaḥ samvṛttah- Svap, Act III.

\textsuperscript{20} Vāsavadattā- bhavatu bhavatu  dattaṁ vetanamasya parikhedasya aho ajñātavāso’pyatra vahugunaḥ sampadyate- Svap, Act IV.
source of consolation\textsuperscript{21}. All through the long period of separation from her dearest one, Vāsavadattā surrendered herself completely to her destiny. During this period she has suffered much grief and humiliation. But she endures all these patiently, only for the well-being of her husband and his kingdom. Her silent suffering undoubtedly draws sympathy of all human beings.

By the glory of self-sacrifice, by firmness of patience and the touch of human feelings, Bhāsa portrays Vāsavadattā as a ideal Indian woman. Her character reminds the reader again and again of the fact that sacrifice is the another name of real love. She is really an unique and a perfect blending of divinity and humanity and herein lies the skill of Bhasa.

Padmāvatī:- Padmāvatī, the sister of Magadharāja Darśaka, is a born princess. She is endowed with personal charm, innocence and high-virtues. Padmāvatī is very beautiful. She is often praised for her beauty. Vāsavadattā, while seeing Padmāvatī remarks, “Her beauty is, indeed befitting to her noble birth”\textsuperscript{22}. In another place she says, “Not only her form, but her speech also is, indeed, charming”\textsuperscript{23}. King Udayana also praises her beauty, “Although Padmāvatī is highly regarded by me on account of her personal charms, character and sweetness, still she does not win my heart set on Vāsavadattā”\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{21} Vāsavadattā- aho akarunāḥ khalviśvarā me virahaparyutsukāśrayaputrasya viśramasthānabhūteyamapi nāma padmāvatyasvasthā jātā - Svap, Act V.

\textsuperscript{22} Vāsavadattā- abhijanānurūpaṁ khalvasyaṁ rūpam - Svap, Act I.

\textsuperscript{23} Vāsavadattā- na hi rūpameva vāgapi khalvasyaṁ madhurā - Svap, Act I.

\textsuperscript{24} Raja- padmāvatīvahumatā mama yadapi rūpasīlamādhuryaiṁ/ vāsavadattāvaddham na tu tāvanme mano harati// Svap, IV, 4.
In the character of Padmāvatī we can find the characteristic features of different types of heroines such as the Devasīthā, Svādhīnabhartrkā etc. as described by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra. Devasīthā is that type of heroine whose limbs are smooth, who is calm and quiet in nature, moves the eyelids slowly, never effected by disease, in whom there is wonder, who is bountiful, in whom there is the expression of satva quality and less sweating, who eats little, who loves scented flowers and fond of by others.

In the character of Padmāvatī some of the above features have been revealed. Padmāvatī is very beautiful with smooth limbs and attached with wonder. The description of her beauty and charm have been mentioned earlier. She is mild by nature. Her gentle and mild character is reflected in the speech of the king—"This young lady, newly married, will feel pain on hearing the truth; granted that she is noble-minded, but still woman is generally timid by nature". Padmāvatī is bountiful. In the Svapnavāsavadatta we met with the description of Padmāvatī's bestowing wealth and other things for religious deeds.

Padmāvatī is also loved by everyone surrounding her. The characteristic features of the Svādhīnabhartrkā heroine can also be found in the character of Padmāvatī. According to Bharata Svādhīnabhartrkā is a kind of heroine, whose husband always remains by her side being

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25. Nāṭya, 22, 102-103.

26. Raja-

27. Kāñcukīyaḥ—bhuh bhoh āśramavāsinastapasvinah śṛṃvantu śṛṃvantu bhavantah, iḥātrabhavati, magadharājaṃ putrī, anena visramāhenotpādita-viṣram bhā dharmaḥ ērtham arthenopaniṣṭhayaḥ

kasyārthah kalaśena ko mrgayate vāso yathāniścitaṁ
dīkṣāṁ pāritavāṁ kimiścetaṁ punardeyaṁ guroryād bhavet/
ātmānugrahamicchatiḥ na pañcā dharma-bhirāmapriyā
yad yasyāsti samipṣitaṁ vadatu tat kasyādya kim diyataṁ/

Svap, I, 8.
attracted by her attachment, beauty and merit\textsuperscript{28}. Padmāvatī is very much loved by her husband Udayana for her beauty and merit, and he feels sorry without her company\textsuperscript{29}.

Padmāvatī attracts everyone not only for her personal beauty and charm but for various qualities also. According to Vidūṣaka Padmāvatī is the storehouse of all noble qualities like gentleness, pridelessness, gentle-speaking and courteousness\textsuperscript{30}. Padmāvatī is also very pious. It is evident from the speech of Kāṅcukīya (chamberlain), who describes her as ‘friend of the righteous’\textsuperscript{31}.

Yaugandharāyaṇa also speaks about her thus “This noble minded princess, whose observance of religious duties is seen”\textsuperscript{32}. She is a high minded and dutiful princess. When she enters the hermitage, she gives her assurance to fulfil the prayer of everyone present. And hearing this Yaugandharāyaṇa wants to keep Vāsavadattā under the custody of Padmāvatī. Padmāvatī at once gives her consent to the prayer of Yaugandharāyaṇa. Though the chamberlain tries to alert her by saying that, the task of guarding a deposit is very hard,\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Nāṭya, 22, 215.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Rājā- bhoḥ kaśtam!
 rūpaśriyā samuditaṁ guṇataśca yuṣṭāṁ
lavdhvā priyāṁ mama tu manda ivādyā śokaṁ/
purvābhīghātasarojopanyābhūtaduṣṭhaṁ
padmāvatīṁapi tathaiva samarthaiyāṁi/
Śvap, V, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Vidūṣaka- padmāvatī tarunī darśāniyā akopanā anahārīkārā madhuravāk sadāksinyā- Śvap, Act IV.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Vide, Ref. no.27.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Yaugandharāyaṇa - dhīrā kanyeyam drṣṭadharma pracaṁrā...// Śvap, I, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Kāṅcukīyaḥ-
sukhamartha bhaved dātum sukhaṁ prāṇāṁ sukhaṁ tapaḥ/
sukhamanyad bhavet sarvam duḥkhaṁ nyāsasya rakṣānam// Śvap, I, 10.
\end{enumerate}
Padmāvatī says that she must keep her word at any cost. This shows her firm determination and readiness to perform responsibility.

From the episode of Brahmacārī the deep love of Udayana for Vāsavadattā, and the compassionate heart of Udayana can be ascertained. This quality of Udayana attracts Padmāvatī towards him. She loves Udayana for his kind-heartedness and not for his physical charm.

Padmāvatī is simple and innocent too. The way in which she believes the explanations of Vāsavadattā for her inadvertent remarks about Udayana and cause of tears in her eyes, reveals Padmāvatī's simplicity and innocence.

What strikes us most in Padmāvatī's character is the complete absence of jealousy for her co-wife, and a clear understanding of Udayāna's feelings. She knows Vāsavadattā as her co-wife, but not for a single occasion Padmāvatī's envy for her co-wife has been

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34. Brahmacārī- 
naivedāṁ tādṛścakravākā naivāpyanye strīviśeṣairviyuktāḥ/ 
dhanīyā sā strī yāṁ tathā vetti bhartā bhartṛśneḥāt sā hi dagdhāpyadagdhaḥ// 
Svap, I, 13.

35. Cetā- bharṭrdaṅkike! kim nu khalvaparā strī tasya hastāṁ gamisyati? 
Padmāvatī (ātmagatam)-mama hṛdayenaiva saha mantritam- Svap, Act I.

36. Padmāvatī- yathā mamāryapuratratathaiśvāryāyā vāsavadattāyā iti. 
Vāsavadattā- aṭo’pyadhikam. 
Padmāvatī- katham tvaṁ jānāśi? 
Vāsavadattā (ātmagatam) - ham aṛyaputrapaśṭaśekṣaṇatāḥ samudācaraḥ. 
evam tāvad bhanisyāmi (prakāśam) yadyalpaḥ snehah sā svajanaṁ na 
parityajati! 
Padmavatī- bhavitavyamī. 

.............................
Cetā- bharṭrdaṅkike! sāśrupātā khalvāryāyā drśṭiḥ. 
Vāsavadattā- eṣā khalu madhukaraṇāmavīnaryāt kāśakusumareṇūnā patitena 
sodakā me drśṭiḥ. 
Padmāvatī- yuṣyate - Svap, Act IV.
expressed. After her marriage with Udayana, when the latter in course of conversation with Vasantaka confesses his greater love for Vāsavadattā, Padmāvatī does not feel offended rather she says that the king is fair-minded, since he remembers even now the virtues of the noble Vāsavadattā. On another occasion when both Udayana and Vidūṣaka give a false reason for the tears of the king, Padmāvatī does not take them to task in spite of the fact that she knows the true cause of the tears, which is perhaps not possible for a woman to be more good, generous and considerate than this. Here it appears that, by her magnanimity Padmāvatī sometimes surpasses Vāsavadattā even to some extent.

Padmāvatī shows a good sense of decency in all her action and behaviour. She treats Vāsavadattā’s relatives as her own relatives, and behaves with them in a nice and sweet manner. When the picture-board, containing the portraits of the king and Vāsavadattā is presented to the king, Padmāvatī looking at the board, desires to pay her respects to Vāsavadattā in the portrait. After the identification of Vāsavadattā, Padmāvatī falls at her feet, and begs her forgiveness for treating her

37. Padmāvatī- sadākṣīṇya evāryaputraḥ ya idāniṁmaṇipṛīyāyā vāsavadattāyā guṇān smarati- Svap, Act IV.
38. Svap, Act IV.
39. Padmāvatī- ariyaputra! priyaṁ me jñātikulasya kuśalavṛttāntam śrotum - Svap, Act VI.
40. Padmāvatī- ariyaputra! citragataṁ gurujanaṁ dṛṣṭvābhivādayitumicchami- Svap, Act VI.
as a mere friend till then, due to her ignorance of Vāsavadattā’s real character\(^{41}\).

In short, it may be said that, Bhāsa’s Padmāvatī with her beauty, merit and magnanimity, will find a place in the heart of the readers. It seems that Bhāsa wants to portrait an ideal co-wife, and he really succeeded in creating such a character in Padmāvatī. In the present day society it is hard to obtain a woman like Padmāvatī. But it can not be said that Padmāvatī is totally irrelevant or unnecessary in the present society. It may be said that in this decaying age, female figure like Padmāvatī, having high morals may have a vital role in moulding the society.

Apart from these principal female characters, the other who have a prominent place in the play Svapnavāsavadatta are the three maid servants of Padmāvatī viz., Ceti, Padminikā and Madhukarikā. All of them are faithful and devoted attendants of their mistress Padmāvatī.

Ceti :- Though a maid servant, Ceti appears to be a real companion of Padmāvatī. She loves Padmāvatī heartily, which is evident from her conversation with Vāsavadattā\(^{42}\). When Padmāvatī playing the ‘Kandukakriḍā’ for a long time, does not want to play more, Ceti, out of her love for Padmāvatī encourages her to play and enjoy the charming time of maidenhood; because this might not be possible after her marriage\(^{43}\). Ceti is also an appreciator of the quality of

\(^{41}\) Padmāvatī- ārye! sakhīnasamudācārenājānātyātikrāntaḥ samudācāraḥ tacchīrśeṣaḥ prasādayāmi- Svap, Act VI.

\(^{42}\) Ceti- āmādrīsto bhartṛdārikāyāḥ snehenāśmākaraṁ kautūhalena ca- Svap, Act III.

\(^{43}\) Ceti- kriḍatu kriḍatu tāvat bhartṛdārikā nirvartyatāṁ tāvadayaṁ kanyābhāvaramanīyaḥ kālaḥ – Svap, Act II.

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Padmāvatī. She praises the style of talk of her mistress, by which Padmāvatī expresses her love for her husband Udayana. In another occasion when Padmāvatī is firm in her decision to take the charge of Vāsavadattā, Cetī prays for her long life. Cetī is intelligent too. When Padmāvatī along with Vāsavadattā wishes to avoid the sight of the king, who is about to enter in the Mādhavī bower, Cetī immediately makes out a plan. Accordingly she shakes the principal creeper that has bees lurking in it and thereby prevents the king from entering the bower. When Padmāvatī is suffering from headache, she becomes anxious and quickly brings ointment for her remedy.

In brief we can say that the Cetī is a true friend and attendant of Padmāvatī, who helps her mistress in every situation and gives her company in happiness as well as in pain.

Padminikā and Madhukarikā :- These two girls, like the Cetī are the reliable and helpful attendants of princess Padmāvatī. They appear in the play for a single occasion, but still they share the sympathy of the readers and the audience. At the time of Padmāvatī’s illness both of them show their serious concern for their mistress, and try to arrange every possible measures for her quick recovery. When

44. Cetī- abhijātaṁ khalu bhartṛdārikayā mantritāṁ priyo me bharteti- Svap, Acč IV.
45. Cetī- ciram jīvatu bhartṛdānikaivaṁ satyavādinī- Svap, Act I.
46. Cetī- bhartṛdārike! ruddhāṁ khalu sma-vayam- Svap, Act IV.
47. Cetī- drḍaṁ khalu bhartṛdārikā śīrṣavedanayā duḥkhita; ............... yāvadahamapi śīrṣānulepanam tvarayāmi- Svap, Act V.
Padminikā informs Madhukarikā that Padmāvatī is suffering from serious headache, Madhukarikā feels very sorry. Padminikā requests Madhukarikā to go and call on Vāsavadattā, because she might dispel the pain of headache of Padmāvatī by telling her sweet stories. Madhukarikā agrees on this and goes to bring Vāsavadattā. Padminikā also goes in search of Vidūśaka, so that he may inform the king about Padmāvatī’s illness. And finding Vidūśaka in her way she gives the message and then quickly proceeds to bring ointment for giving relief to Padmāvatī’s headache.

Indeed Padminikā and Madhukarikā are the ideal, obedient and loving attendants of Padmāvatī. They are sincere enough in their service towards their mistress.

Among the other female characters met with in the Svapnavāsavadattā are the two Dhatrīs; one is the Dhatrī or nurse of princess Padmāvatī and the other, Vasundharā by name is the nurse of Vāsavadattā.

It seems that the nurse has true love and affection for Padmāvatī. The news of the plan of Padmāvatī’s marriage with Vatsarāja Udayana,

48. Padminikā- halā! kি m na jānāsi tvaṁ bhaṛṭḍārikā padmāvatī śīrṣāvedanaya duḥkhiteti? Madhukarikā- hā dhik- Svap, Act V.
49. Padminikā- sā, khalvidānim madhurābhīḥ kathābhīr bhaṛṭḍārikāyāḥ śīrṣāvedanaṁ vinodayaḥ Svap, Act V.
50. Madhukarikā- yujyate......; evaṁ bhavatu- Svap, Act V.
51. Padminikā- tena hi bhaṛtre nivedayainām yāvadahamapi śīrṣānulepanāṁ tvarayāmi- Svap, Act V.
gives her immense pleasure. Her remark that the heart of great men being tender are greatly overpowered by sorrow, but are easily consoled or restored to their natural peace, because they attach the highest importance to the teaching of the Śāstras, goes to prove that the nurse has good amount of knowledge about the worldly affairs.

The other Dātrī viz, Vasundhārā is the nurse of Vāsavadattā. She belongs to the Avantī country and sent by Angāravatī to Udayana in the Magadha kingdom. Her conduct is in accordance with her association with the royal palace, and also reflects her affectionate nature. She gives solace to the king Udayana. Her behaviour towards Padmāvatī is full of affection.

The character of Tāpasī or the female ascetic who is an inhabitant of the hermitage, and Vijoyā, the doorkeeper of the Magadha palace are two minor female figures in the play Svapnāvasavadatta. They appear before us only in name, and probably played no significant role in the dramatic development of the play.

THE PRATIJÑĀYAUGANDHARĀYAṆA

Devi Āṅgāravatī: -The only prominent female figure which is met with

52. Dātrī- Jayatu bhartrārike dattasi- Svap, Act II.

53. Dātrī- aryē āgamapradhānāni sulabhaparyavasthaṅānāi mahāpurusahṛdayāṇi bhavanti- Svap, Act II.

54. Dātrī- medānīṁ bharatīmātraṁ saṁtaptum- Svap, Act VI.

55. Dātrī- paśyatu paśyatu bhartrārikā- Svap, Act VI.
in the Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa, is Devī An胃肠ravatī. She has been portrayed by Bhāsa as an ideal mother. She is the queen consort of Pradyota Mahāsena and the mother of Vāsavadattā. Mahāsena becomes much anxious about the marriage of Vāsavadattā, who is in her youth. Marriage proposals are coming from the kings of different countries. But he fails to choose the suitable match for his daughter. So he wants to discuss with An胃肠ravatī, his wife on this issue. Accordingly she is called by the chamberlain. In course of their conversation when Mahāsena tells about the marriage of Vāsavadattā, An胃肠ravatī unmindfully says that it is the time of marriage of their daughter. But actually she intended to say that the time of marriage of their daughter has not yet come. Further An胃肠ravatī says that she desires the marriage of her daughter, but the feelings of separation gives her pain. Here her condition as a mother has been beautifully expressed by the king himself "If the daughter is not given to marriage, then it becomes a cause of shame for the mother and when she is given to marriage, mother's mind become full of sorrow. Thus staying in between duty and affection mothers suffer a lot". This aspect of the character of An胃肠ravatī as mother is really striking one.

An胃肠ravatī is intelligent and acquainted with the reality of the worldly affairs. Thus in course of their conversation when Mahāsena informs the queen that several kings are coming with the desire of

56. Devī- ham esa idānīṁ me dārikāyāḥ kālaḥ- Prat. Yau, Act II.

57. adattetyāgatā lajja datteti vyāthitaṁ manah/ dharmasnehāntare nyastā duhkhitāh khalu mātarah//

making marital relation with him, Āṅgāravr̥t̥ī gives her opinion that it is not necessary to tell in detail, but he should give the hand of their daughter to that king for which they should not get repented. This statement of the queen reflects her knowledge about the reality. At the end of their long conversation, Āṅgāravr̥t̥ī again requests the king not to make hasty decision about the marriage of their daughter for she is still a girl. By this feelings of the heart of Āṅgāravr̥t̥ī, Bhāsa appears to depict the heart of the mother of all the ages.

Vijoyā :- Apart from Āṅgāravr̥t̥ī, the other female character found in this play is Vijoyā. She is the Pratihārī or portress of the king Udayana. She conforms the characteristic features of the Pratihārī as defined by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra. According to Bharata, one who has the knowledge of the matter of alliance and fight and reports various matters in front of the king is called Pratihārī. At the absence of the king she obeys the orders of the primeminister Yaugandharāyaṇa, and reported his message to the royal mother with utmost sincerity. She also proceeds to show the way of Yaugandharāyaṇa when he wants to meet the royal mother. In brief it can be said that Vijoyā is a sincere and obedient attendant to the royal house, who performs her duty with patience and sincerity.

58. Devi kimidanīṃ vistareṇa i yatra dattvā na santapyāmahe, tatra dīyatāṃ- Prat. Yau, Act II.
59. Devi alamidanīṃ tvaritvā i vālā me dārikā- Prat. Yau, Act II.
60. Nāṭya, 24, 59-60.
61. Prat. Yau, Act I.
62. Yaugandharāyaṇa- vijoyel gacchāgrataḥ .
   Pratihārī- aryāl tathā- Prat. Yau, Act I.
**THE AVIMĀRAKA**

**Sudarśanā:-** Sudarśanā is the wife of Kāśīrāja and the mother of Jayavarmā and Avimāraka. She has arrived in the Kuntībhoja city for arranging the marriage of her son Jayavarmā with Kuraṅgī, the daughter of Kuntībhoja. Bhāsa has not delineated her character in detail. Still she appears before us as an affectionate mother. Avimāraka is her own son. But Sudarśanā gives him to her younger sister Sucetanā, who has lost her son at the time of her delivery. After an interval of long years when Sudarśanā meets her son Avimāraka with her son-in-law Kuraṅgī, she blesses him to live long and embracing her son she says that she has got the delight of the birth of son on this very day. This shows the presence of the features of a good mother in the character of Sudarśanā.

**Devi:-** Devi is the queen of the king Kuntībhoja, and the mother of Kuraṅgī. She makes her appearance on the dramatic scene by the invitation of Kuntībhoja, her husband. She is concerned about the matter of her daughter. Hearing the news that her daughter who was returning from the park, has been attacked by a mad elephant, she becomes very anxious. While Kauṅjāyana says that a low-caste youth has come forward and saved the life of Kuraṅgī, the queen can not believe that a low-born could become so kind-hearted. This

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63. Sudarśanā- putra! ciraṁ jīvaitayā saha (pariṣvajya) cireṇa dṛṣṭo'śi adya mayānubhūtaḥ putrasaṁpattirasaḥ (roditi)- Avi, Act VI.

64. Devi - mahārāja! akuliṇah kathamevaṁ sānukrośo bhavet - Avi, Act I.
attitude of the queen perhaps reflects her favouritism towards the 
saver of her daughter, and also the tenderness and the appreciating 
nature to the quality of others. It is also found that the queen enters 
the inner-house for giving assurance to her daughter after getting the 
permission of the king. Here in her character both wifehood and 
motherhood have been revealed at the same time.

Kuraŋgī:- The most significant female figure in the play Āvimāraka is 
Kuraŋgī. She is the heroine of the play and the daughter of the king 
Kuntībhoja. In her character the dramatist depicts the picture of a 
guileless maiden, full of beauty and youth. She is naturally very 
charming and therefore any ornamentation or decoration seems 
unnecessary for her.

Kuraŋgī is at her marriageable age and so her parents have 
been worried about her marriage. During this period one day when 
Kuraŋgī is wondering in a public garden, a mad elephant attacks her. 
Out of great fear the people present there run away swiftly from that 
place. But an unknown young-man comes forward and rescues Kuraŋgī 
from that mad elephant. This youth is no other than Avimāraka, the 
hero of the play. He is the son of the king Sauvīrarāja but by the 
curse of the sage Caṇḍabhaṅgava, Sauvīrarāja along with his family

65. Rājā - devī | tvamabhyantram praviṣṭayāsvāsaya kuraṅgīṁ | ahamapy - 
anupadamāgamisyāmi | 
Devī - yanmahārāja ājñāpayati -Avi, Act I.

66. Yilāsinī - ha khālu ākrītireva bhartrīdārikāyā alaṅkāra iti bhāṇāmi ; 
svabhāvaramanḍīyāni maṇḍitānyatāramanḍīyāni bhavanti - Avi, Act IV.
members is living the life of candala for one year.

Since this very incident Kuraṅgī has fallen deeply in love with Avimāraka. Kuraṅgī has no knowledge about the race and profession of Avimāraka, but still she gives her heart to him. She has been impressed by his bodily splendour, martial valour, delicacy and strength. These are enough for Kuraṅgī for falling in love with Avimāraka. She doesn’t care for the wealth or family status of Avimāraka, but wishes to obtain the heart of her lover only. Through this approach of Kuraṅgī, Bhāsa appears to reveal his outlook regarding ideal love of the female figures.

Kuraṅgī’s love for Avimāraka is very intense. She can not bear separation from him even for a moment. But in spite of her mental condition, she does not cross the limit of modesty. Thus it is found in the play that when Kuraṅgī for the first time embraces Avimāraka unintentionally instead of her maid Nalinikā, she becomes very abashed and exclaims that her reputation is spoilt.

The love-knot between Kuraṅgī and Avimāraka is very strong. Kuraṅgī can not think of giving a place to anybody else in her heart, other than Avimāraka, her sweetheart. This is perhaps the reason that, when she was informed by Māgadhikā that the king Kuntībhoja has decided to accept the marriage proposal of prince Jayavarmā for Kuraṅgī, her mind can not accept this.

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67. Kuraṅgī(śasambhramam)- hā hīnaṁ cāritram | bhītāsmi- Avī, Act III.
68. Kuraṅgī (ātmagatam)- etadalikam | ahamātmanaḥ prabhavāmi - Avī, Act III.
Kuraṅgī’s love for Avimāraka is deep-rooted. At the sudden separation of Avimāraka, after a period of one year, Kuraṅgī being afraid of and ashamed on the one hand and effected by the pangs of separation on the other, remains in a sorrowful condition. This has been beautifully expressed through the words of Avimāraka. Ever since her separation from her lover Avimāraka, Kuraṅgī becomes more afflicted. The pang of separation is becoming intolerable for her. In such an unbearable condition she, wishing to get relief, tries to kill herself by fasting her upper garment tightly round her neck.

In short, it may be said that Bhāsa, through the different attitude of the character of Kuraṅgī, depicted the true love of an young maiden. The most striking thing which is revealed by the dramatist, is the universal aspect of love. Love knows no limit. Irrespective of rich and poor, love can make its influence on anybody. Thus, it is seen that Kuraṅgī, in spite of being a princess, loves Avimāraka, a caṇḍāla youth (though in reality he is a accursed prince). In her path of love she faces various obstacles. But ultimately she wins the laurels. It appears here that Kuraṅgī represents the common maiden of our society.

69. Avimāraka -
hiṁśa bhavet preṣyajana-pravāda-dairbhītā ca rājāḥ dṛḍhasanniruddhā /
vāśpāvila māma-havekṣaṁ-rājagūmāḥ moham vrajaṁ rātriṣu kīṁ kariṣye //
Avi, IV, 2.

70. Kuraṅgī - bhavatu, uttarayavāsā-sātmānamudvadhyā vyāpādayiṣyāmi-
Avi, Act V.
Besides the principal female figures in the Avimaraka there are many minor female characters. Among them the names of Kaumudikā, Candrikā, Māgadhikā, Vilāsinī, Hariṇikā, Nalinikā etc. may be referred to in this connection. All of them are the attendants in the palace of the king Kuntibhoja. In their leisure hours these attendants pass their time by discussing the matter of Kuraṅgī and the lover of Kuraṅgī. They have friendship with their mistress Kuraṅgī. Some of them help her in her love affair. Among these attendants Nalinikā is a good friend of the princess Kuraṅgī.

Nalinikā acts as a mediator of Kuraṅgī in her path of union with Avimaraka\(^1\). Like a true friend, Nalinikā becomes happy in Kuraṅgī's joy and grieved in her distress. When she knows the mournful condition of Kuraṅgī, resulting in the separation of Avimaraka, Nalinikā fails to control her tears\(^2\). Further noticing the cosmetics of Kuraṅgī, Nalinikā's statement with lamentation that the time of festival that is the happy union of Kuraṅgī and Avimaraka has come to an end, really touches the heart of the readers.\(^3\) Nalinikā is indeed fit to be entitled as a friend of Kuraṅgī. She always gives company to Kuraṅgī, her mistress.

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71. Avi, Act II.

72. (tatah praviśati sāsrā nalinikā)
Nalinikā (saṅkām)- satyaḥ Khalu lokapraṇādaḥ-vahuvighnāni sukhānīti ā eśā khalu saṃvatsara'ṅkānto bhartṛdārikāyā avicchinnasukhasambho-gena ratiṁ kṛtvā ......adya punarmahāraṇe vidita eṣa khalu vyttānta iti śrutvā sīdatāv saṅkāṃ bhartṛdārikā ca lajjābhayamadanaśrābhitādyam-aṇā saṁtāpena mugdhāpagatahecetaneva saṁvīrtā ā eṣā khalu prāśādo nirvāpitaṭīpya iva me pratibhāti ...... Avi, Act IV.

73. Nalinikā - atikrānta utsavaḥ (roditi)- Avi, Act IV.
Being an obedient attendant, Nalinikā gives the embrace of her cool body to the princess, by which the later extinguishes the combustion of her body and gets delight. It may be noted in this context that this type of embrace between Nalinikā and Kuraṅgī, probably hints at the existence of homosexuality of the female figures at the time of Bhāsa.

Like Nalinikā, the character of Dhātrī, Jayodā by name is found in the play Avimāraka who helps the heroine immensely in her love-affair. She is a well-wisher of Kuraṅgī. Thus knowing indirectly about the soft corner of Kuraṅgī for Avimāraka she makes out a plan. Accordingly she along with Nalinikā comes in the dwelling of Avimāraka and relates him about the condition of Kuraṅgī. At this Avimāraka becomes relieved and confident. So it is Jayodā who as if sprinkles water in the seed of love between Kuraṅgī and Avimāraka. She also makes every arrangement to place Avimāraka in the inner apartment of the Kanyāpura palace and gives every details of the means for his entry there. In short, Jayodā as a reliable attendant and true friend helps Kuraṅgī, her mistress in getting her love.

74. Kuraṅgī- hala ! ehi parisvajasva māṃ ;
    Nalinikā - bhartrārike ātathā (parisvajate)
Kuraṅgī- hala ātīśītalaṁ manoharaṁ ca te śarīram ; hala ā samprati
    naśyatīva me śarīradāhaḥ - Avi, Act V.

75. Dhātrī- ............... tatrāpi ko'pi jano'dhikataram yogam cintayannasti i
    tena saha tatraivāryena susūtha yogavidhānaṁ cintyāmiti i
    Avimāraka - ............... (āsanādutthāya) bhavati !
    punardatta īva me pranah i kutaḥ,
    tasyā bhayaḥ kulitadṛṣṭiviṣaṁ manoṣānāṁ
    saumpyaprakaramatītiṣṇamavakeśya vaktram/
    unmādamabhuyagato'smi cīraṁ bhavatyor-
    vākyāṁṛtena punaradya kṛtaḥ sasaṁjñāḥ/
    Avi, II,7.
Apart from the principal and minor female figures there are also three other characters met with in the play Avimaraka. They are Naṭī, the wife of the Sūtradhāra, Ketumati, the portress of the royal house, and Saudāmini, the wife of the Vidyādhara. All these female figures have no significant role in the dramatic development of the plot of the play. It appears that Bhāsa introduced these characters only for the sake of dramatic development.

THE CĀRUDATTA

Vasantasenā:- Vasantasenā is the heroine of the play Cārudatta. In delineating her character, Bhāsa has exhibited his great genius. Vasantasenā, who is primarily a prostitute, has been idealised as a woman of flesh and blood in the 'Cārudatta'. She is the daughter of a prostitute, so by birth she has to come in this profession, but by her behaviour and attitude she is a different person. In spite of being a prostitute Vasantasenā's heart is full of female emotion i.e. love of the highest kind. Bhāsa, the great dramatist has shown the manifestation of womanhood even in the so-called prostitute, with whom generally people are accustomed to behave with negligence, irreverence and dishonour in our society.

In Vasantasenā we can met with the different types of heroines such as Vahyā, Abhisārikā, Gaṇikā etc. as defined by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra. According to Bharata the prostitute heroine is known as Vahyā. In the Cārudatta the term 'Vāhyajana' is mentioned to

76. Nāṭya, 22, 154.
designate the courtesan\textsuperscript{77}. In another place of this drama the word 'Veśyā' is used\textsuperscript{78}. Vasantasenā also conforms to the Abhisārikā type of heroine, as at the end of the play she wants to go for love-tryst (abhisāra) to the house of Ĉārudatta\textsuperscript{79}. Further the characteristic features of 'Gaṅikā' in accordance with Bharata\textsuperscript{80} can be found in many places of the Ĉārudatta\textsuperscript{81}.

Vasantasenā is a charming and beautiful maiden. Naturally everyone desires to enjoy her. Śakāra and Viṭa are among them. But she has fallen in love with Ĉārudatta at first sight from the very day she meets him at the festival of the god of love. She is very pure-minded that she can not entertain any other suitor other that Ĉārudatta. It goes against the belief that a prostitute resorts to this profession for money only\textsuperscript{82}. In spite of being a prostitute, Vasantasenā's morality is high. This is the reason why she refuses to make an affair with Śakāra.

Vasantasenā's nobility of heart is seen in her activity to Sarṇvāhaka and Madanikā. Thus knowing the distressing condition

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Nāyaka - mūrkha ! vāhyajanadhāritamalaṁkāraṁ grhañjano na drakṣyati-Čāru, Act III.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Čāru, I, 17.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Gaṅikā - ehīmalaṁkāraṁ grhitvāryacārudattamabhisarisyāvaḥ - Čāru, Act IV.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Nāṭya, 24, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Ĉārudatta, Ed. by Baladeva Upadhaya, pp - 18,21,23,25,44,46,48,51-53, 58-59.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Čāru, I, 17.
\end{enumerate}
of Samvāhaka she pays off his debt, but does not expect any return for the same. This is evident from the conversation between Vasantasenā and Samvāhaka in the second act of the Cārudatta).

Her generosity is also revealed in releasing Madanikā from her bondage. When Vasantasenā is informed that Sajjalaka has practised theft in the house of Carudatta, only to liberate Madanikā, then she not only releases Madanikā, but also decorates her, and having seated her with Sajjalaka in a car baid farewell to them.

All these incidents glorify the character of Vasantasenā, but her love for Cārudatta is the sole cause, which has installed her in the seat of womanhood. She has a deep love for Cārudatta and this love has changed her outlook too. When Śakāra, the brother-in-law of the king has invited her in his house by sending ornaments and carriage, she at once rejects his proposal, though it is opposed to the profession of prostitution.

83. Samvāhaka - tato’dya veśamārge yadṛcchopanataḥ samāsāditosmi
   tasya bhayeneha praviṣṭah evamāryā jānātu
   Gaṇikā - ........ evam gataḥ ātmīya āryaḥ halā !
   ehi taṁ janāṁ visarjaya !
   ............
   Samvāhaka - ........ yadiyam pariṇāne saṁkrānta kalā bhavet, tata
   āryayānugṛhita bhāveyam
   Gaṇikā-yaśya krte iyam kalā śiśāṭa, sa evāryenopasthātavyo
   bhaviṣyatī .... Cāru, Act II.

84. Gaṇikā - ko’tra, pravahaṇaṁ tāvadārayasya, māneśavda ieva śrūyate
   āgateṇa pravahaṇeṇa bhāvitaṁ, (svaṁbharanaiṁmadanikā -
malaṁkṛtya)ārohatvāryā āryaṁ saha pravahaṇaṁ - Cāru, Act IV.

85. Ceti - nahi, yenālaṁkāraṁ preṣitaḥ sa rājasīyāḥ saṁsthānaḥ
   Gaṇikā - apehyavinfete - Cāru, Act IV.
Vasantasena loves Cārudatta in spite of his being very poor. She feels that by loving a poor man people might not suspect any greed in her love, which is sincere. It really shows her ideal love. Vasantasena's love for Cārudatta is very pure. To her, love is not a means for attaining worldly enjoyments. She loves Cārudatta only for the sake of love. In this love there is no enjoyment, no addiction, but only self-effacement. And that is why leaving behind all her wealth and property Vasantasena wants to go for her love-tryst, to the house of her poor lover.

This kind of extra-ordinary chastity in love in the character of a prostitute like Vasantasena shows Bhāsa's sense of dignity and regard for the womanhood. In creating the character of Vasantasena, Bhāsa indeed has taken a revolutionary attempt. It appears that through the character of Vasantasena, Bhāsa probably exhibits the establishment of all types of female figures in their respective places of activity in the then society. The character of Vasantasena may be an eye-opener to the people of the present day society also. We, the so-called modern people are still habituated to behave with this type of female figure with negligence and abhorrence. These female figures who have to live the life of prostitute under the influence of various contrary circumstances, may also be good women like Vasantasena.

86. Gaṇikā - ................................... itidārīdрапurusaksatā gaṇikā avacanīyā bhavati - Cāru, Act. II.

87. Gaṇikā - astyātivahumato viśrambhaḥ i pūjanīyāḥ khalu sa janaḥ- Cāru, Act II.

88. Vide, Ref. No.79.
So Bhāsa’s Vasantasena may be an example in the direction of changing our mentality towards the prostitutes.

_Brāhmaṇī (wife of Cārudatta):-_ The character of Brāhmaṇī has prominent role in the play Cārudatta. She is the wife of Cārudatta, the hero of this play. Though she comes in the dramatic scene only for a short period, yet she leaves an indelible impression in the mind of the readers by her conduct.

Brāhmaṇī makes her appearance for the first time when Sajjalaka has stolen the ornaments of Vasantasena from the house of Cārudatta. Those were the very ornaments deposited by Vasantasena under the custody of Cārudatta. Rodanika; the maid servant of Cārudatta informs Brāhmaṇī about the theft. Hearing the news, Brāhmaṇī becomes very anxious and wishes to give away her earrings. But alas! Touching her ear she finds the earring of palm-leaf. The remembrance of her jewellery at the time of prosperity grieves Brāhmaṇī very much. Then thinking a while she makes up her mind to give away her valuable pearl-necklace to Vasantasena. Accordingly, Brāhmaṇī in the name of fast and vow, gives her ‘muktāvalī’ to Viddhaka Maitreya to save Cārudatta, her husband from ill-censure.

In the character of Brāhmaṇī we get the picture of a chaste and devoted wife who is always ready to sacrifice everything for

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89. Brāhmaṇī - ___________ mama jñātikulād īadvahā śatasahasramūtyā muktāvali tāmapyāryaputraḥ śauṭiratayā pratičchati bhavatu, evaṁ tāvat kāriśyāmi - Cāru, Act III.

90. Brāhmaṇī - nanu ṣaṭṣṭhīmupavasāmi sarvasārvavibhavena brāhmaṇena svasti vācayitavyamityeṣośyāgamaḥ - Caru, Act III.
the welfare of her husband. She is as if the representative of the ideal Indian wife-a 'vibhāvanuvāya bhāryā' in the words of Cārudatta himself. At the time of poverty Brāhmaṇī has given her last resource only for the sake of Cārudatta, her husband. It is significant at the same time that Brāhmaṇī gives her necklace to that lady who has shared the love of her husband. Knowing about the love-affair between Cārudatta and Vasantasena even, Brāhmaṇī performs her duty as the wife. Through the sacrifice for her husband, Brāhmaṇī really occupies a remarkable place in the heart of the readers.

Besides the principal female figures i.e. Vasantasena and Brāhmaṇī there are two other minor female characters in the play Cārudatta. They are Madanikā and Rodanikā, serving Vasantasena and Cārudatta respectively.

Madanikā:— Madanikā is the maid servant (ceti) of Vasantasena. As a ceti, she is very much obedient and loyal to her mistress. Though a ceti she is also a loving companion of Vasantasena, which is evident from her conversation with the later. Madanikā in spite of her belonging to the lower class, is invested with the good qualities like faithfulness. Her character is beautifully displayed in the fourth act of the play. Sajjalaka, her lover presents the ornaments stolen from the house of Cārudatta. Knowing this fact, Madanikā becomes very

91. vibhāvanuvāya bhāryā samadujākhasukho bhavān / sattvarṇa ca na paribhraṣṭaṁ yad daridreṣu durlabhham// Caru, I , 7.

92. Caru, Act II.
much anxious and asks him if he has injured anyone of the house of Carudatta. When Sajjalaka gives assurance that nobody is injured, she becomes pleased with him. Madanikā recognises the ornaments as belonging to Vasantasena. She does not want to deceive her mistress and that is why, devising a plan she sent Sajjalaka in front of Vasantasena with a view to restore her ornaments. This shows, at the same time, the faithfulness and ready-wittedness of the character of Madanikā.

Rodanikā: Rodanikā is the obedient maid servant of Carudatta, the hero of this play. She is a faithful and fearless attendant of Carudatta, who goes outside the house to offer the 'māṭṭivalī' while Vidūṣaka himself was afraid to go out without a lamp in his hand. She appears to be clever enough as evident from the fact that, she duly returns the charge of deposit to Vidūṣaka exactly on the aṣṭamī day as told by the later earlier. Madanikā also has a good sense of courtesy. Her courteousness is revealed in the fact that, she tells, in secret, Vidūṣaka the reason of Brāhmaṇi’s offering the ‘muktāvalī’.

93. Ceti - sārthavāhakule sāhasarī kurvatā tvayā kaścid kulaputraḥ sāstreṇāstī parīkṣato vyāpādito vā – Cāru, Act IV.

94. Ceti - tena hīmaṁ tāvadalaṁkāraṁ tasya sārthavāhapatrasya vacanādajjukayai niryātaya evam ca kṛte tvam rakṣitaḥ, sa āryaścānirvīṇho bhaviṣyatī ahāṁ ca piḍitaḥ na bhaviṣyaṁ i athavā ajjukāṁ ca punarvaṅcayitvā punareva dāsabhāvo bhāvet – Cāru, Act IV.

95. Cāru, Act I.

96. Ceti - idam suvarṇabhāṇḍarīṁ saṣṭhyāṁ saptamyāṁ parivartayāmi aṣṭamīṁ khalvadya – Cāru, Act III.

97. Ceti (apavārya) - kinnu khalu tasmai janāya dātavyarīṁ bhaviṣyatītyetanāmithaṁ bhartṛdārakah sanṭapyata iti bhartṛdārikā tava hāste dattvāryaputramanṛṇāṁ kariṣyāmītyevaṁ karoti i tād gṛṇāṇaitat – Cāru, Act III.
She does this only to maintain the dignity of her mistress. In brief, Rodanikā is an obedient attendant of her master Cārudatta, who performs her activities with all sincerity.

THE PRATIMĀNĀṬAKA

Sītā: Sītā, the wife of Rāma is the heroine of the play Pratimānāṭaka. Her character has been portrayed by the dramatist as an ideal and devoted wife.

Sītā is described here as a beautiful young lady. She is very bright in complexion, and her eyes are full of snow imitating as if the petals of the lotus. Sītā is also simple-minded. Her simplicity is revealed in her taking the bark-garment from the hand of Avadātikā and also wearing the same. Sītā's friendly behaviour towards the attendants is indicative of her mild nature. Her conduct towards her relatives is very much favourable. This is evident from her motherly behaviour to Bharata, her brother-in-law.

But the devoted wife in Sītā simply surpasses her beauty and other qualities. She is a perfect companion of her husband in his happiness as well as in sorrow. At the time of Rāma’s exilement to

98. Bharataḥ - aye, iyamatrabhavati janakarājaputraḥ?
   idam tat strīmayaṁ tejo jātanḥ kṣetrodāddhatāḥ /
   janākasya nṛpendsaṁya tapasah śānvidarśanam //
   Pratimā , IV, 14.


100. Pratimā, Act I

101. Sītā - vatsa, cīram jivaḥ
    Bharataḥ – anugṛhito’smi
    Sītā - ehi vatsa! bharatmanoratharṁ puraya -Pratimā, Act IV.
the forest Sītā desires to go along with him by saying that to her forest is like the palace, if she is with her husband. Rāma tries to dissuade her, but she is firm in her decision\textsuperscript{102}.

In the forest also, Sītā lives the life of the ascetic, and adjusts in accordance with the circumstance. She uses to water the small creepers with her own hand. Sītā also has guided Rāma in the right path. When Rāma is anxious about the performance of the annual rites of his father, Sītā advises him to perform the śrāddha according to his present position with fruits and water, as the same would be done by Bharata in great splendour\textsuperscript{102(a)}. It reveals Sītā’s profound knowledge of the scriptures and methods of performing the various rites. The similar idea is also quoted in the Rāmāyaṇa that every one should perform the rites in accordance to one’s own capacity and status in life\textsuperscript{102(b)}. Sītā has habituated with the forest life, in spite of her being the daughter of a king, only to accomplish the duty of a devoted wife. In short, it may be said that the character of Sītā has been delineated by Bhāsa as an ideal, devoted and sacrificing woman.

102. Sītā- nanu sahadharmaśaṅkriṇī khalvaham,
Rāmaḥ - maiekapinā kila gantavyam,
Sītā - ato na khalvanugacchāmi,
Rāmaḥ - vane khalu vastavyam,
Sītā - tat khalu me prāsādaḥ - Pratimā, Act- I.

102.(a)Sītā - āryaputra! nivartayiṣyati śrāddhaṁ bharata rddhyaṁ,
avasthīnurūparī phalodakenāpyāryaputraḥ ; etat tātasya
bahumataranī bhaviṣyaṁ - Pratimā, Act V.

102 (b) idaṁ bhūṃkṣva mahāraja prīto yadaśanā vayam /
yadannaḥ puruoḥ bhavati tadannāstasya devatāḥ //
Rām, II, 102, 30.
Kaikeyī:- Kaikeyī is one of the prominent female figure in the play Pratimānāṭaka. She plays a significant role in the development of the plot. It is because of Kaikeyī that Rāma goes for exilement, Daśaratha breathes his last and ultimately all the later incidents in the play take place. For her activities Kaikeyī has to suffer the reprehension of the people of all the ages. But the great dramatist throws a new dimension in her character and accordingly Kaikeyī is shown guiltless.

At the time when Kaikeyī demands the exilement of Rāma and the ascension of Bharata to the throne of Ayodhyā, Bharata was staying at the house of his maternal uncle. After returning back to Ayodhyā, Bharata being informed about the preceding events, rebukes his mother for her evil deeds. He makes her responsible for all such consequences resulting from her demands viz, his infamy, bark garments to Rāma, death of Daśaratha, tears to the whole of Ayodhyā, forest life to Laksmana, grief of the mothers, Sītā's fatigue of travel, and the extreme contempt to her own self103. Further Bharata pronounces the dictum that a wife who does treachery to her husband, loses her claim as a mother104. To this Kaikeyī tries to justify her position on the ground of the fulfilment of the dowry contract. She also says that, she would clarify herself at the proper place and proper context105. By this statement Bhāsa gives the first proof of Kaikeyī's innocence.

103. Pratimā, III, 17.

104. Bharata -
........................bhartṛdroḥādadstu mātā'pyamātā //
Pratimā, III, 18.

105. Kaikeyī-jāta! desēkāle nivedayāmī - Pratimā, Act III.
In the sixth act of the play, Bharata informs Kaikeyī about the kidnapping of Śītā by Rāvana and again rebukes Kaikeyī for the same. Then and there Kaikeyī gets the opportunity to tell the actual cause of her demanding the two boons. Sumantra, on the request of Kaikeyī, narrates the incident that, once upon a time Daśaratha by mistake kills the only son of a blind sage and was cursed by the latter that he too would die through the mourning of his son. Thereafter Kaikeyī tells that as because Daśaratha was accustomed with the separation of Bharata, she demanded the exile of Rāma in order to fulfil the curse of the sage. When enquired by Bharata about the fourteen years of exilement, Kaikeyī defending herself says that, her actual intention was to say ‘fourteen days’ but through mental anxiety she uttered ‘fourteen years’. Further Sumantra tells that all these matters were consented by Vaśiṣṭha, Vāmadeva etc. who are the well-wishers of the Ikṣvāku family.

Here it appears that Kaikeyī has demanded the boons not for her self-interest, not for the greed of kingdom (throne), not for jealousy to the co-wives, but for setting her husband free from the curse of the sage. Thus Kaikeyī is shown here as a chaste and devoted wife, who endures severe scorn of the people only for the well-being of her husband.

106. Sumantraḥ - tatāstevamgañgataṁ drśtvā ,
tenoktaṁ ruditasānte muninā satyabhāṣinā /
yathāhaṁ bhostvamapyevarṁ putraśokād vipatsyase //
Pratimā , VI, 15.

107. Sumantraḥ-kumāra! vaśiṣṭhavāmadevaprabhṛtāmanumataṁ viditaṁ ca-
Pratimā, Act VI.
The most significant aspect which can be observed in the characterisation of Kailéryí is that, with an attempt to expel her ill reputation and to elevate her, Bhāsa very much skilfully depicts the character of Kailéryí in a favourable way. Here again Bhāsa’s sympathy and high regards for the female figures have been revealed beautifully. It also reflects his sympathy for the person, who are in distress.

Kauśalyā:- Kauśalyā, the mother of Rāma is a significant female figure in the Pratimānāṭaka. She has been portrayed by the dramatist as a devoted wife.

Kauśalyā, the daughter of the king of Kośala conforms to the specilities of the ‘Mahādevī’ heroine as defined by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra. She is the first wife or the eldest queen of king Daśaratha. Being the eldest queen she is naturally the ‘Mūrdhābhisiktā’ i.e, her coronation is performed together with the king. She belongs to a good lineage, attributed with all the good qualities and devoid of anger and jealousy, equal in happiness as well as in sorrow and always wishing the well being of her husband. Due to her love for her husband Daśaratha, Kauśalyā enduring the grief of her son gives solace to the king and also serves him. When Daśaratha regrets, Kauśalyā, shedding tears tells that the king should not regret

108. Nāṭya, 24,33.
109. Pratihārī- jayatu kumāraḥ i imaṁ vr̥ttantam śrutvā jyeṣṭhabhaṭṭinī moham gatāḥ - Pratimā, Act VI.
110. Kāñcukīyāḥ ......... (parikramyāvalokya ) aye! ayaṁ mahārājo mahādevyā sumitrayā ca suduṣṣahamapi putravirahasamudbhavaṁ śokam nighṛtyātmāntena hāvaḥ samsthāpayantibhyāmanvāsyamānastithati - Pratimā, Act II.
much, rather he should have patience and he should console himself, because at the end of fourteen years he will certainly meet Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa\textsuperscript{111}.

Due to the grief of son, Kauśalyā considers herself as a woman with illluck \textsuperscript{112}. Kauśalyā’s behaviour towards Kaikeyī reveals that she is fully devoid of anger and jealousy. When Bharata due to anger does not salute Kaikeyī, his mother then Kauśalyā asks him why he is not making obeisance to his mother \textsuperscript{113}. Indeed, Kauśalyā deserves to be called a Mahādevī. She is in the words of Bharata, as pure as the mother Ganges.\textsuperscript{114}. In the Rāmāyaṇa it is found that in the context of the coronation of Rāma, Kauśalyā expresses her anger and jealousy, for Kaikeyī and Bharata.\textsuperscript{115}. But this kind of behaviour on the part of Kauśalyā is not met with in the Pratimāṇāṭaka. Here the dramatist has depicted Kauśalyā as a woman with extreme patience, who endures everything with the slightest objection.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} Kauśalyā (saruditam) - alamidāninī mahārājo’timātraṁ santapya paravaśamātmānaṁ kartum ĩ nanu sā tu ca kumāru mahārājasya samayāvasāne prekṣitavyā bhaviṣyanti — Pratimā, Act II.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Kauśalyā - mahārāja ī saiva mandabhāginī khalvaham — Pratimā Act II.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Kauśalyā - jāta ī sarvasasudācāramadhyasthaṁ kirṇ na vandase mātaram? Pratimā, Act III.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Pratimā, III,16.
\item \textsuperscript{115} idaṁ te rājyakāmasya rājyaṁ prāptamakaṇṭakam/ samprāptaṁ vata kaikeyyā ēghraṁ krūreṇa karmāṇaḥ // prasthāpya cīravasanaṁputraṁ me vanavāsinam / kaikeyyā kaṁ guṇaṁ tatra paśyati krūradarśiniḥ// idaṁ hi tava vistāraṁ dhanadhāṁyasamācitam/ hastyaśvarthasampūrṇaṁ rājyaṁ niryātitaṁ tayaẑ// Rām,2.75 (11, 12, 16 ).
\end{itemize}
The character of Sumitra plays little role in the dramatic development of the Pratimānāṭaka. Sumitra, the youngest queen of the king Daśaratha and the mother of Lakṣmaṇa, is depicted in this play as a chaste and devoted wife. She is in the words of Bharata the holy Ganges.

Other than the principal female figures, there are also many minor female characters. Among them the name of Tāpasī, Avadātikā, Pratiḥārī Vijoyā and Nandinikā may be mentioned.

The character of Tāpasī is introduced only in the fifth and seventh act of the Pratimānāṭaka. She is a companion of Sītā. Being an intimate friend of Sītā, she can not see Sītā alone and so she eagerly desires Sītā's union with Rāma.

Avadātikā is an attendant of Sītā. She is very gentle and soft by nature. Her conversation with Sītā in connection with the bark-garment reveals her friendly behaviour with Sītā, and her refined way of talking also.

The character of Vijoyā is found in many places. Vijoyā is the Pratiḥārī or door-keeper in the court of Ayodhyā. She is very sincere and dutiful in her respective work. Her promptness of activity is seen

116. Pratimā, III, 16.
117. Tāpasī - halā! eṣa te kuṭumvikaḥ, upasarpaināḥ, na śakyaṁ tvāmekākinīṁ prekṣitum - Pratimā, Act VII.
118. Avadātikā - bhaṭṭinī! sarvasobhānīyaṁ surūpaṁ nāma, alaṃkarotu bhaṭṭinī; tava khālu śobhate nāma, śauvarṇikamiva valkalam śamvṛttam - Pratimā, Act I.
at the time of the preparation of Rāma’s coronation\textsuperscript{119}. Vijoyā’s dutifulness is also met with in other places of the drama.

Nandinikā is the maid-servant of Kaikeyī. She comes in the dramatic scene only in the fourth act of the play for a short period. Another Cetī is found who gets ornament from the benevolent Sītā, as a reward of giving good news to the later.

THE ABHIŞEKANĀṬAKA

Sītā:- Sītā, whose character has been delineated by Bhāsa in the Pratimāṅāṭaka also, is portrayed here in a different way. Sītā, who is the wife of Rāma is the heroine of the Abhişekanāṭaka. She is introduced in the second act of the play, sitting in the Aśoka garden being surrounded by the Rākṣasīs, after she has been kidnapped by Rāvana. Being separated from her beloved husband and staying at the abode of the Rākṣasa, Sītā is in a very helpless condition. Sītā holding a single braid, having thin waste is becoming more slim due to her fasting, and having set her heart on her beloved is weeping continuously\textsuperscript{120}. Being afraid of the furious Rāvana and in spite of his

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Pratihārī (parikramyāvalokya)- ārya! sambhayaka! sambhayaka!
gaccha, tvamapi mahārājavacananāryapurohitāṁ yathopacāreṇa tvarayaṁ (anyato gatā) sārasike! sārasike! saṅgītāśālāṁ gatvā nāṭakīyebhyo vijñāpayya - kālasaṁvädinā nāṭakena sajja bhavateti īyāvadahamapī sarvaṁ kṛtamiti mahārājīya nivedayami - Pratimā, Act I.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} asitabhujagalanāṁ dhārayantyakaveṇāṁ
karaparimitamadhyā kāntasarāṁsaktacitta/
anāśanakṣādehā vāśpasarāṁsīktavaktra
sarasiṣṭāvamamālevātape vipravidhā //
Abhi, II, 8.
\end{itemize}
various temptations, Sītā is still thinking over Rāma. When Hanumān informs her about the painful and love-lorn condition of Rāma in her absence, then Sītā feels that she is becoming abashed by the fact that her husband is mourning due to separation from her. She thinks as if her pangs of separation from her husband has become fruitful. Hearing her husband’s love for her, Sītā’s heart is swinging between happiness and misery. Sītā being a chaste and devoted wife can not bear the grief of her husband. Thus, she requests Hanumān to inform Rāma of her condition in such a manner that he may not be grieved.

In the fifth act of the play, Sītā reveals her emotion in soliloquy. The fact of her husband’s arrival gives her delight but at the same time she becomes worried observing some ominous signs. She thus prays to the Lord for giving peace.

121. apāsyā bhogāṁ māṁ caiva śīrāṁ ca mahātīmīmāṁ / mānuśe nyastahṛdayāṁ naiva vāyatvamāgaṭā //
Abhi, II, 12.

122. Sītā (ātmagatam)- hā dhig vṛṣīḍīta khalvasmi mandabhāgā evaṁ śocantamāryaputraṁ śrutvāṁ āryaputrasya virahaparīṣrāmo’pi me saphalaḥ saṁyṛtta iti paśyāmi, yadi khalvayāṁ vānaraḥ satyaṁ mantrayate, āryaputrasyaṁśmin jane’nukroṣaṁ pariśramaṁ ca śrutvā sukhasya duḥkhasya cāntare doliyata iva me hṛdayam- Abhi, Act II.

123. Sītā -bhadra! etāṁ me’vastāṁ śrutvāryaputro yathā śokaparavaśo na bhavati,tathā me vṛttāntaṁ bhaṇa- Abhi, Act II.

124. Sītā- kinnu khalvāryaputrasyaṁgamanena pralhāditasya hṛdayasyādyavega iva saṁvṛttyaṁ aṁśiṁ nimitṭaṁ ca dṛṣyaṁ evamapṛiddhiṁ hṛdayasya mahānabhhyudayo vardhate iva sarvathēśvaraḥ śāntiṁ kurvantu- Abhi, Act V.
general female characteristics such as emotion, patience, apprehension etc. And lastly Sītā prays to the Almighty by saying that if she follows her husband with the utmost devotion worthy of her family, then Rāma might be victorious in his battle against Rāvana. 

All these glorify the character of Sītā as a perfect wife, solely devoted to her husband. Bhāsa, the dramatist appears to sketch the picture of an ideal Indian wife through the character of Sītā in the Abhiṣekanāṭaka.

Tārā:– The character of Tārā has been delineated in the Abhiṣekanāṭaka as an ideal Indian woman. She is the wife of the monkey-king Vālīn. It appears that Tārā has no significant role in the development of the plot of this play. Only for a short period, Tārā makes her appearance before the audience. Yet she leaves the impression of an ideal wife fully devoted to her husband.

Vālīn, the husband of Tārā has exiled his younger brother Sugrīva from the kingdom and captures his wife and wealth. Sītā, the wife of Rāma has also been kidnapped by Rāvana. Both Rāma and Sugrīva meet each other and become friend and the former gives the assurance to kill Vālīn. Sugrīva returns to Kiśkiṇḍā along with Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Hunumān, and invites Vālīn for fight. Vālīn at once accepts the challenge and gets ready to exit for the battle. But Tārā

125. Sītā- tīvarāh! ātmanāḥ kulasādrśena cāritrena
yadyahamanusārāmyāryaputram, āryaputrasya vijayaḥ bhavatu - Abhi, Act V.
tries to restrain him with her suggestion that he should go, after counselling with his ministers\textsuperscript{126}. Apprehending danger for her husband, Tārā again and again requests him not to go. But Vālīn does not pay heed to her words and asks her to go inside. Then Tārā goes away regretting over her misfortune\textsuperscript{127}.

It seems that through the role of Tārā Bhāsa very skilfully reveals the mental anguish of a devoted wife. The feelings of weal and woe for the husband automatically arises in the mind of a loving wife. And this aspect of the female mind has been beautifully delineated by Bhāsa in the character of Tārā. The behaviour of Tārā also reflects the dramatist’s attempt of imposing the qualities of womanhood even in the female figures of the so-called lower tribes.

Besides Sītā and Tārā, the reference of the Rākṣasīs are also met with in the Abhiṣeṇatāka. But they are mentioned only in name. Only in the second and fifth act of the play, these monstrous Rākṣasīs are seen as watching Sītā at the pleasure-garden of Rāvana.

**THE MADHYAMA-VYĀYOGA**

Hidimba:- Hidimba, a female cannibal, is the wife of Bhīma, the middle Pāṇḍava and the mother of Ghaṭotkaca. In this play her

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{126} Tārā-prasīdatu prasīdatu mahārājahi alpena kāraṇena nāgamiśyati sugrīvah tadāṁtyavargena saha sarīmantrya gantavyam- Abhi, Act I.

\textsuperscript{127} Tārā- eṣā gacchami mandabhāgā- Abhi, Act I.
\end{footnotesize}
character does not get much opportunity to be revealed properly. Hidimba appears in the scene at the very end of the play. Still in this short period also, her character touches the heart of the reader.

As a demoness, Hidimba is accustomed to reside in the hills and forests. Yet in behaviour, she is very much courteous, which is proved by her statements in the play. When Ghatotkaca brings Bhima in front of his mother Hidimba for her meal, she becomes astonished and abashed and at once recognises her husband. When Ghatotkaca enquires about that man she tells him that, the man, in reality, is their deity. Further by the address “Aryaputra,” Hidimba shows her reverence to Bhima, her husband. This address of Hidimba testifies her cultured behaviour. Bhima appreciates Hidimba for her modesty and remarks that she is a demoness by birth, but not in conduct. Hidimba also asks Ghatotkaca, her son, to fall at the feet of his father.

All these incidents reflect that Hidimba is a cultured and good mannered lady. It also appears that in spite of a demoness Hidimba is a perfectly devoted wife and an affectionate mother. The characterisation of Hidimba reveals the broader outlook of the dramatist towards womanhood. It appears that to elevate the

128. Hidimba - kimesa manusya anitah
   Ghatotkaca - amba ko'ya
   Hidimba - unmattaka daivatarh khalvasmakam - MV, Act I.

129. Hidimba - aya khi pratayaya jayatvarya puratara MV, Act I.

130. Bhima - jaty raksasi na samudacarena MV, Act I.

131. Hidimba - unmattaka abhivadasa pitaram MV, Act I.
character of Hidimba, Bhāsa has attributed to her the qualities of an ideal woman. The qualities of ideal womanhood has been attributed by Bhāsa to the lower class of people also. And herein lies the success of Bhāsa as having with a great regards towards the whole womanfolk irrespective of high and low.

Brāhmaṇī (wife of Keśavadasa):- Brāhmaṇī, the wife of Brāhmaṇa Keśavadasa has been portrayed by Bhāsa as a devoted wife. In her character the entity of a devoted wife and an affectionate mother can be met with simultaneously.

When Ghatotkaca, the son of giantess Hidimba wants to take away one of the three sons from the family of Keśavadasa, as the meal of his mother, the old Brāhmaṇa decides to sacrifice his own body for saving his son. But the Brāhmaṇī at once tries to dissuade him from doing so, by saying that the duty of a chaste wife is to protect her husband in all circumstances, and therefore she desires to offer her own body for saving her husband and sons. Through the character of Brāhmaṇī the dramatist also depicts the picture of a mother who loves her youngest son most. Keśavadasa, who has to sacrifice his one son, does not want to give his elder son, because he is dearest to him. The mother also says that the youngest son is more affectionate to her. It is generally known that a mother

132. MV, Act I

133. Brāhmaṇī- yathāryo jyeṣṭhaṃicchatī tathāhamapi kaniṣṭhaṃicchami- MV, Act I.
loves her youngest son most, and this very aspect of the mother's love has been beautifully reflected here through the character of Brāhmaṇī. When the middle son decides to sacrifice himself for the sake of the family and becomes ready for his departure, Brāhmaṇī gives him blessings and wishes his long life\textsuperscript{134}. A mother can not desire the misfortune of her children. This very aspect of the mother's heart has also been dealt with by Bhāsa.

**THE DŪTAGHATOTKACA**

Gāndhārī: Gāndhārī, the wife of the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the mother of Duḥśalā, Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana etc. has been introduced in the Dūtaghaṭotkaca as a benevolent mother. In this play she appears before the readers as a woman who makes no difference between friend and enemy.

Hearing the news of the killing of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, Gāndhārī can not control her grief and laments a lot\textsuperscript{135}. This reveals the affectionate nature of the heart of Gāndhārī. Again it is seen that when Duḥśalā, in connection with the death of Abhimanyu reacts that the dress of widow which Uttara puts on today, will also be put on by her very soon, then Gāndhārī becomes very much worried and says, 'My daughter, don't utter such unlucky words. Your husband is...

\textsuperscript{134} Brahmāṇī- jāta! cīram jīva- MV, Act I.

\textsuperscript{135} Gāndhārī- hā vatsa abhimanyo! īḍṣo'pi nāma puruṣākṣayākārake kulavigrahvartamāne bālabhāvaṇimājanamasmākam bhāgyakrameṇa kurvan kutredānīṁḥ pautraka! gato'si- DG, Act I.
alive\textsuperscript{136}. All these glorify the character of Gandharī as an ideal kind-hearted woman.

Duḥśalā:- In the character of Duḥśalā, Bhāsa delineates the picture of a kind-hearted lady who cannot bear the grief of others. When Duḥśalā is informed about the brutal killing of Abhimanyu, she reacts that the man who has made Uttarā a widow has also given widowhood to his own wife\textsuperscript{137}. Duḥśalā has the realisation that giving misery to others always results in one's own misery. On hearing the report that Jayadratha, the husband of Duḥśalā is the chief culprit behind the murder of Abhimanyu, Dhṛtarāṣṭra exclaims that Jayadratha is now no more\textsuperscript{138}. At this, Duḥśalā starts weeping. But the next moment she decides to pay a visit to Uttarā for giving her solace\textsuperscript{139}. It is a woman who can realise the grief of another woman. And Bhāsa, the great dramatist successfully depicts this aspect of female psychology through the character of Duḥśalā.

Apart from the prominent female figures the reference of a minor female character viz, Pratiharī is also met with in the Dūtaghaṭotkaca. But this character is mentioned in name only for a single occasion.

\textsuperscript{136} Gandhārī- putrike! mā khalu, mā khalvamangalarī bhana Ṫīvati khalu te bhartā-DG, Act I.

\textsuperscript{137} Duḥśalā- yenedānīṁ vadhvai uttarāyai vaidhavyaṁ dattaṁ, tenātmano yuvatijānāya vaidhavyamādīstam- DG, Act I.

\textsuperscript{138} Dhṛtarastra- hanta jayadratho nilataḥ- DG, Act I.

\textsuperscript{139} Duḥśalā- tena hyāṇujāṇātu māṁ tātāḥ, ahamapi gamiṣyāmi vadhvā uttarāyāḥ sakā śam- DG, Act I.
THE ŪRUBHAṆGA

Gāndhārī:- The character of Gāndhārī is also met with in the play Īurubhaṅga. The familiar picture of Gāndhārī in the Mahābhārata, who, as a mark of respect for her blind husband Dhṛtarāṣṭra, covered her sight for the whole life, can also be seen in this play 140.

Gāndhārī makes her appearance at the battlefield of Kurukṣetra along with Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Mālavī and Pauravī, the two queens of Duryodhana and the son of Duryodhana. They are searching the king Duryodhana who is lying there after his thighs have been broken by Bhīma. The mournful condition of the heart of Gāndhārī, the mother, makes the scene really pathetic.141. The death of her ninety-nine sons has made her bewildered. Over and above Duryodhana is also going to breath his last; so there remains endless grief for Gāndhārī. The miserable condition of her son makes her extremely sorry, yet she feels proud at the bravery of Duryodhana. Thus Gāndhārī reveals her feelings by the following terms, "O the great king! It is I who has given birth to fearless sons"142. And further Gāndhārī feels delighted at the desire of her son to have Gāndhārī as his mother in another life143.

140. Baladeva........................
   asrairajamadhumā patidharmacinhamādhrikṣtam
   nayanabandhamadadhati///
   Uru, I, 40.

141. Gāndhārī- jāta suyodhana! pariśrānto'si- Uru, Act I.

142. Gāndhārī- mahārāja! ahamabhītapatraprasavini- Uru, Act I.

143. Rājā-
   namaskṛtya vadāmi tvārīḥ yadi puṇyam mayā kṛtāṃ/
   anyasyāmaṃ jātyārīṃ me tvameva janaṃ bhāva///
   Uru, I, 50.

   Gāndhārī- mama manorathah khalu tvayā bhaṅgitah- Uru, Act I.

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In short, it may be said that, here Bhāsa has nicely portrayed the picture of an affectionate and brave mother through the character of Gāndhārī.

Mālavī and Pauravī:- Mālavī and Pauravī are the two queens of the king Duryodhana. They made their appearance in the scene of the Kurukṣetra battle, where their husband is lying after being seriously wounded by Bhīma, the third Pāṇḍava. This news is indeed a great shock to these devoted wives. Being effected with extreme grief, Mālavī and Pauravī have even forgotten the feelings of shame, and so they are searching their husbands in the battlefield without the veil on their heads\(^{144}\). And after finding Duryodhana in a pathetic condition both of them can not control their tears and wail a lot. But afterwards Pauravī, being incapable of bearing the grief of widowhood, decides to die with her husband and stops her lamentation\(^{145}\).

Bhāsa, the great dramatist has depicted the characters of Mālavī and Pauravī as devoted wives in a touching manner.

**THE BĀLACARITA**

Devakī:- Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva is a prominent female figure in the play Bālacakītā. Though she has been introduced only in the first act of the play, yet she leaves an indelible impression in the mind of the readers.

\(^{144}\) yanme prakāśikṛtamūrdhajāni raṇaṁ praviṣṭaṁ yava rodhānāni //

\(^{145}\) Pauravī-ekākṛtapraveśanīścaya na rodimi - Ūru, Act I.
of the readers. The picture of an affectionate mother, as has been portrayed by the dramatist in the character of Devakī, is really highly appealing.

Devakī, along with Vasudeva, has been kept in imprisonment by Kamsā, her cruel elder brother. At the birth of her seventh son, Devakī reveals her feelings that in spite of the wondrous signs at the moment of the birth of her child shows his greatness, yet thinking over Kamsā’s cruelty, she can not believe them fully. The apprehension of the mind of a mother has been beautifully reflected here in the character of Devakī. When Vasudeva decides to take away their child from Mathurā, Devakī expresses her desire to have a long look at her child. This aspect of the heart of an affectionate mother in Devakī, really appeals the mind of the readers. In the words of Vasudeva also Devakī is a mother who has excessive affection to her son. It appears that Bhāsa by the introduction of the character of Devakī in the Bālācarita, reveals the eternal affection of the female figures towards their children.

Gopīs:— The Gopīs or the Gopa maidens have been introduced in the Bālācarita, at the occasion of hallisaka dance with their beloved Dāmodara (Śrī Kṛṣṇa). They are of various names such as Ghosasundarī, 146. Devakī-hā dhik, putrakasya me mahānubhāvatvarṁ sūcayisyaṁ janaṁsama - yasamudbhūṁi mahānimittāṁ pratyaśākṣākurvastam karmṣahatakanuṣṭāraṁ savatvarṁ cintyanīṁ suśthu na pratyemī mandabhāginī - Bāla, Act I. 147. Devakī-āryaputra ! icchāṁ tāvadenaṁ sudṛṣṭaṁ kartam - Bāla, Act I. 148. Vasudeva - ayī atiputravatsale ! Bāla, Act I.
Vanamālā, Candralekhā, Mrgākṣī etc. These Gopa maidens are naturally attractive in their appearance. The Gopīs, whose face and eyes imitate the full-blown lotus, who have bright complexion like the golden Campaka flower, who are putting on multi-coloured dresses and taking wild flowers in the hairs and hands, are wondering by talking sweet words. They pleasantly perform the hallisaka dance with Dāmodara and Sarhkarṣaṇa.

The Gopa maidens have complete attachment to Dāmodara. And that is why when Dāmodara desires to enter the abode of Kāliya serpent, they again and again try to dissuade him from doing so. But when Dāmodara defeats Kāliya, they again experience pleasure in their heart.

In short, the Gopīs are perfectly devoted to Dāmodara. Though they are devoid of the husbands, still they are the sense of having Dāmodara as their husbands through their extreme love for Him.

Besides the principal female characters there are also a number of minor female figures in the play Bālacarita. They are viz, Kaumodakī, .....

149. etāḥ prafullakamalotpalavaktranetrā
gopāṅganāḥ kanakacampakapuspaganāḥ/
nānāviraṅgavanā madhurapralaṅpāḥ
kriṣṇanti vanyakusumākulaśeṣahastāḥ//
Bāla, III, 2.

150. Sarvāḥ-mā' khalu mā khalu bhartaḥ! etāṁ jalaśayam praveṣṭum ēṣā khalu
duṣṭamahoragakulāvadhāḥ - Bāla, Act IV.

151. Sarvāḥ - ēṣā bhartāsīmakaṁ hṛdayānandaṁ kurvan akṣataśārīra ita
evāgacchati – Bāla, Act IV.

143
the Candāla maidens, Rājaśrī, Pratihārī, Yaśodharā, Dhātri, and Katyāyanī. All these characters made their appearance in the dramatic scene for a very short period, and they play a little role in the plot. Yet, in the delineation of some of these female figures, the creative genius of the dramatist can be met with.

The Candāla maidens who are imitating the blue lotus and collyrium, and looking very dreadful have entered the room of Kāṃśa in the absence of his guards. They again and again ask Kāṃśa to be wedded with their maidens. By the sudden entrance of these Candāla maidens Kāṃśa becomes astonished. The introduction of the Candāla maidens generate the adbhutarasa.

In the characterisation of Rājaśrī, a peculiar aspect can be met with. The prosperity of the kingdom, which is an abstract idea has been personified through the character of Rājaśrī, the prosperity of the king Kāṃśa. The depiction of Kaumodakī, a female weapon, also shows the creative genius of Bhasa. Personification and divinity have also been imposed in this weapon, which is described as the club of Viṣṇu.

So in the light of the above discussion, regarding the delineation of various female figures, coming under different groups, as met with in the plays of Bhasa, it appears that all of them are the women with

152. āgacca bhartaḥ! āgacca! asmākaṁ kanyānāṁ tvayā saha vivāho bhavatu - Bāla, Act II.
153. Śrīḥ - kim māṁ na jānteśe | ahaṁ khalvasya lakṣmīḥ - Bāla, Act II.
154. kaumodakī nāma harergadāham ...................../ Bāla , I , 24.
flesh and blood. They are much natural and at the same time emotional as the women are by nature. They are having feelings and apprehension as the women are having by nature. In happiness as well as in sorrow they also feel and react in different circumstances, as the women of our society, feel and react. Therefore, in the character of Aṅgāravatī, the mother of Vāsavadattā we can get the features of a mother for all the ages. The remarkable aspect in connection with the female figures in these plays, perhaps, is that, although they are very much real yet they are having the touch of idealism also. So it is seen that Vāsavadattā and Padmāvatī are ideal co-wives, Sītā and Brāhmaṇī (in the Čārudatta) are ideal wives, and Vasantasenā is an ideal prostitute. The combination of reality and idealism indeed make these characters unique. The elevation of characters which is found in Kaikeyī and some other characters is also superb. Bhāsa has attributed goodness in them to a great extent. His sympathetic outlook towards the female figures is revealed in the delineation of the minor female characters also. These characters also have been handled with great care by Bhāsa, the great dramatist. Thus it may be observed that, in the plays of Bhāsa the way as he has depicted the love of Kuraṅgī, he has depicted the love of a maid-servant Madanikā also in a like manner. No difference has been made by the dramatist between a princess and a maid-servant in revealing their characters. All these possibly go to reveal the attempt of Bhāsa, the great dramatist to give the picture of an ideal society through the female characters of his plays.
CATEGORISATION OF FEMALE FIGURES IN THE PLAYS OF KĀLIDĀSA

Kālidāsa, who has been often appreciated as the prince in Sanskrit dramatic literature, occupies a remarkable position in delineating the characters in all his plays. His characters leave indelible impression in the mind of the readers. All the characters are handled by Kālidāsa with great care. Male and female figures, from every sphere of life have been given proper importance and justice by Kālidāsa in his plays.

So far as the female figures are concerned, the idea, which instantly arises in the mind of the reader, is that Kālidāsa approaches them with the feeling of reverence and sympathy. Female figures in their different roles and under different conditions can be met with in his plays. Here it is to be mentioned that the Mālavikāgnimitram, the Vikramorvaśīyam and the Abhijñānaśākuntalam, the three famous dramas, composed by Kālidāsa, the great dramatist have been taken under the discussion in the present dissertation, though the dramatist may have composed more. The picture of female figures as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and also in different spheres of activities are very lively in the plays of Kālidāsa. Here it is remarkable that Kālidāsa considers the female figure as the power of man and also as a guiding force, which shows a man the right path. According to the dramatist, if the female figures who are the foundations of the society are either
ill-treated or neglected by men, then there can be no safety for anyone or anything.  

However, in the Abhijñānaśākuntalam, the Mālavikāgnimitram and the Vikramorvaśīyam, the three plays of Kālidāsa, almost thirty two female figures can be met with. In as much as eleven categories of female figures have been depicted in the three plays of Kālidāsa. The categorisation of the female figures may be mentioned under the following heads:

1. Rājapatnī (queen).
2. Devapatnī (wife of the God).
3. Rājakumārī (princess).
4. Parivrājikā (wondering female ascetic).
5. Tāpasī (female ascetic).
6. Āśramkanyā (hermit-girl).
7. Apsara (nymph).
8. Paricārikā/Cetī (female attendant/maid servant).
11. Naṭī (wife of Sūtradhāra).

The following chart will show the category, name and number of the female figures coming under the three plays of Kālidāsa:

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155. Rājā - bhoṣ satyavādin, abhupagatāṁ tāvadasmābhirevam i kim punarimātmatisandhāya labhyate i Śāṅgaravaḥ - vinipātaḥ - Abhi. Ś, Act V.
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<td>Rājakumārī</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mālavikā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parivrājikā</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paṇḍitkausīkī</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tāpaśī</td>
<td>Gautami, Subrata &amp; her friend</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nurse of Āyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āśramkanyā</td>
<td>Śakuntalā, Anasūya, Priyārvadā</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apsarā</td>
<td>Sānumatī</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parivārikā/Cetrī</td>
<td>Caturīka, Yavanī</td>
<td>Kaumūdikā, Nipuṇīkā, Bakulāvalikā, Samābhṛtikā, Jyotṣnīka</td>
<td>Nipuṇīkā, Yavanī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udyānpālikā</td>
<td>Parabhṛtikā, Madhukarikā</td>
<td>Madhukarikā</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pratihārī</td>
<td>Vetravatī</td>
<td>Joyasenaī</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natī</td>
<td>Wife of Sūtradhāra</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All Total 35</td>
<td></td>
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A survey of the various categories of female figures shows Kālidāsa’s broad outlook towards them. Female figures from the upper to the lower strata of society have found place in a befitting manner in the three plays of Kālidāsa, the great dramatist.

It is seen that, while depicting the female figures of his plays Kālidāsa mostly follows the rules of dramaturgy. In this context, the character of Irāvatī in the Mālavikāgnimitram may be cited as an example. Irāvatī, the second queen of the king Agnimitra belongs to the type of kalahāntaritā heroine on account of her having the characteristic features of kalahāntaritā, as stated by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra. According to Bharata kalahāntaritā is that type of heroine who leaves her hero out of anger, and later on becomes repented and sorrowful for that\textsuperscript{156}.

When the king Agnimitra meets Mālavikā in the pleasure-garden and in course of their conversation wishes to embrace her, Irāvatī who is present there, suddenly appears in front of them and scolds him with humiliating words. The king then wants to please Irāvatī in a different way, but she does not pay heed to that and leaves the place\textsuperscript{157}. Further in her conversation with Nipuṇikā, Irāvatī expresses repentance for her behaviour with the king and wants to please him\textsuperscript{158}.

\textsuperscript{156} Nāṭya, 22, 216.
\textsuperscript{157} Māla, Act III.
\textsuperscript{158} Irāvatī - citragatāmāryaputraṁ prasādayituṁ ca - Māla, Act IV.
A significant aspect of Kālidāsa's characterisation of female figures is that they have been depicted as being very lively and active. The characters like Mālavikā in the Mālavikāgnimitram, Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā in the Abhijñānaśākuntalam etc. may be cited in this context as example. Mālavikā, the heroine of the play Mālavikāgnimitram, spontaneously exhibited her dancing skill. In the Abhijñānaśākuntalam, Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā have been depicted as sincerely engaged in offering hospitality, when the king Duṣyanta enters into the hermitage of Kaṇva. Both of them exhibited their serious concern about Śakuntalā, their beloved friend in the period when Śakuntalā after her marriage was in a pathetic condition without having any news from Duṣyanta after his returning back to the capital, and prove their active participation in dealing with the situation when Durvāsā enters the hermitage.

In the plays of Kālidāsa, the female figures have been portrayed as ideal Indian woman, who are always ready to do any thing for the well being of their husbands as well as their family. In this connection, the figures like Dhāriṇī and Auśīnārī respectively in the Mālavikāgnimitram and the Vikramorvaśīyam may be cited. But at the same time they are found as having natural human instincts such as jealousy, envy etc also. Thus in the Mālavikāgnimitram it is found that, Dhāriṇī, the chief queen of the king Agnimitra expresses her unwillingness in arranging the dance programme to be performed by Mālavikā in presence of the king, as because Dhāriṇī knows well about the soft corner of the king for Mālavikā.

159. Māla, Act I.
One of the important aspect of Kālidāsa’s female characterisation is that they are engaged to a great extent in education, fine arts and different extra-curricular activities. The characters like Paṇḍitkauśikī, the Parivṛjikā and Mālavikā in the Mālavikāgnimitram may be cited as example in this context. It is due to her knowledge and proficiency in fine arts that Paṇḍitkauśikī has been selected as a judge to evaluate the dancing performance by Mālavikā160.

Another notable aspect of Kālidāsa’s female figures is their love for nature. In the Abhijnānaśakuntalam the attitude of Śakuntatā especially towards nature, is really appealing. In the scene of Śakuntalā’s leaving towards husbands' house, it is seen that the different trees are presenting dress, ornament etc. in decorating Śakuntalā, who never used to take a drop of water even, without sprinkling water to the trees and bowers of the penance-grove161.

In the plays of Kālidāsa, the female figures are seen as engaged in the protection and nourishment of the garden also, and which they perform with all sincerity. Here the characters like Parabhrtikā and Madhukarikā in the Abhijnānaśakuntalam and Madhukarikā in the Mālavikāgnimitram may be cited as examples.

To comprehend the manifold aspects of Kālidāsa’s characterisation of the female figures, it requires a thorough analysis of the roles played by female figures in the three plays of the great dramatist. Therefore, it is intended here to analyze the female figures depicted in the three plays of Kālidāsa.

160. Māla, Act I.
161. Abhi. Ś, IV, 9.
THE ABHIJÑĀNAŚAKUNTALAM

Śakuntalā:—Śakuntalā, the wife of the king Duṣyanta and the foster-daughter of the sage Kaṇva, is the heroine of the play Abhijnānaśakuntalam. She is one of the wonderful creations of Kālidāsa, the great dramatist. She is Śakuntalā as she has been first reared up under the wing of a bird (śakunta). The dramatist very beautifully portrays her character as the combination of a daughter, a wife and a mother. The exquisiteness of Śakuntalā lies in the fact that she, at a time, combines in herself physical charm along with the beauty of the soul. In the words of Goethe, the famous German scholar she ‘combines the young blossoms of the spring with the ripe fruits of Autumn’.

The beauty, which is possessed of by Śakuntalā is something divine and not common in the ordinary mortals, which is but natural, as she has been born of Menakā, a heavenly nymph. Śakuntalā has a beauty that is very natural and very tender—her lip owns the redness of a fresh sprig, her arms imitate tender twigs and her youth, fascinating as flowers, pervades all her limbs. Her natural beauty stands beyond all artificiality. When the king Duṣyanta meets

162. Rājā -

mānuṣaṁ kathāṁ vā syādasya rūpasya sambhavaḥ/
na prabḥātaralam jyotirudetvāvasudhātalāt//

Abhi. Ś, I, 23 .

163. Rājā -

adharah kisālayārāgaḥ komalavitapāṅkāriṇyau bāhu /
kusumamiva lobhanīyam yauvanamaṅgeśu sannaddham//

Abhi. Ś, I, 19.
Sakuntalā for the first time, he becomes astonished and remarks "If such a body, rare even in a harem, is possessed by the people living in a hermitage, then indeed are garden creepers outdone in points of excellence by the forest creepers." In another place, Duṣyanta’s remarks about Sakuntalā’s beauty runs thus—Sakuntalā is the extraordinary creation, a gem of woman, combined with life by the creator after having portrayed in a picture or perhaps mentally imagined by him with the combination of all the beautiful forms.

In the character of Sakuntalā the characteristic features of different kinds of heroines as depicted in the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata, can be met with. Thus, in Sakuntalā, some of the characteristics of the mṛgayā heroine can be observed. Sakuntalā is fond of forest, sportive in nature and has extended eyes like the deer. She also conforms the qualities of the virahotkāṇṭhita heroine as depicted by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra. In one place of the Abhijnānaśākuntalam the picture of a virahotkāṇṭhita can be seen in the person of Sakuntalā.

164. Rājā

śuddhāntadurlabhamidāṃ vapuraśramavāsino yadi janasya/
dūrikṛtyāḥ khalu guṇairudyānalatā vanalatabhiḥ/  
Abhi. Ś, I, 16.

165. Rājā -

citre niveśya parikalpitasattvayaḥ rūpoccahyena manasa vidhinā kṛtaḥ nu/
śrīrātratnasrūṭṭirapara pratibhāti sā me dhāturvibhutvamanucintya vapuśca tasyāḥ // 
Abhi. Ś, II, 9.

166. Rājā-aho nivatsyati samaṃ hariṇāṅganābhiḥ/  
Abhi. Ś, I, 24.

167. Nāṭya , 22, 214.
So, Śakuntalā, who of pure character, putting on a pair of dusty garments, with her face penance impaired and her braid knotted once for all is observing a long vow of separation from Duṣyanta, who had been very unmerciful to her.\(^{168}\)

However, this charming Śakuntalā makes her appearance for the first time as a daughter of a hermit-father. She is rearing under the affectionate care of the sage Kaṇva, her foster-father. Śakuntalā, who has been growing in the atmosphere of a hermitage, has become a maiden. She, along with her two friends Anasūyā and Priyārvadā, watering the trees and plants of the penance grove, fills the heart of the readers with affection and wonder. She is as simple and innocent as the deers and peacocks around her. She is happily living among the plants and creepers, loving and serving them with the sisterly affection.\(^{169}\) Side by side new feelings and new desires of the maiden heart, growing in the mind of Śakuntalā is evident from the episode of the navamallikā and the sahakārapādapa in the first act of the play.\(^{170}\) At this juncture Śakuntalā meets the king Duṣyanta and both

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168. Rāja - 
vasane paridhūsare vasaṅā
niyamākṣāmamukhī dhṛtaikavēṇiḥ/
atiniśkaruṇasya sūddhaśīlā
māma dhīṛghāṁ virahavrataṁ bībharti//
Abhi.Ś, VII, 21.

169. Śakuntalā - na kevalāṁ tātaniyoga eva, asti me sodaraśneḥ api etesu – Abhi.Ś, Act I.

170. Śakuntalā - halā ramaṇīya khālu kāle asya latāpādapamithunasya vyatikaraḥ
samvṛttahāṁavadusumayauvanā vanajyotsnā baddhapallavātayaṁ
upabhogakṣamaṁ sahakāraḥ
Priyārvadā-ānasūye, jānāsi kīṁ śakuntalā hāpyā vauvanām atīmātraṁ ātithaṁ
Anasūyā - na khalu vibhāvayāmi kathaya
Priyārvadā-yathā vanajyotsnā anurūpeṇa pādapena saṅgatā api nāma
evamahamapi ātmānaḥ anurūpeṇa vaṁśi labheya iti
Śakuntalā - eṣa nūnaṁ tava ātmaṁ ātmaṁ manorathaḥ – Abhi. Ś, Act I.
of them fall in love with each other. Sakuntalā feels that her heart goes against the purity of the penance-grove (tapovanaviruddha). But she is not a willful girl who would respond to the impulses of her youthful heart. She is affectionate, obedient and dutiful daughter of her father.

The sage Kaṇva like an ideal father nurtures his daughters with love, affection and attention, providing them good education and training. When he goes on a pilgrimage for appeasing her forward destiny, he gives Sakuntalā the responsibility to entertain the guests171. And Sakuntalā also, like an obedient daughter shows hospitality to the king, and also cares the plants, creepers, animals and birds of the penance grove with sisterly affection. At this point of time Sakuntalā's mind appears to swing in between the love of her father and the desire of her beloved. Though she has intense love and desire for Duṣyanta, yet her modesty prompts her to be quite firm in her proposal to yield to him172. But it is the irresistible persuasion of the king, which later on prompts her to give consent on uniting with him through the Gāndharva system of marriage in the absence of her father.

After this marriage, the king Duṣyanta leaves for his capital, with the assurance of taking Sakuntalā there within a very short time.

171. Vaikhānasah- idānīmeva duhitaram sakuntalām atithisatkārāya niyujya daivamasyāḥ pratikūlaṁ śamayitum somatīrtham gataḥ- Abhi. Ś, Act I.

172. Sakuntalā - paurava, rakṣa vinayam i madanasantarapāpi nahi ātmanah prabhavāmi - Abhi. Ś, Act I.
But due to her misfortune the curse of the sage Durvāsā fell on Śakuntalā, and on account of this the king repudiates everything about his marriage. The sage Kanva after learning about the marriage of her daughter, showers his unstinted blessings on her, and makes arrangements to send Śakuntalā to the abode of her husband. Śakuntalā, getting ready with the bridal dress and ornaments and also with her pregnancy, now, from her entity as a daughter, is growing into the bride and finally an ideal wife. The advice given by Kanva to his daughter Śakuntalā would testify the above fact. The sage advises his daughter to serve her elders, act the part of a darling friend towards her co-wives, even if insulted she should not show a refractory spirit against her husband; be vastly courteous towards her attendants, and be not puffed up in fortune—because in this way do young women attain the position of a grhini, while the perverse are the bane of their family. In another beautiful verse in the same act father Kanva again gives advice to his daughter with the following words - Being stationed in the honorable position of a grhini of a noble born husband, and distracted every moment with his affairs, grand by reason of excessive wealth, and having within a short time brought forth a holy son, as the east gives birth to the holy sun, you will not, my child,

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173.  

ṣuṣrūṣvasva gurūn kuru priyāsakhīvyṛt̄t̄m sapatnījane,  
bharturvipraktāpi roṣanatavyā māśma pratīpaṁ gamaḥ/  
bhūyisthaṁ bhava daksinā pari jane, bhogośvanutseinī  
yāntyevaṁ grhiniṣpadam yuvatayo, vāmāḥ kulaśādhayaḥ/  

Abhi. Ś, IV, 18.
mind the pangs of separation from me. Through the above advices given by Kanva to his daughter, Kalidasa very skillfully portrays the picture of an ideal wife and also the would be motherhood. It is generally known that the personality of a woman is not complete unless she acquires the status of motherhood. Perhaps Kalidasa with this idea in mind has intended to depict Sakuntalā as a complete and real woman.

An appealing aspect of the character of Sakuntalā is her love of nature. Nature and Sakuntalā seem to be inseparably related to each other. Being brought up in the midst of the nature, Sakuntalā considers the trees and animals of the hermitage as her kith and kin, and is interested in their delights and sorrows. She cannot drink water until the trees and creepers are watered, she, though fond of ornaments never pluck the new tendrils out of affection for them, and for whom it is the greatest festivity when the trees first put forth their blossoms.

At the time of her departure towards her husband’s abode, Sakuntalā finds it difficult to move forward, leaving away the

174. abhijanavato bhartuh śiśghye sthitā grhiṇipade
   vibhava-r kṛtyai stasya pratikṣanāma kulā /
   tanayamācīrāt prācīvārkam prasūya ca pāvamaṁ
   mama virahajāṁ na tvam vatsa! śucam gāyaśyasi //
   Abhi. Ś, IV, 19.

175. Kāśyapaḥ - ................
   pāturī na prathamaṁ vyavasyati jalarī yuṣmāsvapīteṣu yā
   nā’datte priyamaṇḍanai’pi bhavatāṁ snehena yā pallavām /
   ādye vaḥ kusumaprasūtisasaye yasyā bhavatūtāvaḥ
   seyam yāti sakuntalā patigṛhaṁ sarvairanujñāyatāṁ //
   Abhi. Ś, IV, 9.

157
hermitage, in spite of the fact that she is eager to meet her husband. She bids farewell to the creepers of the hermitage with an afflicted heart, and entrusts them under the care of her friends. She shows serious concern over the parturient female deer and requests her father to send her information of her safe delivery. And the moment she is ready to move forward, the motherless fawn that she reared up with the motherly affection, does not forsake her way, and with tearful eyes she gently cares it and persuades it to stay in the penance-grove.

In this way Śakuntalā accompanied by Gautamī and the two disciples of Kaṇva, enters the court of the king Duṣyanta, her beloved husband. But at that point of time the king is not the same man whom she met at the hermitage, and gave her maiden heart to him. Duṣyanta, under the spell of Durvāsa’s curse forgets everything about his marriage, and consequently does not want to accept her as his wife.

176. Śakuntalā - halā priyaṁvade, nanu āryaputraraṁotsukāyā api āśramapadaṁ parityajantya duḥkha duḥkhena me caraṇau purataḥ pravartete-Abhi. Ś, Act IV.

177. Śakuntalā - tata, eṣā uṭajaparyantacārīṇi garbhabhūramanthaṁ mṛgavadhūḥ yadā anaghaprasvā bhavati, tada me kamapi priyanivedayitāraṁ visarjayiṣyasi- Abhi. Ś, Act IV.

178. Kāśyapaḥ- 
yasya tvayā vraṇaviropanaṁgudīnāṁ 
tailam nyāśicyata mukhe kuśasūcividdhe / 
śyāmākamūṣṭiparivardhitako jahāti 
so’yam na putrakṛtakaṁ padaviṁ mṛgaste // 
Abhi. Ś, IV, 14.
Not only that, he also accuses her of falsehood. As an ideal Indian woman Sakuntala suffers everything silently and with great patience. Without blaming her husband for her helpless condition, she only blames her destiny. Here it seems that Sakuntala tries to realize the duties of the Ideal Indian wife in her own life, as advised by her foster-father earlier.

But the patient picture of Sakuntala changes at that very moment when the king makes the remark that the women are fraudulent by nature, by giving the example of the female cuckoo who gets its own eggs hatched by the ignorant crow. These words uttered by the king appear to be a stroke of a whip, not only on her character but also on her future motherhood. Sakuntala as a wife was silent so long, but the mother in her entity rouses her with bitter remark towards Duṣyanta. Here it appears that the wife Sakuntala is slowly fulfilling herself with the attributes of motherhood.

Having deserted by the king Duṣyanta and also by the ascetics, Sakuntala has been picked off by the heavenly nymph Menakā.

179. Purodhāḥ - .................
    sa nindanti svāni bhāgyāni bālā bāhūtkṣepāṁ kranditurī ca pravṛttā /
    Abhi. Ś, V, 30.

180. Rājā -
    strīnāmaśīkṣitapaṭutvamamānusūṣāṁ
    sarṇārṣyate kimuta yāḥ pratibodhavyah āḥ /
    prāgantarikṣaṇaṁ svamapatyajātām
    anyairdvijāṁ parabhṛtāṁ kila poṣayanti //
    Abhi. Ś, V, 22.

181. Śakuntalā(saroṣam)- anārya ātmano hrdayānumānena kila sarvaṁ
    pṛekṣāṣe i ka ṛddhimaṁyo dharmakāṅcukapraśīnas-
    tṛṇacchannakūpopamasya tavānukṛtiṁ pratipatsyate- Abhi. Ś, Act V.
who took her away to a safe place\textsuperscript{182}. Menakā thereafter keeps Sakuntalā in the hermitage of the sage Mārīcā, where she has been leading a life of penance and rigid self-discipline\textsuperscript{183}. This Sakuntalā is not the same sportive and lively maiden whom we meet in the hermitage of Kaṇva, but the mother of a son, a calm and quiet lady silently suffering her fate. When Duṣyanta after a long period of repudiation comes in front of Sakuntalā, the thirsty heart of Sakuntalā becomes filled up with unbounded joy\textsuperscript{184}. The king begs pardon for his cruel behaviour towards Sakuntalā, and falls at her feet. But she resists him from doing so, saying that all those incidents happened in her life due to her ill luck and the king Duṣyanta is not responsible for that\textsuperscript{185}. At that point of time not a single word with blame comes out from the mouth of Sakuntalā. Here it is also significant that the motherhood in Sakuntalā becomes fruitful and glorious and it is because of his son Sarvadamana that Sakuntalā has been re-united with her husband Duṣyanta, and as a result she becomes a happy wife later on.

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{182. Purodhā -} \\
strīsaṁsthānaṁ ca paurastīrthamārādaṁ uktṣipyāśināṁ jyotirekaṁ jagāma / \\
Abhi. Ś, V, 30.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{183. (a) Dvitīyā -} imāṁ vṛttāntāṁ niyamavyāprāṇīyai śakuntalāyai nivedayāvaḥ - \\
Abhi. Ś, Act VII.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{(b) Abhi. Ś, VII, 21.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{184. Śakuntalā -} jayatu, jayavṛryaputraḥ - Abhi. Ś, Act VII.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{185. Śakuntalā-uttisṭṭhatu uttisṭṭhatu āryaputraḥ} naṁ me sucaritapratibandhakaṁ purākṛtam teṣu divaseṣu pariñāmāmukham āśiṣṭi yena sāṅkuroṣo’pi āryaputro mayi tathāvidhah saṁvṛttarḥ - Abhi. Ś, Act VII.
\end{flushright}

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Thus, Kālidāsa, the great dramatist with the help of his superb imaginative style depicts the story of the transformation of a maiden into a wife and ultimately as a mother. Within the limited range of the play, Kālidāsa has beautifully portrayed the different roles of an ideal woman, the daughter, the wife and the mother in the character of Śakuntalā and herein lies the grand success of Kālidāsa, the great dramatist.

Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā :- Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā are the two loving friends of Śakuntalā, the heroine of the drama Abhijnānaśākuntalam. They are as if the embodiments of sisterly affection and love. Both of them are of the same age as Śakuntalā and not less beautiful and charming than her. What is most striking in the characters of these two maidens is the selfless and sincere love towards Śakuntalā, their friend. All of their thoughts center round Śakuntalā, and they are always ready to bring happiness in her life, in every possible way. They help Śakuntalā in sprinkling water in the plants and creepers of the hermitage, which has been entrusted to her care by the sage Kaṇva, her foster-father. When she has been in a serious condition being smitten with love, both the friends try to give her comfort and want to know the actual cause of her affliction.

186. राजाः सारसां दर्शानां अहो, मधुरां सारसां दर्शानां।
    सुधांतदुर्लभादार्द्धिर् वपुरां अर्ममवासिनो यात्ज्ञाया।
    दुःर्ख्यताः क्षलू गुणारुद्याणालताः वानालात्भ्री।
    Abhi. ३, १, १६।
which is concealed by her out of shame\textsuperscript{187}. All these reveal their genuine and extraordinary love for their friend Sakuntalā.

Though they are equally loving, simple and friendly by nature yet they differ sharply from each other through their behaviour temperament and style of speaking. While Anasūyā is more serious and thoughtful in understanding; Priyārvadā is more vivacious, quick-witted and clever. Priyārvadā is full of laughter and fun, and foremost in teasing her friend at every possible chance. Anasūyā is tranquil and grave and so it is found that in conformity to her nature she tells the serious matter i.e., the story of Sakuntalā’s birth and heritage. And Priyārvadā, true to her name, makes the king reveal his feeling towards Sakuntalā and also helps to sprout the seed of love, in the mind of both the lovers.

The conversation, which took place between Anasūyā and Priyārvadā at the beginning of the fourth act, reveals clearly the different temperaments of these two maidens. While the former feels anxious about what Duṣyanta would do after entering his capital and meeting with the ladies of seraglio, the later very simply remarks that

\begin{itemize}
  \item Anasūyā - halā Śakuntale, anabhyantarāḥ khalu vayaṁ madanagatasya viṛṭtāntasya i kintu yādṛṣṭi itihāsanibandheṣu kāmayamānānāṁ samavasthā śrūyate tādṛṣṭaṁ te prekṣe i kathaya kim nimittaṁ te santāpaḥ i
  \item Priyārvadā - kimātmāna ātaṅkamukṣase i anudivasāṁ khalu parīhiyase aṅgaiḥ kevalam lāvanyamayī chāyā tvāṁ na muñcati-Abhi. Ś, Act III.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{187} Sakhyau (upavijya sasneham) - halā Śakuntale, api sukhāyate te nalinīpatravātaḥ i
an excellent feature can not be opposed to merit\textsuperscript{188}. Further when Priyaṁvadā is afraid of the reaction of their father on this matter, Anasūyā assures her that he will accept everything, because the prime object of the parents is to bestow a daughter to a worthy bridegroom, has been fulfilled here by the fate itself\textsuperscript{189}. From the above conversation it is evident that Anasūyā is more practical and worldly wise, while Priyaṁvadā is simpler.

But however different they may be in their nature, they show similar concern for Šakuntalā, their loving and affectionate friend. When the short-tempered sage Durvāsā pronounced his curse on Šakuntalā, both of them have been greatly shocked. They intensely think out the means of warding off the curse on their friend. Both of them tried their level best to pacify the quick-tempered sage and word off the curse\textsuperscript{190}. In spite of the severe pangs of separation from their friend, Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā eagerly try to complete the arrangements for her departure. When Šakuntalā gives the charge of vanatoṣiṇī at the hands of her friends, both of them asks her,

\begin{itemize}
  \item Anasūyā - adya sa rājaṛsi riśṭir pariṣambhiyā riśbihirvisṭaḥ ātmano nāgaram praviṣya antaḥpurasaṁśaṁgaṁtaṁ viṣṭaṁ saṁrati vā na vetti
  \item Priyaṁvadā - nahi tādṛśā ākṛtiviṣesā guṇavirodhino bhavanti
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Anasūyā - gunavate kanyaka pratipādanīya ityayam tāvat prathamāḥ saṅkalpaḥ i taṁ yadi daivameva sampādayati, nanu aprayāṣena kṛtārtho gurujanaḥ
  \item Priyaṁvadā - ko'nyaḥ hutavaḥaḥ prabhavati daṅghum i tadgaccha pādayoh praṇamya nivartaya enam yāvadaham ardhodakam upakalpayāmi
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{188} (a)Anasūyā - adya sa rājaṛsi riśṭir pariṣambhiyā riśbihirvisṭaḥ ātmano nāgaram praviṣya antaḥpurasaṁśaṁgaṁtaṁ viṣṭaṁ saṁrati vā na vetti

\textsuperscript{189} (b)Priyaṁvadā - nahi tādṛśā ākṛtiviṣesā guṇavirodhino bhavanti

\textsuperscript{190} Anasūyā - yadā nivartitum naicchati tada paḍeṣu patitvā vijñāpito mayā- bhagavan, prathamamiti prekṣya avijñātatapaḥprabhāvasya duḥitrjanasya bhagavatā eko'parādho marṣītavya iti-Abhi. Ś, Act IV.
"But to whose charge have you bestowed us?" 191 This query of these friends really touches the heart of the readers.

In short Kālidāsa has depicted the ideal and unparallel friendship through the characters of Anāṣūyā and Priyānvadā, the two true friends of Śakuntalā.

Apart from these principal female figures, there are also many female characters in the Abhijñānaśākuntalam such as Gautamī, Sānumatī, Aditi, Subrata and her friend.

Gautamī, the old hermit mother of the hermitage of Kaṇva is a pure and high-minded lady. She acts as a gurdian-figure over the inhabitants of the hermitage. Her concern for the health of Śakuntalā and effort to give her comfort simply testifies her motherly affection 192. At the court of the king Duṣyanta, she wants to convince him of the truthfulness and chastity of Śakuntalā, her tender foster-daughter, and also appeals to Śarṅgarava for the hopeless condition of Śakuntalā 193. All these go to prove the unadulterated love and affection in the heart of a mother towards a daughter.

191. Śakuntalā - halā eṣā dvayorvāṁ haste nikṣepaḥ |
Ubhe- ayam janaḥ idānīṁ kasya haste samarpitaḥ - Abhi. Ś, Act IV.

192. Gautamī - jate, api laghusantāpāṇi te aṅgāni |
.............................................
anena darbhodakena nirābādhaveva te śārīram bhaviṣyati - Abhi. Ś, Act III.

193. Gautamī- vatsa śarṅgarava, anugacchati naḥ karuṇaparidevinī Śakuntalā |
pratyādeśaparūṣe bhartari kim vā me putrikā karotu? - Abhi. Ś, Act, V.

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Sānumatī is a celestial nymph. She is the friend of Menakā, the mother of Śakuntalā. On the request of her friend, Sānumatī goes to the palace of Duśyanta to know the real condition of Śakuntalā. Though she can know everything from a distant by the application of supernatural power Tiraskariniṇīvidyā, yet she goes there personally only to show respect to the affection of her friend. In spite of being a divine woman, Sānumatī’s feelings are quite human. She feels motherly emotion for Śakuntalā. Thus she is delighted at the suffering of Duśyanta, for whom Śakuntalā lives in a pathetic condition till the day. Though Sānumatī appears in the dramatic scene only for a short period, yet she occupies a respectable position in the heart of the readers.

Aditi, the wife of the great sage Mārīca, is the mother of Gods. She makes her appearance in the play for a few minutes, still her character has been depicted by Kālidāsa in conformity to her status. She seems to be a devoted wife, as she desires to know the duties of the chaste wife from Mārīca, her husband. Her blessings to Duśyanta and Śakuntalā reveals her motherly nature. Aditi being the divine mother can guess the anxiety of a father’s heart, so she requests her husband to inform, at length, the sage Kaṇva, about the fulfillment of his daughter’s wish i.e., the happy reunion of

194. Sānumatī-.....asti me vibhavaḥ pranidhānena sarvāṁ pariṣṭhānam i kintu sakhyā ādaro mayā mānayitavyaḥ - Abhi. Ś, Act VI.
195. Sānumatī- ammahe ! idṛṣṭi svakāryaparataṁ i asya santāpena ahaṁ rame - Abhi. Ś, Act VI.
196. Mātāliḥ -kirṇ vravīṣi, dākṣāyaṇyā pativratādharmanadhiḥkṛtya pṛṣṭa stadasyai maharsipatnīgaṇasahitāyai kathayatīti?- Abhi.Ś, Act VII.
Śakuntalā with the king Duśyanta. Subratā and her friend, the two female ascetics, are the foster-mothers of Sarvadamana, the son of Śakuntalā. They appear to have no significant role in the dramatic development of the plot. These two female ascetics, however, take care of Sarvadamana with affection and all sincerity.

Besides the above female figures the minor female characters whom we came across in the play Abhijnānaśakuntalam are Parabhṛtikā, Madhukarikā, Caturikā, Yavanī, Vetravatī and Naṭī.

Parabhṛtikā and Madhukarikā are the two female garden keeper of the pleasure-garden of Duśyanta. These two girls are in their youth, and so they are very happy at the appearance of the vernal season there. With a happy mood, Madhukarikā, in the name of the God of love throws a mango-sprout. Then the chamberlain being angry, enters there and obstructs them to do so, as the king has prohibited the vernal festival. Both of them beg pardon for their mistake, as they know nothing about this matter. Parabhṛtikā further tells that the actual reason of their ignorance is their new appointment in this job. They also want to know the cause, behind the prohibition of the festival. Later on when the chamberlain suggests them to perform their duty, both of them accept this and leave that place.

197. Aditi- bhagavan, asyā duhiṭṭmanorathasampatteḥ caṅvo'pi śrutavistaraḥ kriyatām - Abhi.Ś, Act VII.
198. Prathama - ārya, kati divasāni avayormitrāvāsuna rāṣṭriyeṇa bhartuḥ pādamūlaṁ preṣitayoḥ i atra ca nau pramadavanasya pālanakarma samarpitam i tadāgantukatayā aśrutapūrva āvābhyaṁeṣa vṛttāntah - Abhi.Ś, Act VI.

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The above incidents reveal the politeness, and sincerity of Parabhṛtikā and Madhukarikā towards their respective duties. It also testifies the fact that the female figures, at the time of Kālidāsa were used to be appointed in various fields of activity.

Caturikā is a maidservant, who serves for the king Duṣyanta. Vetravatī is the pratihārī or doorkeeper of the palace of Duṣyanta. Both of them have been depicted as performing their duty with all sincerity and responsibility. Yavanī is the keeper of the weapons of Duṣyanta. She may be a woman who belongs to wild people, who lives in the forest and expert in the use of weapons. These people seem to be trustworthy and loyal. So it is probable that in a duty of such grave importance i.e., the custody of weapons, only trustworthy people can be appointed. Thus Yavanī, possibly belonging to this class of people has been recruited in the weapon house of the king Duṣyanta. The reference of the above characters such as Caturikā, Vetravatī and Yavanī, may point out the fact that female figures were employed in various responsible works specially in the royal families, in the age of Kālidāsa.

Another female character, which is found in the Abhijñānaśakuntalam, is the Naṭī. She is the wife of Sūtradhāra, the stage manager of the play. She, along with her husband, introduces the play before the audience, by means of singing a beautiful song. The character of Naṭī is generally introduced by almost all the dramatists of the classical period, as a customary rule, which has been followed by Kālidāsa also.
THE MĀLAVIKĀGNIMITRAM

Mālavikā :– Mālavikā, the heroine of the play Mālavikāgnimitram is the princess of the Vidarbha Kingdom. But she has been introduced as an attendant of the queen Dhārinī up to the fourth act of the play. Corresponding to her aristocratic birth she is matchlessly beautiful. Mālavikā is not only extremely beautiful but also skilled in the art of dancing and music. It is due to her uncommon beauty that the king Agnimitra, seeing her in a picture for the first time, placed her in his heart. In another place the king remarks that the Lord has, as if, created a poisonous arrow of Kāmadeva, by connecting her natural beautiful form with the performing art.

In the character of Mālavikā the attributes of the different types of heroines, as depicted by Bharata in his Nātyaśāstra, can be met with. So in Mālavikā some of the features of the gandharvaśīlā heroine, in accordance with Bharata can be observed. Mālavikā has beautiful eyes and well-shaped body. She is efficient in

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199. Bakulāvalikā - devi, apūrveyam dārikā tavāsanna likhitā kimnāmadheyeti – Māla, Act I.

200. Rājā -

   avyājasunārēm tāṁ vijñāhena lalitena yoyayatā /
   parikalpito vidhātrā vāṇāḥ kāmasya viṣadigdhaḥ //

   Māla, II, 13.


202. Rājā -

   vipularēn hitambabimbe madhye kṣāmaṁ samunnataṁ /
   kucayoḥ atyāyataṁ nayanayormama jīvitanetadāyati //

   Māla, III, 7.
music and dance\textsuperscript{203}. The characteristic features of the virahotkānthitā heroine \textsuperscript{204} also can be found in Mālavikā. In one place, Mālavikā, by the pangs of separation from Agnimitra, requests her own heart to resist itself from supportless unlimited hope and asks why it gives her futile sufferings\textsuperscript{205}? Agnimitra in another occasion supposes himself to be the cause of affection, which Mālavikā is feeling\textsuperscript{206}.

Mālavikā, who is extremely beautiful, is quite young. She is often referred to as vālā or dārikā in the play\textsuperscript{207}. Mālavikā also appears to be timid by nature. Though her love for the king

\begin{verbatim}
203. Parivājikā -
angairantarnihitavacanaḥ sūcitaḥ samyagarthaḥ
pādanyāso layamanugatastasmayatvaṁ raseṣu /
śākhāyonirmṛḍarabhinayastadvikalpānurvṛttau bhāvo
bhāvaṁ nudati viśayādṛśagavandhaḥ sa eva //
Māla, II, 8.
204. Nātya, 22, 214.
205. Mālavikā-ḥṛdaya ! niravalambandatibhūmilāṅghinaste manorathādvirama;
kim māmāyāsayasi ? Māla, Act III.
206. Rājā ..............................
karomi lakṣyamātmānameśāṁ paridevitānām //
Māla, III, 10.
207. Gaṇadāsah -
yadyat prayogaviśaya bhāvikamupadiśyate mayā tasyai/
tattadvipasakarāṇāṁ pratypadiśatīva me vālā //
Māla, I, 5;
Bakuḷāvalikā - devi aprūveyāṁ dārikā tavāsannā likhitā kimnāmadheyeti
- Ibid, Act I.
\end{verbatim}
is intense but at the same time she is afraid of Dhārīṇī also\(^{208}\). Her timidity has been revealed again even at the recital of the description of the attack of robbers by Parivrājikā Panditkauśikī\(^{209}\).

Malavikā draws the attention of the readers and the audience mainly because of her efficiency in the various branches of art. Gaṇadāsa, the dance teacher of Malavikā admits that his disciple is extremely efficient and talented, and is also surprised at her speedy advancement in the art of dancing\(^{210}\). She has also been highly praised by a connoisseur like Paṇḍitkauśikī, for her superb performance in the chalita dance\(^{211}\). It is the firm belief of Gaṇadāsa that he would be renowned by the quality of Malavikā, because the knowledge of a preceptor excels by creating a good student\(^{212}\).

Malavikā is talented enough to express her love for Agnimitra.

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208. Malavikā- sakhi devīṁ cintayitvā vepate me hṛdayam - Māla, Act IV.
209. Parivrājikā-
\[\text{tuṇṭiraṇṭa pariṇaddhabhujāntarālamākarnaṇalambikhipichakalāpadhāri/}
\text{kodanḍapāṇi ninatpratirodhakānāmāpātadvapradhānāmāvīrabhudanīkam} //
\text{(malavikā bhayaṁ rūpayati) Māla, V, 10.}
210. Gaṇadāsa - bhadre ! vijñāpyatām devī paramāpyataṁ medhāvinī ceti
\text{kiṁ vahunā,}
\text{yadyat prayogaviśaye bhāvikamupadiśyate mayā tasyai /}
\text{tattadvīśakaranāt prayupadiśātīva me vālā //}
\text{Māla, I, 5.}
211. Vide, Ref. No. 203.
212. Gaṇadāsaḥ -bhadre ! mayāpi yaśasvinā bhavitavyam i yataḥ -
\text{pāṭraviśēge nyastāṁ guṇāntaraṁ śilpamādhaṭuḥ /}
\text{Māla, I, 6.}
through the song along with her dancing performance 213.

In spite of her being born of a noble family, Mālavikā has to lead a life of servitude under Dhāriṇī, the chief queen of the king Agnimitra. Her real identity is disclosed at the very end of the play. But it is her extra-ordinary graceful form that already makes Gaṇadāsa to guess that Mālavikā must have come from an aristocratic lineage 214. Mālavikā’s position as a maid servant indeed makes her helpless. Though she extremely loves the king, her shyness restricts her to express it even before her friends, and she does not know how far she would be afflicted by the pangs of love 215. To get the hand of a mighty king like Agnimitra may be taken as an aspiration on the part of a maidservant. Mālavikā also keeps silence, probably because of her belief in the words of the astrologers that; she would get the resembling husband, by living the life of servitude only for one year 216. Sometimes it appears that Mālavikā’s love for the king might result in futility. But it the sheer fate of Mālavikā that Bakulāvalikā and Vidūṣaka Gautama appear there, and give her proper encouragement in her way of love.

213. Mālavikā -
durlabhāḥ priyastasminbhava hrdaya! nirāśāmaho
apāṅgakō me parisphurati kimāpi vāmaḥ/
esa sa ciradṛśṭaḥ kathāḥ punarupanetavyo nātha !
māṁ parādhīnāṁ tvayi parigaṇaya satṛṣṇām //
Māla, II, 4.

214. Gaṇadāsaḥ (svagatam) - ॐक्रत्विश्वासप्रत्ययादिदेवानुवादवस्तुकाम्
sambhāvyaṁī- Māla, Act I.

215. Mālavikā - avijñātahṛdayaṁ bhartāramabhilaṅgantyaṁtmano’pi tāvallajje i kuto vibhavaṁ snigdhasya sakhijanasyemāṁ vṛttāntamākhyāntum? na jāne’pratikāśagurukāṁ vedānāṁ kiyantāṁ kalaṁ madano māṁ nesyātīṁ
............. - Māla, Act III.

216. Parivṛṣṭikā - śṛṣṭāṁ śriyataṁ iyaṁ pitari jīvati kenāpi lokayātrāṇatena

siddhāḥśeṣaṁ śādhuṁ matsamakṣamādiśaṁ saṁvatsaramātṛtmiyaṁ

presyabhāvamanubhūya tataḥ saḍsabhartṛgāminī bhaviṣyatīti -Māla, Act V.
The selection of Mālavikā by the queen Dhāriṇī, for favouring the Aśoka tree with the promise to accomplish Mālavikā’s desire is also a significant step in this direction. All these ultimately makes Mālavikā to win the laurels. At the end of the play Mālavikā appears before us under the bridal wearing apparel and being bestowed by Dhāriṇī at the hands of Agnimitra. Mālavikā has also been entitled with the name of ‘Devī’, that has elevated her to a dignified status.

Thus Kālidāsa, the great dramatist appears to portray the picture of a girl of high family, who through her beauty, innocence, nobleness, and good behaviour, becomes the queen of the hearth and home.

Dhāriṇī :– Dhāriṇī, the chief queen of the king Agnimitra is a significant female character in the play Mālavikāgnimitram. Though she is not the heroine of the play, yet she seems to be the controlling power of the story. The picture of an ideal Indian woman can be met with in the character of Dhāriṇī. She appears to be a true bhāryā who sacrifices her own pleasure for the happiness of her husband, and takes every step for the well-being of her family and all the people around her.

Dhāriṇī for the first time appears in the dramatic scene as a holy personality. To speak in the words of Agnimitra, ‘Being accompanied

217. Devī (mālavikāmavagunṭhanavatiṁ kṛtvā)- āryaputra idāniṁmāṁ pratīcchatu – Māla, Act V.
218. Devī - etasyā rājadārikāyā abhijanenaiva datto deviśabdaḥ kirṇ punaruktena - Māla, Act V.
by Kauśikī, the ascetic and being adorned with auspicious ornaments, she appears like the personification of the triad of the Vedas accompanied by metaphysical lore. Though there is no direct reference about the bodily beauty of Dhāriri, yet a single word can give some hint in this direction. So, Parivrājikā Panḍitkausiki addresses her as ‘induvadanā i.e., a woman whose face imitates the moon, which indicates that Dhāriri is quite charming. In another place Dhāriri is mentioned as a lady of reddish-brown eyes – ‘piṅgalākṣi’. This much is known about the physical beauty of the queen Dhārini. It appears that Kālidāsa desires to portray an ideal wife in Dhārini, who wins and retains the affection of her husband mainly by her self-less devotion, and not much by her personal charm.

In conformity to her high position Dhārini is intelligent and courteous too. The episode of the dance performance of Mālavikā reveals these aspects of the character of Dhārini. She knows well about the nature of her husband, and therefore she tries to keep Mālavikā aside from the sight of the king. But in spite of her continuous effort, Mālavikā has been seen by Agnimitra. Dhārini by her mature

219. Rājā –
maṅgalālaṁkṛtā bhāti kauśikyā yatīveṣaya/
трāyī vigrahavatyeva samamadhyātmavidyayā//
Māla, I, 14.

220. Parivrājikā –
animmattaminduvadane kīmatarbhavataḥ paraṁmukhi bhavasi/
prabhavantyo’pi hi bhartrṣu kāraṇakopāḥ kuṭumvinyah //
Māla, I, 18.

221. Vidūṣaka – sā khalu tapasvinī tayā piṅgalākṣyā sārabhāṇīdabhughe
mṛtyumukha iva niksiptā – Māla, Act IV.

intellect could realize that the inevitable has happened. But she reacts over all these with calm resistance. When the Parivrājikā wants to know the opinion of Dhārīṇī about the dance-contest, the later replies that she does not like such type of quarrel\textsuperscript{223}, which makes it clear that she is quite aware of the reality. Her mild taunt to the king that, if this type of efficiency is applied by him in state affairs, than it will be much better, testifies this point\textsuperscript{224} Though Dhārīṇī has the capacity to stop this contest, thereby throwing cold water to the intension of the king, by using her authority, yet she did not do this. Rather as a chief queen she manages the situation in such a way that may be resulted in the welfare of everybody around her. Being the guardian – angel of the harem, Dhārīṇī’s responsibility is multifarious- she has to maintain not only her own dignity, but also has to keep up the dignity of the king as well as the royal family. Thus it is found that while the frolic of Vidūṣaka Gautama has been crossing the limits, she tells Gaṇadāsa that his disciple has finished her performance\textsuperscript{225}, thereby pointing out that he should remove Mālavikā, ending all these pranks, which are lowering the dignity of the king.

Dhārīṇī’s behaviour towards Irāvatī, her co-wife unfolds another pleasing aspect of her character, which reveals her respect towards the feelings of Irāvatī. In spite of her own statement that her age does not allow her to be influenced by jealousy, yet Dhārīṇī

\textsuperscript{223} Devī - yadī māṁ prccchasi tadaityorvivāda eva na me rocate - Māla, Act I 
\textsuperscript{224} Devī - yadi rājya-kārṣyavidyupāyanipūrṇapratyaputra yataḥ śovanaṁ bhavet - Māla, Act I. 
\textsuperscript{225} Devī - ārya gaṇadāsa! nanu darśitopadāte śīṣyā - Māla, Act II.
on the complaint of Irāvatī keeps Mālavikā in the prison, thereby
gives honour to the words of Irāvatī. Again it is seen that before
presenting Mālavikā to the king, Dharinī takes the consent of Irāvatī
requesting her that she should not deviate her from truth i.e., her
promise to give Mālavikā her desired object. The nobility of the
character of Dharinī can also be seen at her candid admission after
knowing the truth about Mālavikā that; she is guilty of polluting sandal
by using it as footwear.

Dharinī has a sympathetic heart too. Her concern for Vidūṣaka
Gautama when a snake bites him is a testimony to this. While Dharinī
knows that she becomes the cause of the apprehension of the death
of Vidūṣaka, she becomes very sorry. Further being asked by the
physician about a snake-imprinted material for the healing of Vidūṣaka;
she at once gives away her snake-imprinted ring. Dharinī appears
to be a religious minded lady also. This is evident from the fact that

226. Ceti - devi bhaṇati i na me eṣa matsarasya kālaḥ i tava khalu vahumānaṁ
vardhayitum vayasyayā saha nigaḍavandhane kṛtā mālavikā-Māla, Act IV.

227. Devi- yanmayāśokadhadaniyoge mālavikāyai pratijñātaṁ tadasya
abhijanam ca nivedya mama vacaneneravatīmanunaya i tvayāhaṁ satyāṇṇa
paribhramśayitavyeti - Māla, Act V.

228. Devi- katham rajadarikeyam i candanaṁ khalu mayā pādukāparibhogena
duṣitam - Māla, Act V.

229. Devi- hā dhik hā dhik ahameva brāhmaṇasya jīvitasaṁprāyanimittāṁ jātārīmi
- Māla, Act IV.

230. Devi- idarī sarpamudritamaṅguliyakam - Māla, Act IV.

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she has been daily bestowing eighteen gold coins as gifts among the worthy brāhmaṇas, for ensuring long life of Vasumitra, her son, form that very day he has been appointed by his grandfather to guard the sacrificial horse\textsuperscript{231}.

All the above qualities certainly glorify the character of Dhāriṇī, but the most appealing aspects of her character are patience and selfless devotion to her husband, which has been well proved by her in accepting two co-wives. At the first time when Agnimitra gives away his heart to the beautiful Irāvati, Dhāriṇī accepts her as her co-wife because she is committed only to her husband's pleasure. But the test of her endurance does not end here. She has to accept Mālavikā, another co-wife, who is again trying to deprive her of her husband. Yet she is not persuaded by the feelings of anger or envy. It is also true that she has rapidly tried to dissuade the king from Mālavikā, but she has failed in her attempt. Finally she gladly accepts Mālavikā and gives her hands to Agnimitra, her husband. Dhāriṇī does everything only for the sake of her husband. She fulfills the duty of a devoted wife even accepting her rival wife. Parivrājikā beautifully expresses this when she says that the devoted wives serve their husbands even by the means of offering rival wife\textsuperscript{232}. The king also feels the greatness

\textsuperscript{231} Sārasakaḥ - yadāprabhṛti śrutāṁ senāpatinā yaṁnaturaṅgarakṣaṇe niyuko bhartṛdārako vasumitra iti tadaprabhṛti tasyāyunirmittamaṣṭaśaṇuṣvarṇāparīmāṇāṁ dakṣināṁ devi daksāṇīyaḥ parigrāhayaḥ - Māla, Act V.

\textsuperscript{232} Parivrājikā- pratipakṣenāpi patrīṁ sevante bhartṛvatsalaḥ sādhvyah / anyasaritarīṁ śatāni hi samudragaḥ prāpayantyavdhim //
Māla, V, 19.
of Dhāriṇī. Therefore, at the end he says that the only thing he desires is that she may always be pleased with him\textsuperscript{233}.

Dhāriṇī with her loving character, sympathetic heart, desire to make everyone happy, patience, forgivingness and above all love and devotion for her husband, indeed occupied, undoubtedly the position as an ideal Indian woman.

Irāvatī :- Irāvatī, the second wife of the king Agnimitra, has been delineated by Kālidāsa as a proud, jealous and quarrelsome lady. Her very appearance in the play is somewhat different and strange. She enters in the pleasure garden in a state of intoxication, and asks her maidservant whether intoxication has added more beauty to her appearance\textsuperscript{234}. Irāvatī appears to be a charming lady, because she has been often addressed by her husband with the term ‘beautiful waman’\textsuperscript{235}. She is also addressed by the king as a beautiful lady with curly hair\textsuperscript{236}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{233} Rājā -
\begin{IEEEeqnarray*}{rCl}
\text{tvāṁ me prasādasumukhī bhava devī} & & \\
\text{nityametāvadeva hṛdaye pratipālaniyām} & & \\
\text{// Māla, V, 20.}
\end{IEEEeqnarray*}

\item \textsuperscript{234} (tataḥ praviśati yuktamadā irāvatīceti ca)
\begin{IEEEeqnarray*}{rCl}
\text{Irāvatī - haṁje nipuṇike! śṛṇomi vahuśo madaḥ kila strījanasya} & & \\
\text{viśeṣamaṇḍanamiti i api satya eṣa lokavādaḥ? Māla, Act III.}
\end{IEEEeqnarray*}

\item \textsuperscript{235} (a) Rājā - sundari ! na śobhate prāṇayini janē nirapekṣatā - Māla, Act III.
(b) Rājā- kadā mukham varatanu kāraṇādṛte
\begin{IEEEeqnarray*}{rCl}
\text{tavāgataṁ kṣaṇamapi kopaśtratām/} & & \\
\text{aparvaṇi grahakaluṣenduṁanḍalā} & & \\
\text{vibhāvarī kathaya kathāṁ bhaviṣyati//} & & \\
\text{// Māla, IV, 16.}
\end{IEEEeqnarray*}

\item \textsuperscript{236} Rājā -
\begin{IEEEeqnarray*}{rCl}
\text{aparādhiṁ mayi dāṇḍaṁ samharaśi kimudyaṁ kutilakeśi !} & & \\
\text{vardhayasi vilasitaṁ tvāṁ dāsajanāyātra kupyasi ca//} & & \\
\text{// Māla, III, 22.}
\end{IEEEeqnarray*}
\end{itemize}
The characteristic features of the ‘kalahāntaritā’ type of heroine as described by Bharata in his Nāṭyaśāstra\textsuperscript{237}, can be observed in Irāvatī.

Irāvatī is jealous and at the same time quarrelsome by nature. At the advent of the spring season, Irāvatī with the desire to enjoy swing ride with her husband, sends him a message through Nipuṅikā, her maidservant. Accordingly Irāvatī comes in the pleasure-garden in a state of intoxication, and waits for her husband. But unfortunately she finds that Agnimitra is busy in making romance with Mālavikā. It is naturally a great shock to Irāvatī when she finds that her husband is exploring a new source of enjoyment. Thus she becomes jealous and suddenly appears there in a wrathful condition\textsuperscript{238}. She scolds the king, her husband, in very humiliating words. The king then wants to please her in various ways but she does not pay heed to that. He even prostrates on her feet for his behaviour, but disregarding this Irāvatī walks away from this place\textsuperscript{239}.

Irāvatī's anger lasts for a long time and she seems to be unforgiving. This is evident from the fact that she gives complain to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{237} Nāṭya, 22, 216.
\item \textsuperscript{238} Irāvatī - pūraya pūrayaśokaḥ kusumaṁ nanu darśayati āyaṁ punaḥ puṣpati phalati ca - Māla, Act III.
\item \textsuperscript{239} Irāvatī - na khalvimau mālavikācaranau, yau te sparśadhadam pūrayiṣvataḥ - Māla, Act III.
\end{itemize}

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Dharinī against Mālavikā, and also persuades Dharinī to put Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā in chains. It is also seen that, later on in her conversation with Nipuṇikā, Iravatī expresses repentance for her behaviour with the king, and wants to please him. Iravatī is unforgiving and impulsive too. Her changing ideas about Dharinī are a testimony regarding this fact. At first she considers that Dharinī favours Mālavikā as she has been appointed for the purpose of Aśokadohada. But later on when Dharinī at her complain put Mālavikā in chains, Iravatī shows her gratitude by saying that, she has been favoured by the punishment of one's own maid servant. Iravatī's attitude about Dharinī seems to change immediately, when she comes to know that the meeting of Agnimitra and Mālavikā has been arranged in the sea-house, and she take it for granted that Dharinī herself released Mālavikā and thereby shows partiality to her. She has been relieved only after a short while when she comes to know that, the release of Mālavikā is the result of the policy of the clever Vidūṣaka.

Iravatī shows great jealously for Mālavikā. Unlike Dharinī who is a typical wife, she cannot tolerate a co-wife. All the times Iravatī displays suspicion and apprehension for Mālavikā. This is perhaps the reason why she, on looking Mālavikā in the pleasure-garden

240. Rājā- aho dīrgharosatā tatrabhavatāḥ api atah param kathaya api Vidūṣaka - kimatóḥ param api mālavikā vakulāvalikā ca nigaḍapadyāva- dhṛtaśūryapādaṁ pātālavāsaṁ nāgakanyake ivānubhavataḥ - Māla, Act IV.
241. Iravatī- citragatamāryaputraṁ prasādayitum ca - Māla, Act IV.
242. Iravatī- parijananigaḍanena darśito māiyanugrahaḥ - Māla, Act IV.
243. Iravatī- nipuṇike gaccha devīṁ vijñāpaya api drṣṭo bhavatyāḥ pakṣapāto nanvadyeti - Māla, Act IV.
244. Iravatī- iyamasya kāmatantrasacivasya nītiḥ - Māla, Act IV.
remarks with apprehension that it is not the place of Mālavikā
to receive him. Mālavikā’s beauty rouses a sense of fear in her heart, which prompts
her to go to the end of the matter. The fire of jealousy in the mind of Iravati does not extinguish fully till the end. The sea-house episode
is another example in this connection. Irāvatī by this time had realized
that her husband has given his heart to another lady. Yet on seeing
Mālavikā and the king in a romantic mood at the sea-house, she cannot
resist herself from making the ironical remark whether the desire of
union has been fulfilled without any obstacle. Later on she admits
that as her fortune has gone in the hand of other, then anger on her
part would only make her a laughing-stock. When Mālavikā’s actual
identity is revealed, Dhārinī wants to unite her with Agnimitra. But
before that Dhārinī wishes to get the opinion of Irāvatī with regard to
this matter. At this Irāvatī, in a very formal way gives her consent by
stating that, it will be unjust to do otherwise of the promise made by
the powerful queen.

245. Irāvatī (saṅkāṁ rūpayitvā) abhūmiyāṁ mālavikāyāḥ - Māla, Act III.
246. Irāvatī - sthāne khalu kātaram me hṛdayam - Māla, Act III.
247. Irāvatī - āśāṅkitasya tāvadantāṁ gamiṣyāmi - Māla, Act III.
248. Irāvatī - mugdhe yāḍrśaścitragatastādṛśā evānyasaṁkrāntahṛdaya āryaputraḥ
- Māla, Act IV.
249. Irāvatī - api nirvighnamanoratho divāsaṁketo mithunasya - Māla, Act IV.
250. Irāvatī - anyasaṁkrānteśvasmākaṁ bhāgadheyeyu yadi punah kupyeyam
tato hāsyā bhaveyam - Māla, Act IV.
251. Pratiharī (janāntikam) - bhaṭṭīni irāvatī punarvijāpayati i sadṛśarāṁ khalu
devyāḥ prabhavantā vacanāṁ prathamasarāṁkalpitāṁ na yujyate’nyathā
ekartumiti - Māla, Act-V.
Kālidāsa has portrayed indeed a jealous wife in Irāvatī, who can never cross the ocean of envy. Her proud and envious nature cannot tolerate any other woman to share the love of her husband. This attitude of Irāvatī is also justified to some extent if it is considered from the perspective of the feelings of a female heart. Irāvatī with all the flaws of her character appears to be a familiar female figure especially of the present day, which is not ready to share her husband with anybody else at any cost.

Parivṛājikā Pañcītkausikī :- Parivṛājikā Pañcītkausikī is a female celibate, who resides in the palace of the king Agnimitra. Her presence is found all through the play where she plays a significant role in the development of the plot. She is a lady born of noble family. Her brother Sumati is the minister of Mādhavasena. It is her illluck that she has lost her husband at an early age, and she remains helpless after the killing of her brother by the bandits. As a result of this mournful condition, she becomes ascetic and somehow gets entrance to the palace of Agnimitra

Parivṛājikā appears to be a learned woman. This is evident from her benediction to Agnimitra, and her assuring statement to Dhārinī. She has deep knowledge and proficiency in fine arts, music and dance. It is due to her wisdom in this field that Pañcītkausikī has been selected by the king as well as both the dancing masters

252. Parivṛājikā-tato bhṛātuḥ śarīramagnisātkṛtvā punarnavībhūtavaidhavya-duḥkhayā mayā tvadīyaṁ desamavatīryeme kāśāya ṣṛṛīte - Māla, Act V.
253. mahāsaraprasavayoh sadṛśakṣamayordvyoh/ dhāriṇībhūtadhāriṇyorbhava bhartā śaracchatam// Māla, I, 15.
Haradatta and Gaṇadāsa as a judge to evaluate the dancing performance of Mālavikā\(^{255}\). The appreciation made by Paṇḍitkauśikī about Mālavikā’s performance also goes to prove her insight in the art of dancing\(^{256}\). She appears to be a good story-teller, and a respected companion of Dhāriṇī. It is seen that while the latter has been suffering from pain in her foot, Parivrājakā tells her a story, which is appreciated by Dhāriṇī as a beautiful story\(^{257}\). She has some knowledge about the science of medicine also, which is evident form the fact that when the Vidūṣaka is reported to have been bitten by a snake, she suggested the remedy of cutting off the effected finger quoting authority for the same\(^{258}\). She seems to be efficient in the art of decorating, which is revealed by the request made by Dhāriṇī to decorate Mālavikā in the bridal

\(^{255}\) Rājā – bhagavatī atrabhavorharadattaganadāsayaḥ parasparam
    vijnānasārgharṣo jaṭaḥ | tadatra bhagavatyā prāśnikapadamadhyāsītavyam
    . . . . .

Ācāryau - samyagāha devaḥ | madhyasthā bhagavati guṇadoṣau naḥ pari -
    cchettumahati - Māla, Act I.

\(^{256}\) Parivrājakā –
    aṅgairantarnihitavacanaḥ sūcitaḥ samyagarthah
    pādanyāso layamanugatastānmayatvarah raseṣu/
    śākhāyonirmpīdurabhinayastadvikalpānuṛttāu
    bhāvo bhāvarā ṃudatī viṣayādrāgavandhāḥ sa eva//
    Māla, II, 8.

\(^{257}\) Devī - bhagavatī ramaṇīyarāṁ kathāvastu | tatāstataḥ - Māla, Act IV.

\(^{258}\) Parivrājikā - tena hi daṁśacchedaḥ pūrvakarmeti śrūyate | sa tāvadasya
    kriyatāṁ
    chedo daṁśāsya dāho vā kṣaterva raktamokṣaṇāṁ/
    etāni daṣṭamātrāṁmāyuṣyāḥ pratipattayaḥ//
    Māla, IV, 4.
make-up, at the moment of giving her away to the king in marriage\textsuperscript{259}.

Parivrājikā is discreet and far-sighted too. When she makes her entrance into the palace of the king Agnimitra, she certainly comes to know the actual identity of Mālavikā, but she does not disclose this to anybody else and has been waiting for a proper opportunity. It seems that her silence is due to her firm belief in the words of a sage, which foretold that Mālavikā would get a suitable husband after passing only a year of servitude\textsuperscript{260}. Being a celibate, Parivrājikā cannot take direct part in progressing the cause of Mālavikā, yet she indirectly extends her help for bringing Mālavikā to the presence of Agnimitra. It is she who incites Gaṇadāsa, introducing Mālavikā on the stage, by her statement that a good teacher is one who not only teaches well but also assists others to exhibit his or her skill\textsuperscript{261}: Again her choice of particular type of dance and the piece to be sung by the contestants goes to help Mālavikā to get fulfilled her aim. It is because when it is actually performed it appears to be a direct approach of love to the

\begin{itemize}
\item 259. Vidūṣakaḥ - adya kila devyā paṇḍitakaśikā bhaṇītāḥ bhagavati yattvaṁ prasādhanagarvaṁ vahari taddarśaya mālavikāyāḥ śaṅre vairadbhaṁ vivāhanepathyamiti tayā ca saviśeṣālaṁkṛtā mālavikā - Māla, Act V.
\item 260. Parivrājikā - iyaṁ pitarī jīvati kenapi lokāytrāgatena siddhādeśena sādhunā matsamakṣamādiśṭā saṁvatsaramātramiyam preṣyabhāvamanubhūya tataḥ sadṛśabhartṛgāminī bhaviṣyatī tadavaśyambhābinamādesāmasyāstvat-pādaśusrūṣayā pariṇāmantamavekṣya kālapratīkṣayā mayā sādhukṛtamiti paśyāmi - Māla, Act V.
\item 261. Parivrājikā -
śīloṣṭā kriyā kasyaciddātmasarāṁsthā saṁkrāntiranyasya viśeṣayuktāḥ yasyobhayaṁ sādhu sa śikṣaṅkānāṁ dhuri pratiṣṭhāpayitavya eva// Māla, I, 16.
\end{itemize}
king from her side. Further Parivrājikā's suggestion about the entrance of the participants on the stage with beautiful dress and make-up, which heighten the beauty of all the limbs of the body\(^{262}\), also goes to reveal the beauty of Mālavikā and thereby attracting the attention of Agnimitra. Thus Parivrājikā in an indirect and impartial way planned the situation skillfully to achieve the desired purpose. And when the union of Mālavikā and the king Agnimitra fulfills her aim, Parivrājikā wants to retire, but it is the loving persuasion of the king and the queen that she has to change her decision.

Parivrājikā is an unique example of a female figure, who in spite of being an ascetic finds interest in the worldly affairs.

Besides the principal female figures in the play Mālavikāgnimitram, there are some other female characters, which have been depicted by Kālidāsa. The names of Bakulāvalikā, Nipuṇikā, Kaumudikā, Samabhṛtikā and Jyotsnikā may be cited in this connection. All of them are maidservants in the court of the king Agnimitra. But their own characteristic features distinguish them from one another.

Thus Bakulāvalikā, who is only an attendant of the queen Dhārīṇī, is a girl of good manner and refinement. She is the only friend of Mālavikā, who admires her beauty and helps her in the course of getting the love of the king. While Mālavikā is getting anxious about the queen in her way of love, Bakulāvalikā encourages

\(^{262}\) Parivrājikā - sarvāṅgasauṣṭhavabhīvyaktaye viraḷanepathyayoh patrayoh praveśo’stu - Māla, Act I.
her by saying that, she should prove the words of the learned that the
test of love is done only in love, thus showing the necessity of becoming
bold in her action\textsuperscript{263}. Again it is seen that when Mālavikā requests her
to become helpful at the time of grief, Bakulāvalikā with the charming
pun remark that she is Bakulāvalikā which gives more fragrance, the
more it is crushed\textsuperscript{264}. Finally Bakulāvalikā reassures Mālavikā when
the later despairs about the accomplishment of her desire by saying
that, the queen is true to her promise\textsuperscript{265}. This sentence clearly indicates
Bakulāvalikā’s respect and devotion, and also her faith on the queen
Dhāriṇī. Her ready resourcefulness and the sweet and clever way of
talking reminds us of the character of Priyaṁvada in the
Abhijñānaśākuntalam.

Nipuṇikā, the friend and maidservant of Irāvatī seem to be a
very clever girl. Her flattering statements to her mistress clearly
testify this fact. When Irāvatī, in a state of intoxication, enquires
whether her charm has increased due to intoxication; Nipuṇikā, in
agreeable words, says that earlier it was a public rumour, but now it
happens to be true\textsuperscript{266}. Again being asked by Irāvatī as to how she
could know that the king has entered the pleasure-garden earlier,
Nipuṇikā with the flattering taunt quickly replies, ‘Due to the excessive

\textsuperscript{263} Bakulāvalikā - anurāgo’ nuraṇeṇa parīkṣitavya iti sujanavacanaṁ
pramāṇikuru - Māla, Act III.

\textsuperscript{264} Bakulāvalikā - vimardasurabhirbakulāvalikā khalvaham – Māla, Act III.

\textsuperscript{265} Bakulāvalikā - aśvasitu sakhi satyapratijñā devi - Māla, Act IV.

\textsuperscript{266} Nipuṇikā - prathamarṁ lokavāda eva, adya satyaṁ sarvottataḥ-Māla, Act III.
attraction for the mistress. It appears that Nipuṇikā, like her mistress finds pleasure in giving trouble to other. This is evident from her frightening Vidūṣaka by biting him with a snake-like stick. However, Nipuṇikā is a faithful attendant of her mistress, helping in all her business.

Kaumudikā, Samābhṛtikā and Jyotsnikā are also maid-in-waiting in the harem of Agnimitra. But they have little role in the play.

Apart from these female figures there are two more female characters in this play- they are Madhukarikā and Joyasena. Both of them have different duties in comparison with the above-mentioned characters. Madhukarikā is the garden-keeper of the pleasure-garden of Agnimitra, and Joyasena is the pratiḥārī or doorkeeper in his court. Though they have minor roles in the development of the plot, yet it can be said that both Madhukarikā and Joyasena have performed the duties entrusted to them with all sincerity and responsibility.

THE VIKRAMORVASTYAM

Urvaśī:- Urvaśī, the celestial nymph is the heroine of the play Vikramorvastīyam. She can also be termed as the heavenly prostitute. In conformity to her position she is very much beautiful and accomplished with the various branches of art such as music, dancing and acting etc. She is admired by Indra and others in the heaven for her matchless beauty and accomplishment. But in this play, Kālidāsa introduces Urvaśī in a quite different way. Here she is the beloved of

267. Nipuṇikā - bhaṭṭīnyā akhaṇḍitāt praṇayāt – Māla, Act III.

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Purūrvas, a mortal king whom she loves with all sincerity and for whom she could even abandon the splendid life of the heaven.

Urvaśī has fallen in love with Purūrvas from the very day she has been rescued by him from the demon Kesī. The king is also fascinated by the extra-ordinary beauty of the heavenly nymph. According to him Urvaśī’s appearance is the ornament of ornaments even, special decoration of decorations, and the competing standard of comparison of a standard of comparison even. Urvaśī appears to be bold in her attempt of getting her desired person. So, she herself, with the help of her friend Citralekha comes to the king, but stays there invisible under the influence of the ‘tiraskarī’ and tries to know his feelings towards her. When the king with sigh says that either Urvaśī does not know his serious mental grief, or she is ignoring him in spite of knowing his love through supernatural power, she at once expresses her attraction for him by the means of a love-letter. Urvaśī’s love for Purūrvas is deep and sincere. She can not think of living a moment without him. She is so much absorbed in her dreams that she fails to perform her heavenly duties. Thus while acting the part of Lakṣmī in the piece ‘Lakṣmīswayamvaram’ she, being

268. Rājā -
ābharaṇasyābharaṇaṁ prasādhanaśvīdeḥ prasādhanaviśeṣaḥ/ upmāṇasyāpi sakhe pratyupamānaṁ vapustasyāḥ //
Vikram, II, 3.
269. Urvaśī – tiraskarīāpratichchannā pārśvagatāśya bhūtvā śroṣyāmi tāvat pārśvaparivartinā vayasyena saha vijane kimapi mantrayamānastiṣṭhati - Vikram, Act II.
270. Urvaśī – hā dhik hā dhik i māmevamavagacchati i asamarthāśmyagrato bhūtvāśya prativacanasya prabhāvanirmitena bhūrjapatreṇa saṃpāditottara bhavitumīcchāmi – Vikram, Act II.
absentminded, utters the term ‘Purūravas’ instead of ‘Puruṣottama’\(^{271}\). As a result of this she has been cursed by Vṛhaspati to go away from the heaven, but it is Indra who becoming a mediator permits her to live with Purūravas, as long as he does not see his child born of Urvasī \(^{272}\).

It appears that Urvasī has no feeling of jealousy for the queen Ausinari, her co-wife. This is evident from her appreciating remark about the glowing personality of the queen\(^{273}\). She also has faith on the queen. When Ausinarī gladly promises to accept the beloved of her husband as her relative, Urvasī fully believes her words\(^{274}\). But the absence of jealousy in Urvasī is not met with, at the moment when Purūravas looks at the Vidyādhara maiden. Urvasī becomes enraged at this conduct of the king, and enters into the Kumāravana\(^{275}\). This may be justified on the part of Urvasī, because the conduct of Purūravas is perhaps an insult on her self-esteem. The king even after getting Urvasī, the matchless beauty of the heaven is not satisfied and is looking on a ordinary Vidyādhara maiden.

271. Dvitiyāḥ - tatastaya puruṣottama iti bhanītavye puruṣravarśī nirgatā vāṅśī – Vikram, Act III.
272. Dvitiyāḥ - mahendrenā punah prekṣanāvasāne lajjāvanamukhalī bhanītā yasmin vaddhabhāvāsi tasya me raṇasahāvyasya rājārēḥ priyamatra karaniyamā sā tvāṁ yathākāmaṁ puruṣravarāsamupatiṣṭhasva yāvat sa tvayi drṣṭasantarāno bhavedita– Vikram, Act III.
273. Urvasī- halā sthāne khalviyāṁ devīśabdenopacaryate na kimapi parihāyate śacyā ojasvityā – Vikram, Act III.
274. Urvasī-aho na jāne kimaparamasyā vacanamiti mama punarviśvasaviśadam hṛdayaṁ sarvvyṛttaraṁ – Vikram, Act III.
275. Citralekha - tatra khalu mandākinyāḥ pulineṣu sīkatāparvatakelībhīḥ krīḍantī vidyādharaṅḍrikodayavatī nāma tena rājārśiṁā cīrāṁ nīdhyāteti kupitorvaśī– Vikram, Act IV.
Urvasī has a great sense of duty also. Her passionate love for the king does not make her forget his duties. It is she who coming back to life again by the touch of the 'saṅgamanīya' jewel, reminds him about his duty of looking after his subjects, when Purūravas is out of his capital for a long time for enjoying the company of Urvasī. She also reminds his son Āyu to bow down before Auśīnarī, his elder mother, which reflects Urvasī's nobility of character.

The flaw which is found in the sweet character of Urvasī is hiding of her son Āyu from his father Purūravas. In spite of the fact that she knows the agony of the king for his childlessness, Urvasī keeps silence until it is impossible to hide the matter any further. Urvasī keeps Āyu away from his father because she is afraid of separation from her beloved, which will happen when Purūravas will behold his son. Here it appears that the mother in Urvasī has been defeated by her identity as the beloved. Urvasī by her faultless grace, nobility of character, and above all with her sincerity in love will leave an impression in the heart of the readers and audience.

Devī (Auśīnarī) :- Auśīnarī is the chief queen of the king Purūravas and the daughter of Kaśīrāja. She has been portrayed by Kālidāsa as an ideal chaste and devoted wife, who is always eager to accommodate her husband.


277. Urvaśī - yadā sa mama priyasakho rājarṣistvai samuṭpannasya varṇākarasya mukhaṁ prekṣiyate tadā bhūyo'pi mama samāpamāṅgantavyamiti : tato mayā mahārājaviyogabhūtaya jātamātra eva vidyāgamanimittaṁ bhagavataścyavanasyāśramapade eṣa putra āryāyaḥ satyavatyā haste'prakāśaṁ nīkṣiptaḥ - Vikram, Act V.
The fact that Purūravas loves the celestial nymph Urvaśī makes Auśīnarī unhappy. The moment when Auśīnarī finds the love-letter of Urvaśī to Purūravas and thereby for the first time learns about Purūravas affection for Urvaśī, she becomes really shocked. The perfidiousness of the king makes her angry. Purūravas wants to beg pardon for his behaviour by prostrating Auśīnarī²⁷⁸, but the latter does not pay heed to this and walks away immediately from that place. But her soliloquy at that time reveals that she is in the throes of repentance²⁷⁹. A good wife cannot be discourteous to her husband. This idea agitates her consciousness to a great extent. She is constantly thinking over the means of pleasing her husband, and ultimately she undertakes the 'priyānuprasādhana'— the vow to be reconciled with her husband²⁸⁰.

In accordance with the above vow Auśīnarī invites the king to the Maniharmya palace, and there witnessing the divine couple Rohinī and the Moon, she desires to satisfy her husband with the words that, she will be tied up with a bond of affection to the lady whom her husband loves²⁸¹. Thus she gives consent to the marriage of the king with Urvaśī, his beloved. Again, in a reply to the query of the Vidūṣaka

278. Rājā -
aparādhi nāmāhāṁ prasīda rambhoru virama saṁrambahāṭ /
sevyo janasca kuptaḥ kathaṁ nu dāso niraparādhaṁ/
(iti pādayoḥ patati) Vikram, II, 21.

279. Devī- mā khalu laghuḥṝdayāhamununayaṁ vahu manye kiṁ tvā -
dāśiṇyakṛtāt paścāttāpādvibhemi - Vikram, Act II.

280. Rājā-kiṁnaṁadheyameteddevyā vratamā√√
Nipuṇikā-bhartāḥ priyānuprasādhanam nāṁ - Vikram, Act III.

281. Devī- adyaprabhṛti yāṁ striyamāryaputraḥ pṛarthayate yā cāryaputrasya
samāgamapraṇayinī tayā saha mayā pṛtīvandhena vartitavyamiti - Vikram, Act III.
whether the king is so much fond of the queen, she says that she
desires to make her husband happy even at the cost of her own
happiness, which will indicate undoubtedly her love for her husband\textsuperscript{282}.

Thus Auśīnarī, as a real Pativrata accepts her co-wife without
the least jealousy, and without putting obstacles in the way of both
Urvaśī and Purūravas. Here Auśīnarī appears to be an ideal Indian
woman who cannot see her husband in distress, and endeavours to
make her husband happy at any cost.

Citralekha:- Citralekha, a celestial nymph is the friend of Urvaśī. Her
love towards Urvaśī prompts her to come in the mortal world, and
helps her friend in various ways to attain her desire. She acts as a
mediator in the way of Urvaśī’s love for the king. Citralekha on behalf
of her friend conveys Urvaśī’s message of love to the king Purūravas.
Again, it is she who assures Urvaśī of union with her beloved, after
hearing the promise made by the queen\textsuperscript{283}. And after the union of
Urvaśī with the king, when Citralekha requests her friend to bid her
farewell without the least feelings of sorrow in her mind, it really touches
the heart of the readers. Citralekha is a real friend, intelligent counsellor
and ever conscious helper of Urvaśī.

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282. Devī- mūḍha ahaṁ khalvātmanāḥ sukhāvasānāryaputraṁ nivṛttasāriṁaṁ
kartumīcchami etāvatā cintaya tāvat priyo no veti – Vikram, Act III.
\hline
283. Citralekha - sakhi mahanubhāvaya pativratayābhyanujñāto'nantarāyaste
priyasaṁgamo bhaviṣyati – Vikram, Act III.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Besides Citralekhā there are some other friends of Urvaśī, all of whom are heavenly damsels. They are Sahajanyā, Rambhā, Menakā and others. These female characters have little role in the dramatic development of the play as they appear in the dramatic scene only for a short period. Yet they have been delineated by the dramatist as the loving companions of Urvaśī. When the demon Keśi kidnapped Urvaśī along with Citralekhā, they shout for rescue. The king Purūravas who is coming on this way hears their shout and immediately goes to rescue Urvaśī. Within a short while, when the king returns back along with Urvaśī and Citralekhā, all the friends become glad at the arrival of their friend. They express their respect and gratitude to the king for the help he has extended to their friends 284.

Apart from the above celestial damsels, the rest of the female figures which can be met with in the Vikramorvaśīyam are Satyavaṭī, Nipuṇīkā and Yavanī.

Satyavaṭī a female ascetic, is the foster-mother of Āyu, the son of Urvaśī and Purūravas. Urvaśī after the birth of her son keeps him under the care of Satyavaṭī, who brings him up with utmost care and affection. Her husband Cyavana performs the necessary ceremony prescribed for the Kṣatriyas. Āyu has been taught the Dhanurveda after the completion of the Vedic teaching. Satyavaṭī comes in the court of Purūravas to take back his son Āyu, who is in his youth and capable of holding the amulet 285. She appears to be very affectionate

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284. Rambhā- sakhyāḥ eta priyakārīṇāṁ saṁbhāvayāmo rājārśim - Vikram, Act I.
285. Tāpasī- ēṣa gṛhitavidya āyuḥ sāmṛtataṁ kavacaharaḥ saṁvṛttataṁ tadetasya te bhartuḥ samakṣaṁ niryātito hastanikṣepeḥ tadavisarjavayitumicchāmi - Vikram, Act V.
to her foster-son. When Āyu requests her to send the little peacock, named Manikaṇṭaka, she, with smile, agrees to fulfil his demand.

Nipuṇikā is the maidservant of the queen Auśīnarti. Her character is almost similar to the character of Nipuṇikā found in the Mālavikāgnimitram. She seems to be very clever in her act of knowing the secret matter. The way in which she makes the Vidūṣaka reveal the secret affair of Purūravas and Urvaśī, is evident of this fact. She gives the queen the report of the entrance of the king in the creeper-house, according to which Auśīnarti waits there to know his secret words, and there she, by chance, gets the love-letter of Urvaśī and thereby knows everything about the love of her husband for the latter. So, it may be said that Nipuṇikā is a faithful attendant of the queen, who with great sincerity helps her mistress in every situation.

The character of Yavanī, which is found in this play is a bit peculiar. She is the keeper of weapons of the king Purūravas. Here it may be mentioned that the similar named character can be met with in the Abhijñānaśakuntalam, the masterpiece of Kālidāsa also.

286. Nipuṇikā - ārya yannimittaṁ bhartotkaṇṭhitastasyāḥ striyā nāmadheyena bharrī devyālapitā।
   Vidūṣakaḥ - kimāmantrī tatrabhavyurvaśītī tasyā apsaraso
darśanenonmāditastatrabhavānna kevalaṁ tatrabhavatīṁ māmapi
   vinodavimukho dṛṇharīṁ pīdayati - Vikram, Act II.

287. Nipuṇikā - bhattini, tadeva kaūīnāmiva pratibhāti।
bhartāramuddiśyorvaśyāḥ kāvyavandha iti tarkayāmi।
   āryamāṇavakapramādenavayorhasaṁ gata iti - Vikram, Act II.
From a study of the different female figures coming under different categories, as depicted in the plays of Kālidāsa, it appears that they are natural and teeming with human feelings. The idealisation of the female figures in these plays is also significant. Dhārinī is an ideal devoted wife, Śakuntalā is an ideal lady-love, and Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā are ideal friends. Realism, greatness and idealism make these characters unique. The vivacity and spontaneity of the female figures in the plays of Kālidāsa is also a charming aspect. Characters like Mālavikā, Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā with their liveliness and spontaneity become very attractive. The comparatively minor characters such as Bakulāvalikā, Sānumatī etc. also have been delineated by Kālidāsa with great care. And perhaps the most significant aspect regarding the female characters in the plays of Kālidāsa is their love for nature. The attitude of Śakuntalā especially, towards nature and her intimate relation with the natural objects is striking. Although Kālidāsa has composed his plays many centuries ago, his superb genius has made his female characters so special that they appeal to the people of the present day also as before.

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