ABSTRACT

SAVITRI-FROM EPIC POEM TO STAGE PLAYS: TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION, TRANSLATION ISSUES, AND THE PASSAGE FROM INDIA

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This thesis is a translation thesis of a classical Thai play called Savitri. It was written by King Vajiravudh of Siam and it is based on a story in the Indian epic The Mahabharata. The play was translated from Thai to English, and it was adapted into a 13 minute version in a storytelling approach. Along with the translation and adaptation, this thesis also includes a chapter on translation theories which contains the translator’s issues in the translating process and the theories of translation. Since the tale of Savitri is originally from India, there is also a chapter on how the Indian culture, literature, and traditions, including the epic Mahabharata traveled to Thailand and how they affect Thai people and culture.
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Foreword

As a courtesy, I would like to begin this thesis with a brief biography of the playwright, King Vajiravudh of Siam.

King Rama VI of Siam, also known as King Mongkutklao or King Vajiravudh, was born on January 1st, 1880 to King Rama V or King Chulalongkorn and Queen Saowaphaphongsi. He received his early education in the Royal Palace, and at the age of fourteen he was sent to England to continue his higher education. He was the first King to be educated in a foreign country. While staying in Ascot, England, his older brother, the Crown Prince Vajirunhis, passed away. King Rama V then named Prince Vajiravudh the heir to his throne. The ceremony took place in the Siamese Embassy (the name of the country was not changed to Thailand until 1949) in London, England. To prepare himself to be the ruler of the country, Prince Vajiravudh received education in subjects both related to humanity and military. He attended military training at Sandhurst and studied History and Law at Oxford University. After his graduation, Prince Vajiravudh moved to Paris, France, and visited various countries in Europe. He had lived abroad for nine years before he returned to Siam in 1902. He became the King of Siam on October 23rd, 1910 and ruled the country for 15 years. King Vajiravudh passed away on November 25th, 1925 due to the blood poisoning in his abdomen.

During the reign of King Vajiravudh, he accomplished much to improve the welfare of the country. He established the Primary Education Act that required children to attend school from age seven to fourteen. He founded Vajiravudh College from the school for the royal attendants and
changed the status of the Civil Service College to Chulalongkorn University, which became the first University in Thailand. It was named in honor of his father, King Rama V. He created the Wild Tiger Corps which is a “nationwide mass paramilitary corps. Its chief stated function was to defend ‘nation, religion, and king’ against all enemies, domestic and foreign, and to promote the unity of the Siamese nation” (Wyatt 212). The Wild Tiger Corps was later complemented by a junior Boy Scout movement which has lasted until the present day. King Vajiravudh introduced democracy to the nation and taught the Siamese people about self-governing. He experimented with the process of democratic government in many different miniature cities, starting with the royal attendants, and then expanded it into a larger sphere. The most renowned and developed miniature city was called “Dusit Thani,” located in Dusit Palace. During World War I, the King declared war against Germany, Austria, and Hungary and sent Siamese soldiers to battle in Europe. After the war, King Vajiravudh changed the Siamese national flag from a white elephant with a red background to the tri-colored flag that Thailand continues to use. The colors are red, white, and blue, which coincide with the color of the flags of the Allies during the World War I. However, the colors of the Siamese flag have a deeper meaning; the red represents the nation, the white represents religion, and the blue represents the King himself. Being on the victor’s side of the war brought benefits to Siam including an opportunity to discuss and change the unfair treaties that were disadvantageous to Siam with the powerful nations that perpetuated them.
Drama, literature, and other diverse fields interested the King since he was young. He started writing while studying in England and founded a weekly journal for children called “The Screech Owl.” He produced many works of writing in his lifetime with different names and pennames. The summary of his work is as follows:

- 167 Khon (traditional Thai mask drama) and play scripts
- 157 short stories and comedies
- 278 newspaper articles
- 151 poetries
- 100 documentaries

King Vajiravudh was the first King who used newspapers to communicate with his people and he also allowed the readers to write back to him their response to his articles. Most of his works based on the promotion of nationalism in order to teach his people to love their nation. Apart from his original works he also translated works from other well-known playwrights, such as, Shakespeare, Moliere, Sheridan, etc. He sometimes composed his plays first in English and then translated them into Thai. Furthermore, King Vajiravudh was skilled in all kinds of Thai poetry writing and his works include both traditional and contemporary styles. Apart from composing, King Vajiravudh also worked as an actor, director, and producer. He later became known as “The Father of Thai Drama.”

For his work as a writer, poet, and dramatist, King Vajiravudh received the name “Pramahatheerarajjao” which means “the great philosopher” and was the fifth Siamese man honored and celebrated by UNESCO for his work in the field.
On January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1981, Vajiravudh Memorial Hall was opened in the Thai National Library with the intention of collecting all of his works and all the materials about the life of the King for anyone who is interested in studying or researching the life and works of one of Thailand’s greatest poets.

\textit{Sāvitrī} was the last play composed before King Vajiravudh’s death, and he wrote it for his wife, Queen Suwatana.
Introduction

When I looked through the foreign literature and drama section in the libraries in the United States, I found many books, researches, and studies from many countries in Asia. Yet the Thai section seems to always be one of the smallest. There are many studies about Thai literature and culture done in Thailand, but outside of the country it seems like Thailand and Thai literature hasn’t been a subject that is often discussed or rehearsed. As a Theater student, I am interested in translating some works of literature by Thai dramatists into English so that they can reach a larger audience or readers.

Thai community, culture, art, and literature mostly emphasize on beauty, gracefulness, and respect for the elders and higher beings. I chose to translate Sāvitrī because it is a classical work that can greatly portray these elements in Thai culture. The character of Sāvitrī herself is a good model of an ideal Thai woman. She is beautiful, virtuous, respectful, dedicated, and determined. The way she gets her husband, Satyavān, along with other blessings back from Yamā, the god of death, shows us that through courtesy and honesty, a mortal can win the favor of a god. Even though the play was adapted from a story in an Indian epic, *The Mahābhārata*, the story and the characters are familiar to the Thai audience because a large part of Thai culture is heavily influenced by India and the playwright skillfully inserted some Thai elements to the play to make it more Thai.

This thesis consists of four chapters and two appendices. Chapter 1: Translation Issue in Sāvitrī, contains the
translator’s process of translation, along with the major issues that came up during the process and some translation theories. Chapter 2: The Passage from India: the Historical Background of Sāvitri and Influence of Indian Culture in Thailand is the historical background of the play. In this chapter, the readers are introduced to one of India’s greatest epics, *The Mahābhārata*, and how Indian culture and this epic traveled to Thailand and influenced Thai culture and religion. This chapter is written to help the readers understand the context and the cultural background of the play better. Chapter 3 is the full-length translation of the Sāvitri, and Chapter 4 is the 13-minute adaptation of the full-length play. It is called the 13-minute adaptation because it is an estimated time for a production for a young audience. The conclusion of the thesis deals mostly with the process of the sit-down reading of the full-length play and its reception. It introduces the questions and comments of the script and its adaptation with their answers and explanations. It also concludes the overall process of translation and what the translator can take forward from this work. Appendix 1 is the description of the major gods and goddesses and other divine figures in Sāvitri. This appendix is to help the readers gain a better understanding of the role and the significance of the divine beings that are mentioned in the play. Appendix 2 is the pronunciation guide of the names and the places mentioned in Sāvitri. Due to the fact that the Indian names are unfamiliar to many people, this appendix is created to aid the readers or the performers to pronounce the name correctly.
Translation Issues in Sāvitri

Sāvitri is a story found in the Indian epic, The Mahābhārata, which the Thai playwright, King Vajiravudh, adapted into a full length play. It is a story about a virtuous woman with a strong determination who brings her husband back from Yamā, the god of death, by her exceptional virtue and wit. I chose to translate Sāvitri from Thai into English because I would like it to be accessible to a wide English speaking and listening audience. English is a language that is taught in many countries in the world and this translation is not intended to be only for English or American audiences but for all the people who can understand English, no matter what countries they come from.

It is important to mention that I translated the text of Sāvitri before I read any articles or books on Translation Studies and that Sāvitri is my first translation work. It was after translating the play that I decided to work on the translation theories because I believe that translation is a practical and creative process and I wished to translate the text on my own without worrying about any theories or rules. Therefore, I translated the text without any obligations or theories other than the ones I had made for myself, which I will discuss later. I began to read about Translation Studies after finishing the translation because I felt it would be helpful both for me and for the readers to understand the process of translation. Moreover, it will also be helpful for me in my future translation work. After comparing my process of translation to the translation theories, I have found that a lot of the techniques I made up to do my
translation are quite similar to those in articles or books on Translation Studies.

**Grandmother/Mother/Daughter/Granddaughter**

In the process of translating and adapting *Sāvītrī*, there are four major texts involved: 1) *The Mahābhārata*, 2) The Thai version of the stage play *Sāvītrī*, 3) The English translation of the Thai play, and 4) the 13 minute adaptation of the English translation. Even though these four texts are written by different authors, in different format, and during different time periods (except for the 3rd and the 4th ones), they are connected to one another and the relationship between each of them is very close, like a different generation of the same family. Here, we have *The Mahābhārata* as the grandmother, the Thai stage play as the mother, the English translation as the daughter, and the English 13 minute adaptation as the granddaughter. In fact, there are more texts involved in the process: for example, the different English translations of *The Mahābhārata* and the Thai translation of *The Mahābhārata*; but because they are simply used as references, I would like to include only the four main texts that I mentioned about in this chapter.

The grandmother of the four works, the story of *Sāvītrī* in *The Mahābhārata*, was collected and written in Sanskrit between 300 BC and 300 AD. Because the work is Indian, it is directed toward a Hindu audience. When King Vajiravudh adapted the story into a play in 1924, he changed the language into Thai because the target audience changed to Thai people. The change was not dramatic, however, because Thailand shares the same cultural roots as India. Some of the Indian gods and goddesses are worshiped in Thailand;
Sanskrit words are used in Thai writing; some rituals and ceremonies are connected to Hinduism; Thai arts and theatrical performances are influenced by Indian culture; and a good amount of Thailand’s population is of Indian descent. Therefore, the play is easily perceived by the Thai audience as if the story takes place in their own country. Another reason for the ease of the transition is that the names of the characters, including the gods and goddess, are just a Thai pronunciation of the Sanskrit words. The Hindu gods become the Thai gods and the Indian characters also become partially Thai.

In the English translation of the Thai play, the target audience is broader. It includes anybody who is able to understand spoken English, which can include Indians, Thais, Americans, Russians, Koreans, etc. The advantage of having Thai as my first language and English as my second is that I understand the cultural background of the play, both Indian and Thai, since Indian is the root of my culture. Additionally, I am also often an audience—and often a participant—for English Language performances. Therefore, the English text is not translated into any specific culture like American or British. The advantage I hope to have is that I am able to preserve the culture in the mother text and thus guard against any cultural imperialism.

In the granddaughter text, or the 13 minute adaptation, the story is told in a different way from the ancestor texts. The target audience is still the English listening audience, but younger. The adaptation is intended to be a play for children who want to get the story in a shorter
span of time. For that reason, the characters are modified and the way of telling the story changes. In appearance, it seems like the granddaughter text is the farthest away from its grandmother text; but in fact, the granddaughter text is the most similar to the grandmother text, especially in how the text is delivered. During the Epic period in India “a class of professional reciters grew up who travelled across the country reciting to audiences the story of one or the other epic accompanied by music, dance and later followed by acting proper” (Bhatt 12). They acted as messengers, carrying the stories and the culture to the people throughout India. The granddaughter text of Sāvitri is written in the form of storytelling for a smaller troupe of actors/storytellers to perform. The narrators act as some of the characters, which is similar to what a storyteller would do. The minimal requirements of the production also enable the troupe to travel and act without difficulty.

**Types of Translation**

Susan Bassnett brings up an interesting way of looking at translation in the introduction of her book *Translation Studies*: that a translation work can be compared to cannibalism. This is based on the idea of a master-servant relationship arising from the post-colonial context; “either a translator takes over the source text and ‘improves’ and ‘civilizes’ it or the translator approaches it with humility and seeks to do it homage” (Bassnett xv). A translator can choose to be a ‘master’ who uses the original text to create something totally new, or he can choose to be a ‘servant’ who respects the original text and
tries to make the translation text as close to the original as possible.

The cannibalistic notion of translation is not the only term translators use to describe types of translation. During the history of Translation Studies, there are many metaphors that have been used; for example, translation as a mirror or as a portrait; translation as an infidelity: an unfaithful or a reformed marriage. But the metaphors refer pretty much to the same thing; whether the translator is being truthful to the original text or not.

While I see myself as a translator who is truthful to the original, I also believe that there is a middle ground between the ‘master’ and the ‘servant’ in translation. I don’t look at the text as the ‘master’ nor as the ‘servant,’ but I do respect the original text; and to me, respectfulness is the benchmark in translation. I do not worship the original text, and at the same time, I do not translate it in a too casual way. It is my intention to make my translation as close to the original as possible, but because Thai and English are different languages with different language roots, it is impossible to translate a text directly without altering its meaning. However, by being respectful to the original text, even though the translation is not exactly the same as the original, I can still try to preserve the story, the tradition, the culture, and the structure that are presented in the original text.

Sāvíṭrī was written in the form of poetry for a Thai musical theater. King Vajuravudh used a poetic and old form of Thai language in portraying the story. There are also a lot of Pali and Sanskrit words in the play that are
unfamiliar to most Thai people nowadays. However, I decided to translate it into English with the language that most English listening audiences will easily understand. And, since the original is in a beautiful poetic form, I tried to translate the beauty of the story as well. In an epic play like Sāvitrī, the beauty of the language is a crucial factor in both telling the story to the audience and in setting up the overall atmosphere of the play. Moreover, beauty is a very important characteristic of Thai literature and a translator should not overlook this element. I did not, however, translate Sāvitrī into poetry. An advantage of translations of poetry into prose is that they are arguably more “accurate to the source text than a verse translation could ever be. They are happily liberated from the deadening restraints of the doggedly word-for-word technique” (Lefevere 42). My translation is in prose/ blank verse with some beauty of poetry in it, and I believe that it is a good medium to convey the message to the audience.

Invariant Core

In order to be respectful and to capture the essence of the original text, and in order to avoid worshipfulness and the casualty of translation, the translator has to find the middle ground in doing his or her work. That middle ground is what Anton Popovic calls the ‘invariant core’ (Bassnett 26).

Because a word can have more than one possible meaning, the translator is given freedom and creativity to choose the words he or she wants. But at the same time, when we look at different translations of the same text, even though the words or the format of the translations are not the same, these translations have something in common: the ‘invariant
Popovic’s example is that when a dozen of translators try to translate one poem, they will produce a dozen different versions of that poem. But amongst these different versions, there is an invariant core or common thread that exists between all translations of that poem.

An example from Sāvitri is the line that Aśwapati says to Nārada in Act I. If I translate it word by word it would be: ‘that’s right the sage speaks like (or likable).’ Since the Thai grammar and the English grammar are different, this sentence in Thai makes sense for Thai people but maybe not for people who don’t understand Thai. We know from this sentence that the king tells the sage that what he said is right, so I translated it as: ‘The sage has spoken right.’ I can also translate this sentence in other ways; for example: ‘What the sage has spoken is right,’ or ‘Sage, what you have said is correct.’ Even though the sentence structure is different and the word choice is not the same, the invariant core of this sentence is the fact that the king tells the sage that what he has said is right. Instead of worshipping the original text and translating it word by word or being so casual that the original text is turned into something else, by paying attention to the invariant core the translator can portray what the original author wanted to convey. In this way, the translator is being respectful to the original text.

**Translation Equivalence and its Relation to Culture**

The notion of invariant core leads to the concept of equivalence in translation. According to J.C. Catford, translation may be defined as “the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language” (Catford 20). However, “there are,
properly speaking, no such things as identical equivalents” (Belloc 15). Here equivalence is not a search for sameness, because sameness cannot exist between to languages. Belloc gives the reason why:

First each word, however simply used, is used with multiplicity of meaning. Secondly, the history of a word, its use in the prose and verse of the language to which it belongs, its sound-value in that language, its connexion in the mind of the cultured reader of that language with its use in certain masterpieces and remembered phrases, and in general all the atmosphere of its being, make it one thing in one language from what it is in another even where the use being made of the is similar. (Belloc 16)

J.C. Catford also agrees with this view: “Meaning, in our view, is a property of a language. An SL [source language] text has an SL meaning, and TL [target language] text has a TL meaning—a Russian text, for instance, has a Russian meaning (as well as Russian phonology/graphology, grammar and lexis), and an equivalent English text has an English meaning” (Catford 35).

In the text of Sāvitrī, King Vajiravudh used old Thai words that have roots in the Thai culture and have a certain value and connection in the minds of the Thai people. Even though these words are used in the same context in English, their meaning will still be different from the meaning that the Thai audience comprehends.

A language is inseparable from its culture. Susan Bassnett talks about the importance of the relationship of language and culture in translation. She compares language to “the
heart within the body of culture” (Bassnett 14). Just as a person cannot neglect his heart, a translator cannot treat the text in isolation of its culture.

In a certain language, each word comes with its cultural context and a person in one country or community can understand the meaning of the same word differently from a person from another country. When translating a word from one language into another, even though the translator has an exact translation from a trustworthy dictionary, the reader will still have the concept of the word based on their own cultural context. For example, in the stage direction of Sāvitri, in Act I, scene 1, when the curtains are drawn open, two personal attendants are fanning the king and the sage. The verb “to fan” in both languages means to direct a current of air upon someone or something, especially in order to cool. If you grow up in Thailand, when you read that the attendants are fanning, you will know that the shape of the fan will have a long handle, so that when the attendants are sitting on the floor the flat part of the fan will be on the same level of the royalty. The attendants are not supposed to stand or sit higher than the royalty or the respectable spiritual teacher. They will also fan in a slow and gentle way so that the wind will not be too strong. People from a different culture may see the action of fanning in a different way.

This issue doesn’t only exist in the Thai language, but also in other languages. For example, Bassnett gives a comparison between the word ‘butter’ in English and the word ‘burro’ in Italian:
In Italy, burro, normally light coloured and unsalted, is used primarily for cooking, and carries no association of high status, whilst in Britain, butter, most often bright yellow and salted, is used for spreading on bread and less frequently in cooking. Because of the high status of butter, the phrase bread and butter is the accepted usage even when where the product used is actually margarine. (Bassnett 19)

For such reason, a direct translation is often impossible. You may have the exact translation from a dictionary, but a word is not only a word. It contains the culture and differs according the tradition in a given language.

It seems to me that we may compare the work of a translator with that of an artist who is asked to create an exact replica of a marble statue, but who cannot secure any marble. He may find some other stone or some wood, or he may have to model in clay or work in bronze, or he may have to use a brush or a pencil and a sheet of paper. Whatever his material, if he is a good craftsman, his work may be good or even great; it may indeed surpass the original, but it will never be what he is set out to produce, an exact replica of the original. (Winter 68)

The marble can be compared to the mother text, and different materials that the artist chooses to use are the different languages that contain different cultures. The artist may create a wonderful replica of the marble statue from wood or from some other stone, and the pattern of the statue or the invariant core may be there; but the wood statue can never be the same as the marble.
Translating Idioms

One of the rules given by Belloc in his book, On Translation, suggests that “the possession of a foreign idiom must extend to much more than the possession of what are called literal meanings” (Belloc 15). Therefore, we must deliver idiom by idiom, focusing on the meaning of the idiom itself, not translating it word by word. When translating an idiom, the translator should try to find the words that have the closest meaning to the original idiom because some idioms, when translated into another language, can have a comical meaning or not make any sense to the audience. An easy example in the English language is the expression ‘raining cats and dogs.’ If I translate this idiom directly from English to Thai, it will make no sense; hence, I have to translate the idiom from English to English first and then translate it into Thai as ‘raining heavily.’ An example from the text of Savitri is the Thai idiom ‘the people’s heads are cool.’ When ‘the people’s heads are cool,’ it means that the kingdom, including its people, is filled with peace and joy as if the people have been sheltered by the cool shade of a big tree. If I translate this idiom directly, the meaning of the words maybe conveyed differently, therefore, I translate: ‘The kingdom is filled with joy and peace.’

Since each word carries its own unique meaning in each language and a direct translation is impossible, even though translators try their best to find the closest words in the daughter language, they still can’t capture the exact meaning of the original idiom. This issue creates another language, which we can call the third language, where the translation presents a meaning that is close to the original but is slightly different. By translating the
words directly from the original text, one can present the meaning that sounds strange but is still understandable. I see this creation not as a bad thing but a creative solution that gives people more interesting ways of saying things or expressing themselves. For example, the Thai expression ‘the one underneath your feet’ is often used to express respect towards people of higher status and it is used with the pronoun ‘I.’ This expression is not found in the English language but by keeping the exact translation along with the context of the sentence, the audience could still understand its meaning.

**Word Choice**

Oftentimes there are words in Thai that, when trying to find an equivalent English translation, give more than one English meaning. Since the words come with their cultural context they might not have an exact meaning in English, and there may be more than one English word that has at least a partial equivalence. For example, the word ‘virtue’ comes up very often in the translation of Śāvitri. The original Thai source of the word ‘virtue’ is the word ‘taam’ or ‘taamma.’ When looking “taam” up in a Thai-English dictionary, we see that there are many definitions of this word: justice; the eternal principle followed by nature; condition; doctrine; virtue; the Buddhist scripts; etc. Therefore, a translator has to select the word that most appropriate for the context in order to convey the message to the audience.

Another example is in the beginning of Act 2 when Śāvitri says,
"It is the sins we have committed
That make us suffer an enormous misfortune today."

The word "sin," for some people, has a Christian connotation to it, and they may wonder what the character means by using the word "sin." In Thai, the word "gkam," which means consequences or results of evil thoughts or words in a past existence, is often used with the word "bap," which is normally translated as "sin" in English. The Thai word "bap" has some religious connotation to it, and since most Thai people are Buddhist, the Thai associate the word with Buddhism. For most Thai people, the English word "sin" also has the same connotation. Since I would like to use a word with some religious meaning to it that describes the wrong past actions, I decided to use this word.

Another similar issue is that there are some Thai words that have different meaning in themselves, and when we say a particular word to a Thai person, he or she will understand the overall concept of the word, not only a specific meaning. In a translation, a translator has to find an English word to describe that word and sometimes one word is not enough to describe the concept of the Thai word. Sometimes the translator has to use more than one word to describe one Thai word so that the audience will understand the meaning of the word better. I use this strategy from time to time, and when necessary I even add a phrase or a sentence to help explain a particular word. For example, in the stage direction in Act I, scene 1, the king and the sage are sitting on something that is called 'tang' in Thai, which is a type of seat. But to make the audience from other cultures know what the author means by using
this type of seat, I have to add ‘a square seat raised on four feet, fitted with a back.’ Another example can also be found in Act I, scene 1, when the attendants say in Thai, ‘Here we prostrate before the gods.’ A Thai person would know that ‘the gods’ here means the king and the sage because in the past we believed that the kings, the royal family, and the spiritual teachers are descended from the divines. The audience from other cultures may not know that and they may think that the attendants are prostrating to some gods, not the king and the sage, so I choose to add ‘Here we prostrate before you, our gods.’

The process of translation must be to accept that although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to semiotics, the science that studies sign systems or structures, sign processes and sign functions. Beyond the notion stressed by the narrowly linguistic approach, that translation involves the transfer of ‘meaning’ contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar...(Bassnett 13)

By adding some English words to a Thai word to help convey the meaning, the aim is to transfer the meaning of the word rather than the word itself. By doing so, even though it is not a word by word translation, it will help the audience understand the word and the content of the play better. I don’t believe there are any rules in choosing words for translation or for adding something to the original script; but the translator has to use logic and creativity to do the most suitable thing in order to transfer the meaning to the audience. “In such a case, the investigator acts as his
own informant and discovers textual equivalents
‘intuitively’ – i.e. by drawing on his own experience, without necessarily going through an overt procedure of commutation” (Catford 28).

Names and Concepts
In the original text of Sāvitrī, there are a lot of names, terms, and concepts that only Thai or Indian people or people with knowledge of Pali or Sanskrit would understand. There are a lot of names mentioned, including Indian gods, goddesses, warriors, sages, kings, etc. These are names that most Indian people would recognize, and often the author would compare the qualities of the characters in the play to these great beings in the past or in the ancient myth. In order to make the audience understand to whom these names refer, I added some description to the name mentioned. For example, Nārada compares Satyavan to be as wise as ‘Bṛhaspati.’ ‘Bṛhaspati’ is one of the seven great ṛishis, to whom many of the hymns of the Rig-Veda are attributed. He is also a person who inspired poets and sages to create their works. An audience who is not familiar with ‘Bṛhaspati’ may wonder who this person is. In order to give the audience some hint, I translate: ‘As wise as Bṛhaspati’, one of the seven great ṛishis.’ I didn’t give more description because the sentence has the word ‘wise’ in it and that word itself hints that Bṛhaspati is a wise person; and to add that he is one of the seven great ṛishis is enough for the audience to have a concept of who he is. Furthermore, some people may not know what a rishi is; by stating that he is one of the seven, the audience knows that he is one of the very few, therefore, he must be very important.
Other than names, there are often religious concepts presented in the text. Most of the concepts are found in Hinduism and some of them are also found in Buddhism. The ambiguity of some of these terms arises because the action of the play is supposed to take place in an ancient time when people still worshipped different gods. However, the play was written in 1924 for the Thai audience where the national religion was (and is) Buddhism. Some of the terms may overlap. That means they have both meaning in Buddhism and the meaning in the ancient philosophy in general. For example, the word ‘taam’ or ‘taamma’ which I translate as ‘virtue’ can be understood in both the concept of Buddhism and also outside the Buddhist concept. One of the standard translations of this word is ‘Dharma,’ which, in Buddhism, is the teachings of the Buddha. However, the word ‘Dharma’ existed long before the Buddha was born. Most people nowadays associate the word ‘Dharma’ with Buddhism, so in order to diminish the confusion and ambiguity, I chose to translate this word as ‘virtue.’

**Grammar**

Thai grammar is very different from English grammar. First of all, the Thai language does not have verb tenses; there are some indicators that tell us the time that an action takes place, while the verb remains the same. Some of the indicators may be very apparent: for example, yesterday, last night, or tomorrow. Some may be a word that does not have a meaning in itself, but when used with some other words or when attached to another word, it can indicate time whether the action has already taken place or not. When translating from Thai into English, the translator has
to change the verb tenses in order to indicate the time for the English listening audience.

Another simple example of the grammatical difference between Thai and English is the significance of the verb "to be." In English, the verb "to be" seems to be very important and is used very often. It accompanies adjectives, but when used alone it also has a significant meaning, like the famous phrase 'to be or not to be.' In Thai, there is not such thing as the verb "to be" and it will take more than a single word to translate the verb "to be." For example, the phrase 'to be or not to be' has no meaning in Thai unless it is translated as 'to live or to die' or 'to stay or to leave' and so on. In Thai, we do not use it to accompany an adjective like in English. For example, when I want to say 'I am hungry,' I would say 'I hungry,' or 'She is beautiful' would be 'She beautiful.' The sentence 'I have been waiting for you,' which is in a present perfect continuous tense, would simply be 'I wait you' in Thai, with an additional one-syllable word that helps to indicate the concept of time.

The linguistic difference confirms that direct translation is impossible and that the meaning will be conveyed according to the context of the situation. In translation "it is the function that will be taken up and not the words themselves, and the translation process involves a decision to replace and substitute the linguistic element in the Target Language" (Bassnett 21).

Translating for Theater

In his article Translating for Actors, Robert W. Corrigan talks about a significant element of Avant-Garde theater:
that “it is a theater of gesture. ‘In the beginning was the Gesture!’ Gesture is not a decorative addition that accompanies words; it is rather the source, cause, and director of language, and insofar as language is dramatic, it is gestural (Corrigan 96). In classical Thai drama, gestures are, in fact, the source of the play. When you don’t understand the words, the gestures will convey the message to you. Therefore, the actors’ physical movement and facial expressions are crucial parts of Thai classical drama.

The aim of the translation of Sāvitri is not for Thai classical drama. But since gestures are a big part of the culture, it is important that the gestures get translated as well, or at least their values in the culture of the play. In the translation of Sāvitri, the stage directions inform the director and the actors where a certain activity, dance, or ceremony is taking place. There is not descriptive detail about what kind of gestures the actors should make, but if we look at the language in the play, we can see that the gestures should be gracious and beautiful. By looking at the text itself, we can see that the culture emphasizes on the respect towards the elders and the gods/goddesses, and that politeness is highly valued. These facts imply that the gestures of the attendants towards the king and the sage or the gestures of Sāvitri towards her father should contain the feeling of deference and courtesy in them, as well as the beauty and the rhythm that will coincide with the words spoken.

In order to translate a play successfully, I believe the translator doesn’t only have to translate the story, but also the structure of the play. “The structure is action;
not what is said or how it is said but when” (Corrigan 98). I believe that when a certain word is spoken is important, but what is said and how it is said is also important, especially in the case of Śāvitri. In order for Śāvitri to get Yamā to listen to her, she has to approach him in a particular way and how she delivers her speech is very important. She has to be well-spoken and polite. She has to be witty, and at the same time, respectful to the god. Otherwise, there might be no reason for Yamā to give her back her husband.

I agree with Corrigan that when the action takes play is very important. In order to keep the structure of the play, the translator has to keep the plants and pointers where they should be to keep the forward strategy and to point the play to its climax. In Śāvitri, repetition is a device that needs occur at a specific place and time. From the grandmother to the granddaughter texts, even though the format of the texts is different, the structure is the same and the repetition occurs at exactly the same place. A question that arises in translation for the theater is that a theater text is often seen as “something incomplete, rather than a fully rounded unit, since it is only in performance that the full potential of the text is realized” (Bassnett 120). However, as a text, I see Śāvitri as complete for a performance because I have included everything that needs to be included in the text. Some translators may also translate the texts without the notion of performance in mind. We can see the evidence from the fact that “the volume of ‘complete plays’ has been produced primarily for a reading public where literalness and linguistic fidelity have been principal criteria” (Bassnett 123). However, Śāvitri is an epic play, with dances,
gestures, music, and spectacles, and I do think that it needs a performance in order to achieve its full potential.

**Conclusion**

Even though I started reading about Translation Studies after translating and adapting *Saïvîtrî*, I find that most of the theories or rules coincide with what I did and found out for myself during the process of translation as stated above. However, “the purpose of translation theory, then, is to reach an understanding of the processes undertaken in the act of translation and, not, as is so commonly misunderstood, to provide a set of norms for effecting the perfect translation” (Bassnett 37). I found the theories of translation to be useful in furthering my understanding of the process of translation, but the theories do not apply to all the practical activities of translation. Translation is a practical task that needs to be done with creativity and exception of rules. The problems of the translation process may be categorized, but each problem within each language has to be death with on its own.
In this chapter, I would like to give the readers some background information on the history and the characteristics of the Indian epic, *The Mahābhārata*, the story of Sāvitri as a myth within *The Mahābhārata*, the movement of Indian culture towards Southeast Asia and Thailand, the influence of Indian culture in the Thai society, how the epic came to Thailand, and how it was received by the Thai people.

*The Mahābhārata*

*The Mahābhārata* is an Indian epic which may be considered the longest poem in the world. Its original version contains nearly 100,000 verses and its modified version contains as many as 75,000 verses. “Mahā” means “great” and “Bhārata” is the name of the great king Bhārata. The story in *The Mahābhārata* is concerned with the genealogy of Bhārata and the succession of his reign, which is the Bhārata war between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. J. A. B. van Buitenen states in his introduction to *The Mahābhārata* that “the central story of the epic takes its matter form the legitimacy of the succession to the kingdom of Kurukṣetra in northern India. This kingdom was the ancestral realm of a clan known by several styles, the most common being that of Bhārata” (van Buitenen xiii) However, according to John Brockington, “‘The Mahābhārata doesn’t seem to reflect any historical event’ but rather an oral epic tradition that has degraded reminiscences of an actual battle into mere poetic topics” (Brockington 5).
According to the Indian tradition, *The Mahābhārata* is an ‘itihāsa’, which can be translated as “chronicle” as well as “epic.” *Itihāsa* is always attributed to a sage who “speaks” rather than “sings.” *The Mahābhārata* came to be called an epic when it was compared to the Greek epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Nevertheless, *The Mahābhārata* is much longer than the two Greek epics combined. Part of it is that the story in *The Mahābhārata* covers a larger span of time. The main theme is the rivalry between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, who are cousins; but the story goes back to the history of their parents and grandparents.

The date and the authorship of *The Mahābhārata* are not known with certainty. The epic includes folk stories and myths of ancient India that have been told orally from one person to another and from one generation to another, and later transmitted by Brahmans into written forms. The poem of *The Mahābhārata* has been collected from one time period to another and for that reason, one event has also been covered by the idea of another as far as 2,000 years. It is said that the date for *The Mahābhārata* can cover the time from 400 B.C. until A. D. 400. “It makes sense when we look upon the text not so much as one opus but as a library of opera. Then we can say that 400 B.C was the founding date of that library and that A. D. 400 was the approximate date after which no more substantial additions were made to the text” (van Buitenen xxv). J. Taboys Wheeler suggests that the gathering of the main tradition of the Mahābhārata
seems to have taken place during the Vedic age but the poem was composed in the Brahmanic age.¹

There is a strong relationship between *The Mahābhārata* and the Vedic literature. The word “Vedic” is a term borrowed from the Ṛgveda, which is an ancient collection of hymns, addressing to different Indian deities.² The first traces of an epic poetry are perhaps to be found in Vedic literature. The stories of gods, goddesses, and heroes are then recited as a part of religious ceremonies, sacrifices, and festivals. *The Mahābhārata* is often called the 5th Veda, as a collection of ancient tales. John Brockington suggests that the core of *The Mahābhārata* was obviously composed after the early the Vedic period because the conflict in the epic lies in the location east of the Panjab, in which the Ṛigveda is located.

*The Mahābhārata* is divided into 18 Parvas, which has been translated to English as ‘Books’ or ‘Chapters.’ The story starts when the Bard Ugraśravas arrives at the Naimiśa forest and is asked to recite the history of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. The story begins with King Śaṅtanu of the Kuru race who marries the river goddess, Gaṅgā, and has a son named Devavrata. He then

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¹ “In the Vedic period the Brahmans were scarcely known as a separate community; the cast system had not been introduced, and the gods that were worshipped who subsequently superseded by deities of other names and other forms. In the Brahmanic period the Brahmans had formed themselves into an exclusive ecclesiastical hierarchy, endowed with vast spiritual powers, to which even the haughtiest Rajas were compelled to bow. The caste system had been introduced in all its fullness, whilst the old Vedic gods were fast passing away from the memory of man, and giving place to the three leading Brahmanical deities—Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva” (Wheeler 6).

² *Veda* means ‘knowledge.’ The Vedas consist of three parts: the Samhitās, the Brahmaṇas, and the Upanishads. The Samhitās, which literally means ‘collections’ consists of 4 parts: Rig, Yaju, Śāma, and Atharva. The Ṛigveda comes from Ṛig + Veda, which is considered the most important among the four Vedas.

³ The Vedic period is approximately between 1500–500 BC.
falls in love with a fisherman’s daughter, Satyavatī. Before the king marries Satyavatī, the fisherman asked the king and his son to make a vow that his daughter’s son will be the heir to the throne and that Devavrata will lead a life of celibacy. Both the king and his son agree.

Śaňtanu has two sons by Satyavatī: Citrāňgada and Vicitravīrya. Citrāňgada dies when he was young so Vicitravīrya succeeds the throne and marries two sisters: Aṁbikā and Aṁbālikā. Unfortunately, Vicitravīrya dies childless. Therefore, Satyavatī asks her older brother to marry the two sisters by the law of levirate. By Aṁbikā, he begets Dhṛtarāśtra and by Aṁbālikā, he begets Pāṇdu. The Kauravas are the offspring of Dhṛtarāśtra, and the Pāṇḍavas are the offspring of Pāṇdu. When they grow up, the Kauravas get jealous of the Pāṇḍavas’ glorious achievements. Therefore, Duryodhana, the oldest of the Kauravas, challenges Yudhiṣṭhira, the oldest brother of the Pāṇḍavas to a game of dice. Yudhiṣṭhira loses the game and all his wealth. The Pāṇḍavas are challenged again and this time the losers have to spend twelve years in exile in the forest. In the thirteenth year they must conceal their identities because if they are discovered, they will be killed. The Pāṇḍavas lose the game and go into exile. After spending thirteen years in exile, the Pāṇḍavas desire to claim back their kingdom. The war between the two groups of cousins breaks out and lasts eighteen days. The Pāṇḍavas win the war and regain their kingdom. Years later the Pāṇḍavas decide to end their existence on earth. They go to the Himalaya Mountains and proceed to Heaven. And since Heaven is the place where there is no jealousy, anger, or
malice, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas are united again, in peace.

The story of *The Mahābhārata* is influential in the lives of Indian people and they have been exposed to it since childhood. The stories are presented at village festivals and chanted at special gatherings. *The Mahābhārata* was translated and adapted into most Indian languages. Van Buitenen compares *The Mahābhārata* to “the storehouse of ancient lore. Aeschylies describes his plays as crumbs from Homer’s table; with probably more right *The Mahābhārata* itself declares: ‘From this supreme epic rise the inspirations of the poets…All Lore ranges in the realm of this epic…No story is found that does not rest on this epic…All the best poets live off this epic’” (Van Buitenen xxvi). In Sanskrit literature, especially the theater, some of the great writers and Dramatists created their stories and plays based on the stories in *The Mahābhārata*.

The influence of *The Mahābhārata* does not only cover the literature in India, but also extends to the literatures in the modern Indo-Aryan languages as well as the Dravidian languages. It went as far as Southeast Asia and inspired national and local poets to create their works.

**The Book of the Forest**

The Book of the Forest, the third major book of *The Mahābhārata*, is where the story of Śāvitri is told. The Book of the Forest is when the heroes of *The Mahābhārata*, the Pāṇḍavas, are in exile. According to van Buitenen, The Book of the Forest is divided into two large blocks: the heroes’ lives in the forest and the narrative stories told
to the characters. In fact, more than half of the book is taken up by these narratives that are unrelated to the main story. Sāvītri is one of them. The Book of the Forest is said to be the book of leisure, with visits paid and received, and occasional battles with demons. The intention of this Book is piousness, with an emphasis on building the character of Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest brother of the Pāṇḍavas. The Book of the Forest is “the celebration of the highest value in the moral code of the ancient Indians, truthfulness and faithfulness under all circumstances” (van Buitenen 177). The moral code is seen from the portrayal of the truthfulness in the character of Yudhiṣṭhira.

Apart from the pious intention, the story of heroes going off into the forest is a popular scheme to please the Indian audience. The forest has the romantic quality that induces the audience’s attention; its danger, adventure, and peace. However, the concept of the ‘forest’ for an Indian audience and a Western audience may be different, and the English word ‘forest’ may invoke an image different from the Indian’s image. “The intention of the many Sanskrit words for “forest” is wider: they denote in general any wild area of the countryside that has not been brought under cultivation, which is, in other words, outside the village, though nor necessarily far away, and its acres” (van Buitenen 175).

The forest is also a symbol for one of the four stages of life, according to the Indian philosophy. The ideal Hindu life consists of four stages: “brahmacarya, the period of discipline and education; gārhaṣṭhya, the life of the householder and active working, vānapraṣṭhya, retreat for
the loosening of bonds, and finally sannyāsa, the life of a hermit” (Sen 22). The fourth stage, sannyāsa, takes place when a person is of an old age and his children have all grown up. He is to “depart for the forest” (van Buitenen 176) and reside in a hermitage outside the village. There, he will devote himself in religious practices, though his wife may accompany him. Every now and then he will journey to places of pilgrimage to visit other sages or fellow hermits. By doing so, he can share the fruits of his practices with them and gain more knowledge and wisdom.

For the above reason, the Book of the Forest employs two ambivalent characteristics of the forest that entice the audience. It is filled with danger, but at the same time, wisdom.

**Sāvitrī in the Book of the Forest**

The story of Sāvitrī is told by the hermit, Mārkaṇḍeya, to Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest brother of the Pāṇḍavas. After leaving their kingdom and moving to the forest in exile, Draupadī, the wife of the Pāṇḍavas’ brothers, follows her husbands to the hardship of the life in the forest to take care of them without neglect. During their stay in the forest, Draupadī is carried off by Jayadratha, who happens to pass by and sees that Draupadī is alone. Yudhiṣṭhīra expresses his grief to Mārkaṇḍeya for his wife and her misfortune and asks him whether there has ever been a woman who is as devoted to her husband as Draupadī. Mārkaṇḍeya tells him that there was such a woman and tells Yudhiṣṭhīra the story of Sāvitrī. When finished, Mārkaṇḍeya tells Yudhiṣṭhīra to reflect on the story of Sāvitrī and the
trials she faced. With patience and determination, Draupadī, too, shall save her husbands.

The story of Sāvitri in The Mahābhārata has become well-known and well-liked among Indian people and people who come upon the story. It has been adapted into stories for children, with some slight differences in different versions, while the main story remains the same. It has been made into a piece of opera. And it has been made famous by Sri Aribindu, an author who composed an extended and detailed epic poem about Sāvitri.

**From India to Thailand**
The connection between Indian and Thailand has been established since ancient times. Unfortunately, there is no written record that takes us back beyond the 3rd century B.C. According to some archeological artifacts and literary evidence, it is suggested that the contact must have started several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

Though Thailand is not geographically connected to India, the Indian culture entered the country through neighboring kingdoms, mostly through Khmers, who were highly Hinduised people. The north-east of Thailand previously formed a part of the Hinduised kingdom of Funan, which was later governed by Khmer rulers. Thailand also received Indian culture through Burma and the Malay Peninsula. The southern part of Thailand, which is a seacoast, was open to the direct communication with India by sea.
There are many theories written about the Indianization in Thailand. Some theorists suggest that Indian warriors or rulers may have come to Southeast Asia to found their kingdoms, because the names of the cities and their rulers in ancient Thailand that have been documented are in Sanskrit. Some suggest that merchants, sailors, and adventurers from India may have come to Southeast Asia for trading and business, as we can see from some archeological evidence of trading goods. Some suggest the coming of Buddhist and Hindu missionaries from India as stated above. Later, the theory of the Indianization was changed toward the idea that the native people already had their own culture and civilization beforehand. They had established their own cities and they had had their own kings and rulers. These kings and rulers are the ones who made a connection between their cities and India. They gained benefits from trades and they also borrowed the Indian system of government.

The most accepted theory about the first Indianization of Thailand is the fact that King Aśoka of India send two Buddhist missionaries to the land called ‘Survanabhumi,’ which is believed to be either Burma or Siam. However, after King Aśoka sent missionaries to Southeast Asia, there were not only Buddhist monks in the area; but also missionaries from other religions and other sects from India that traveled to Siam and to the neighboring kingdoms. Among these religions and sects, Buddhism and Hinduism were the most prominent. The Thai’s acceptance of Buddhism and Hinduism was not by force or authority. The ruler of each tribe or city was the one who selected what religion they would accept. The archeological evidence
found in each region is different; in some regions, there are both Buddhist and Hindu evidence mingled together; some received Buddhism before Hinduism; and some received Hinduism before Buddhism.

The expansion of these religions started among nobles or people with higher status. These people gained advantage from religion by changing their status from being a chieftain or a ruler of a city into a king or a monarch. Thus, a monarchy was created along with its national religion.

Monks and Brahmins, who study religious and sacred texts, were considered learned people and were honored by the monarchs. They often had a high position in court and performed religious ceremonies. They also served as teachers and counselors to the kings and the royal family members. When the king and the royal family were loved and respected by the citizens, then the religion expanded from the court to the people.

When traveling to the villages to teach religion, the Buddhist monks brought the stories of the Buddha and his past lives with them. The Hindu Brahmins brought the two epics: *The Mahābhārata* and *The Rāmāyaṇa*. The Buddhist and Hindu literature was read or studied first among the nobles or the monarch; then, it gradually expanded to the common people.

O. W. Walters suggests that the Indianization of the Thai culture was a progress that was achieved through the cooperation of both the native people and the Indians. The
native people learned about the Indian culture, selected what they believe to be suitable and beneficial for their way of life, and adapted themselves to the received culture. He calls this process “localization.” Through localization, the Indian culture was received and adapted to the native culture slowly and persistently.

Alastair Lamb also proposes a similar theory. “The Indian inheritance in South-East Asia is not to be found in the unthinking repetition of Indian forms; rather, it is to be seen in the inspiration which India gave to South-East Asia to adapt its own cultures so as to absorb and develop Indian concepts” (Lamb 443). The two cultures met as equals: neither was superior to the other. Distinctive styles of art and architecture in Thailand are the products of the interaction between the Indian and the native ideas. Lamb also uses the term ‘self-Indianization’ to describe the development of culture in Southeast Asia. It explains the willingness to accept the Indian cultural elements and adapt them into their own lives.

An important element of Indian culture that is present in Thai culture, literature, and life, is language. Sanskrit is the ancient language of India that is used in sacred texts and scriptures, and it came to Thailand with the Hindu texts and literature. Since Sanskrit was used by court Brahmans in various ceremonies and rituals, it was seriously studied in Siam. In many places in Indo-China, Sanskrit was considered the court language and was used in official records for the government and the monarch. Sanskrit is one of the root languages of the modern Thai language, along with Pali, which came to Thailand through
Hinyanaya Buddhism and the Pali canon from Sri Lanka. A large part of Thai vocabulary is Sanskrit, with a slight difference in pronunciation. Since Sanskrit was considered a sacred and highly respectable language, the names of the holy people, places, kings, and royal family members in Thailand are mostly Sanskrit.

As mentioned above, Buddhism and Hinduism established in different regions and cities in Siam; in some areas, there were more Buddhist followers, in some areas more Hindu followers, in some areas, both. However, it seemed like Buddhism gained more popularity among Thai people and became the national religion while Hinduism became almost extinct. Sujit Wonthes suggests that Thai people were able to adapt the teachings of Buddhism to their indigenous belief and religion better than those of Hinduism. The idea of the Buddha as a great human being who obtained Nirvana and the stories of his many past lives as humans and animals, with some supernatural and divine phenomena, were popular among Thai people. They felt more connected and close to the human quality of the Buddha than to the power and authority of the Hindu gods. However, even though Hinduism may seem to be extinct in Thailand, it left many traces and influence to the Thai social and cultural life.

The Mahābhārata in Thailand
As mentioned before, whenever a Buddhist monk traveled, he took the stories of the Buddha and his past lives with him. And whenever a Hindu Brahmin traveled, the two Indian epics, The Rāmāyaṇa and The Mahābhārata were always with him. In almost all regions in Southeast Asia, in order for

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4 According to the CIA World Factbook, January 2005, 95% of the population in Thailand is Buddhist, 0.1% is Hindu.
the chieftain or the ruler of a city to become a monarch and establish a monarchy he had to follow the Brahman’s counsel and receive and respect the two epics as the Brahman advised. We can see that most of the names of the cities and their rulers in Thailand are taken from these two epics. A good example is the name of the Kings in the Charkri Dynasty, the dynasty that rules the country at the moment. All the Kings have the title “King Rama,” which is taken from Prince Rāma, the main character in the epic, Rāmāyaṇa.

In India the two epics are honored as respectable texts, and when they first entered Siam they were both regarded as equal. Later, The Mahābhārata was disregarded by the Thai people and became the lesser celebrated among the two. The Rāmāyaṇa was praised and honored and was adapted into a Thai version called Ramakien. The different episodes and characters of Ramakien have been used in various kinds of arts, architecture, and performances. For example, there are many episodes of Ramakien depicted in Thai traditional dance and mask drama, in the bas-reliefs and paintings on temple walls, in sculptures of Hindu deities and heroes from the epic, etc. The reason why The Mahābhārata has been disregarded and The Rāmāyaṇa elevated is due to the political, social, and cultural condition in both the epics and in Thai society.

The theme of The Mahābhārata is the conflicts, killings, and revenge among cousins and relatives, while The Rāmāyaṇa is focused on the relationship and loyalty between children and parents, wife and husband, brother and brother, and leaders and followers. In Thai society, the relationship
between blood relatives is very important. Even a distant cousin whom one has never met is considered part of the family. Therefore, the story of *The Mahābhārata* contradicts this important belief in the Thai community. *The Rāmāyaṇa*, on the other hand, promotes and establishes the stability of the monarchy and the family life.

The characters in *The Mahābhārata* are quite ambiguous. Nobody is purely virtuous or righteous and nobody is purely evil. In *The Rāmāyaṇa*, there is a bad side and a good side, divided very clearly. This division in *The Rāmāyaṇa* serves as a tool for the king or the monarch to establish himself as the righteous king, being on the righteous side.

The relationship within the family members in *The Rāmāyaṇa* also gives importance to siblings that were born from the same mother. For example, siblings from the same mother have the right to inherit the wealth or reign over the country before passing on to their children. This kind of conduct is in agreement with the beliefs and tradition in the Thai society. There are also other characteristics of *The Rāmāyaṇa* that make it well-received among Thai people; for example, the fact that Rāma has to journey in the forest is similar to the life of one of the Buddha’s lives, etc.

**From an Indian Tale to a Thai Play**

In order to adapt a story narrated in *The Mahābhārata* into a full-length musical play, King Vajiravudh had to change and omit some parts of the story and add some other materials to it to make the play complete. Though the form and the language of the story were changed, King Vajiravudh
remained true to the original story and made only some minor changes. More content in the dialogues between the characters were added to make the conversation sound more fluid and poetic. The lovely scenes between Sāvitri and Satyavān in the beginning of Act II and Act III were created to add more sweet flavors to the play. The two main parts that were cut from the original are the part before Sāvitri marries Satyavān and the part at the end of the story after Yamā releases Satyavān’s prāṇa and everyone is back at the hermitage. The reason for cutting these scenes must have been to make the play flow smoothly and to make it more compact.

In *The Mahābhārata*, before Sāvitri marries Satyavān, Aśwapati “summons all the Brahmin elders, the sacrificial priests, and his house priest and set out with his daughter. The king betook himself to the holy wood and hermitage of Dyumatsena…” (van Buiten 765). There in the wood, Aśwapati converses with Dyumatsena and asks him to take Sāvitri as his daughter-in-law. After Dyumatsena consents, the wedding ceremony takes place at the hermitage. Towards the end of the story when Satyavān regains his breath of life, instead of being found by the Brahmins, Sāvitri and Satyavān journey home in the dark, and Satyavān’s parents are waiting anxiously in the hermitage. Sāvitri and Satyavān tell the story about the incident in the forest to Dyumatsena, Śaivya, and all the fellow Brahmins. The next morning, a minister from Śalva comes and reports the news of Dyumatsena’s enemy. He invites Dyumtsena to reign the land of the Śalva s once again.
In the play Dyumatsena, Śaivya, the counselor of Śalva, and the Brahmins come to find Sāvitri and Satyavān in the forest and the play ends with the entering of the gods to bestow wishes upon them. The presence of the gods was created by the playwright in order to create more spectacles to the performance and to create a glorious and concise ending without having to move the characters to other places.

Sāvitri in Thailand
The story of Sāvitri became known in Thailand because King Rama VI of Siam, King Vajiravudh, translated the story from The Mahābhārata into a prose. From the prose translation, he adapted it into a play. Because The Mahābhārata is overshadowed by the popularity of The Rāmāyaṇa among the Thai people, the story of Sāvitri had not been well-known in Thailand either, and Sāvitri, is considered one of King Vajiravudh’s lesser known plays. Sāvitri was written in 1924 and it was the last complete play by King Vajiravudh before he passed away in 1925. It was written for the Thai classical and musical Theater with 81 stanzas and 2 prayers to be sung. King Vajiravudh had prepared music to accompany only 19 stanzas and later the nation’s Department of Fine Arts added music to accompany all the verses. King Vajiravudh had cast all the roles for the play, but Sāvitri was never performed during his lifetime. Sāvitri was performed for the first time during the reign of King Rama VII, King Prajadhipok, at Sri Ayuthaya Theater, Bangkok. After the first performance, Sāvitri or some parts of the full-length play were performed in some schools and colleges. The biggest performance was held in Silpakorn Theater and sponsored by the Department of Fine Arts in
1948. Even though Ṣāvitrī is still a required text to be read in some schools, there has been no major production since then.
Sāvitrī

Translated and Adapted by Orada Lelanuja

Characters:

Nārada – a sage
Aśwapati – king of Madra
Aśwapati’s chief counselor
Sāvitrī – Aśwapati’s daughter
Satyavān – Dyumatsena’s son
Dyumatsena – a hermit
Śaivya – Dyumatsena’s wife
Yamā – god of death
Satyavān’s “Prāṇa” (breath of life) *not speaking*
Chief counselor of Śalva
Indra – king of gods
Varuṇa – god of rain
Agni – god of fire
Male and female attendants/Brahmins

Act I

Setting: The throne hall of King Aśwapati, Mandra.

Nārada, a respectable sage and Aśwapati are sitting on a square seat raised on four feet, fitted with a back. Offerings for the sage are placed beside the seat. Two personal attendants are fanning the king and the sage, one on each side. Chief officers, counselors, and attendants
are sitting according to their ranks. When the curtains are drawn, the attendants speak as a chorus.

ATTENDANTS
Today we have seen with our very eyes,
Both the great king and the heavenly sage.
To delight in the holiness and the glory of the two at once
    Is very seldom to find.
To appear before your majesty,
With the highest, most honorable Brahmin
    Is a reward for us, the ones underneath your heels.
This wonderful sight expands our devotion and faithfulness.
    Here we prostrate before you, our gods,
And entrust ourselves under the soles of you feet.
    Please protect us for all times.

NĀRADA
Look at the respectable king
    Who has such great servants.
You should be very delighted
For the kingdom is filled with peace and happiness.
    Any king who enables to gain my loyalty
Is like gaining a brave warrior,
    A wise counselor,
And a skillful treasurer at once.
These three are crucial for a great king.
Besides, there are the most beautiful women,
    As a wife and a daughter,
Who embellish your glory.

AŚWAPATI
The sage has spoken right,
Fitted with the ancient rules.
I have an army of brave warriors,
Wise counselors and skillful treasurers.
And a gracious woman as my lovely wife,
With beautiful Sāvitri,
My excellent daughter.
The most wonderful daughter a man can have.
In the beginning I was childless and miserable.
I gave up the world and entered the wilderness as an ascetic.
I practiced devout meditation and paid homage to the god of fire, Agni.
It took eighteen years to receive what I had wished for:
Her holiness Sāvitri,
My one and only daughter.
She is beautiful and radiant
Like an image cast from a glorious, beautiful goddess.

Towards the end of the king’s speech, the chief counselor crawls to the king and prostrates.

My faithful counselor,
Has my daughter returned home?
Traveling alone in the wilderness,
Has she been safe from harm?

COUNSELOR
Your Majesty, the royal princess
Has returned to the capital
With prosperity and no harm.
Danger and peril have not touched her.
Wherever she treaded,
A warm welcome was presented.
She is approved and loved by the people.
Her speech is sweet and gentle, pleasing and capturing everybody’s heart.
The princess is courteous and reverent,
Showing respect towards Brahmins throughout the land.
She has received blessings from every one of them.
Virtues and happiness have been gathered from all around.
Your majesty should be contented
To have such a great daughter.
Nobody can be compared to her
Because she is the finest woman in the world.

AŚWAPATI
The duty that she was determined to achieve,
Has it been completed?
Or were there any obstacles?
Please inform me.

COUNSELOR
You Highness, the princess
Has returned from the wilderness
Because the determined duty
Has already been accomplished.

AŚWAPATI
To hear the news of my daughter
Is very pleasing to the ear.
Go, counselor, and bring the girl here.
The counselor prostrates to the king and leaves. The king turns to talk to the sage. At the same time, a smaller square seat is brought to the hall by attendants for Sāvitri to sit.

The fact that my daughter arrives at the moment
Is a very good opportunity for her
To pay homage to the sage
And to receive a blessing.
I have only one daughter
So I give all my love to her.
I have taken good care of her
And taught her according to blessed virtues.

NĀRADA
I have heard rumors
Which have even reached to heaven
That there is no one who can equal Sāvitri.
She is graciously beautiful
With the highest propriety.
The virtues in her heart are untainted.
She is the most honorable woman who should be praised,
By gods and humans.
It’s very easy to perceive a beautiful body,
But both outer and inner beauty
Is very difficult to find.

The sound of a conch shell trumpet is heard. Several short beats of drums are played. (This kind of drums has two faces, mounted on a handle. From the side of the drum is suspended a small ball which acts as a clapper when the handle is rotated in the fingers. This is used by Brahmins
in various functions.) Female voices are heard, at first softly, and gradually become louder. A group of female attendants enters, leading Sāvitri to the throne hall.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS
We raise our hands up to our heads to venerate.
The honorable princess
Has come back from the wilderness
To the prosperous and beautiful city.
The royal Father
Is very satisfied.
He is here to welcome his beloved daughter.
Please do not linger, move forward to see him.
We, your humble servants,
Are very joyful, all of us.
The princess, high above our heads,
The kingdom is filled with joy and peace.

AŚWAPATI
My daughter, my happiness,
I’m happy to see your beauty again.
Since you left the kingdom,
You mother and I have had no joy.
Every night and every day
We were worried about our young daughter,
Afraid that when you went into the wilderness,
You would encounter dangers.
Since you were young I have nurtured you,
Brushing off mosquitoes and insects that annoyed you.
When thinking of you wandering alone in the wilderness,
My heart grieved for you, my beautiful daughter.
The sound of the conch shell trumpet and the drums is heard. The sound of a Thai orchestra is also heard. A Thai orchestra consists of five or more pieces: a small two-faced drum, held on the lap and struck with both hands; an oboe; a kyeewain (gongs strung on a circular rack), a basso xylophone; and drums of varying sizes. A parade leading Sāvitri to the throne hall enters, starting with the senior counselor, followed by a pair of Brahmins, blowing the conch shell trumpet, a pair of Brahmins spreading (throwing from the containers to the floor) popped rice mixed with coconut milk, a pair of female attendants spreading petals of flowers. Next in line is Sāvitri herself, dressed in a full royal costume. Following her are some female attendants. The parade walks towards the throne and then separated to the right and left. Sāvitri dances to the music until she reaches the throne, then sits down and prostrates to the king and the sage. The king then takes her to the small seat that has been prepared for her.

SĀVITRI
Power and goodness, equal to Your Royal Highness,
With compassion and precious loving kindness
Who dwelled high above my head.
When I traveled in the wilderness,
You protected me and kept me from harm.
Contemplating on sharing love and compassion
To all animals, large and small,
And sacrificing to spirits in the forest,
My mind was firmly resided in virtues.
I lived according to the words of my teachers,
Saluting to the gods every morning and night.
The greatest love of my father and mother that has been with me
Is the most valuable thing that saved me from all danger.

NĀRADA

Great King, looking at your daughter,
I am very pleased with what I see.
Her skin is glowing like the full moon.
Her beauty is like the descent of a deity from heaven.
Her manner is exceptionally graceful.
Her words are soft and sweet, gentle and pleasant.
Virtues are rooted deeply within her soul.
I see her as the most honorable woman.
But why, my king, did you not find her a good husband
Who deserves all her virtues?
To see the noble princess
Alone like this is heartbreaking.

AŚWAPATI

I agree with what the sage has said.
I am not trying to keep back my daughter.
Since she has grown into a woman,
Nobody has come to ask her hand in marriage.
I believed that if I did nothing,
It would seem like I did not care.
So I approached my daughter
And asked her to find me a son-in-law.
I told her that I would agree
To let her journey into the wilderness
In order to find a gentleman
Who is worthy of her.
NĀRADA
You were right, my king.
Finding a husband for your daughter is important.
But if nobody has come to ask her to marry him,
You should let her find one as she pleases.

AŚWAPATI
I am glad that you agree with me.

NĀRADA
Your Majesty has done the right thing.

AŚWAPATI
Sāvitri, my daughter,
Seeing that you have come back home,
Have you already found a suitable husband,
The one you have given your life to?
Or have you come upon any obstacles?
Tell me the story and don’t hold back.

SĀVITRI
Even though I felt ashamed as women do,
After I heard the demand of my father
I was determined to suppress the feeling of shame
And made it disappear in the blink of an eye.
My powerful father
Is like a Brahma angel for me, your daughter.
Anything that you ask me to do
Is like a command of the gods that I have to obey.

NĀRADA
Honor be to you, the royal princess,
The most excellent woman in the human world,  
Elegant in manner and beautiful in speech,  
Due observance in our rites and customs.  
Please do not feel ashamed.  
To choose a husband is not a disgrace.  
But if you live alone without a marriage,  
The people will speak ill of the king, your father.

SĀVITRI
I would like to tell you the story,  
My great father.  
When I went into the wilderness,  
I met a gentleman whose handsome appearance strikingly caught my eye.  
He looked radiant as if emitting rays of light.  
His manner was very loveable.  
He also appeared to be physically powerful and strong,  
A very elegant and gracious gentleman.  
My heart suddenly beat fast, sparking when I saw him.  
When I heard his voice I was pleased,  
As though the sentiment of pleasure pierced the heart.  
I believe he would be my companion until death do us part.  
Please, father, have mercy for us.

AŚWAPATI
I know that you did not choose the wrong man  
Because I believe in your decision.  
This fine gentleman,  
Who is he? Tell me, my daughter.

SĀVITRI
Once in a prosperous kingdom,
There was a majestic king  
Whose name appeared to be  
Dyumatsena, the righteous king.  
He was loved and adored by the citizens,  
Both in his land and in neighboring kingdoms.  
But misfortune fell upon him.  
His eyes became blind.  
His enemy took the chance  
And attacked the capital city.  
Dyumatsena was fortunate enough  
To escape from the hand of the enemy.  
He fled into the wilderness  
With his pitiful wife,  
Holding their infant son, pressed tightly against her heart.  
The king was ordained and became an ascetic.  
The prince who was born in the powerful city  
Was raised in the humble forest.  
And the son of King Dyumatsena  
Is the one I have chosen to be my husband.

NÄRADA  
Oh, my great king,  
Your lovely daughter  
Had wasted her strength through the harsh journey in the wilderness  
And had chosen the wrong husband

AŚWAPATI  
Sage, why did you say things like that?  
Sāvitri, my daughter, what do you have to defend yourself?
SĀVITRI
The prince does not have any inclination
To neglect the moral teachings.

NĀRADA
It is true that he is righteous.
But he also has a flaw.

AŚWAPATI
I am here to listen to your explanation.

SĀVITRI
And I, who respect the venerable ascetic,
Who has been a shelter for all people,
Will listen to your reason.
Please enlighten us with the truth.

NĀRADA
The prince that Sāvitri
Has chosen to be her royal husband,
His great father
Is righteous and truthful in speech.
The prince was given the name “Satyavān”
Which means truthfulness.
When he was young
He loved to ride on horses.
He also liked to form images of horses out of clay.
His name implies that when he grows up
His fame will travel far and high.
And all human beings will obey him.
AŚWAPATI
Satyavān is a son
Who possesses gratefulness towards his parents.
He is filled with honor and intelligence.
His mercy has been seen by everyone.
He works diligently and steadily.
Haven’t there been enough virtues in him?

NĀRADA
Satyavān, son of King Dyumatsena
Is as glorious as the sun god,
As wise as Brhaspati, one of the seven great ṛishis,
As brave as Kosit, the heroic warrior.
He is very compassionate.
His heart is like that of the goddess of the earth.

AŚWAPATI
The prince loves and respects the gods.
Is he charitable or is he filled with greed?
His appearance is beautiful and flawless.
Is his goodness too distrustful?

NĀRADA
The prince gives to others what he can give,
Remains truthful in every condition.
He is respectful and adores
Elderly Brahmans and teachers.
An aura of glory surrounds him
Like the glorious king Yayāti.
His face is glowing like the full moon, pleasing to see.
His physical body is like that of a knight angel from heaven.
He knows how to hold back the ten forms of evil passions: desire, hate, ignorance, vanity, heresy, doubt, sloth, arrogance, shamelessness, and hardness of heart.

He is brave, honest, and ethical, faithful to his friends, pure at heart, without a stain. Hospitality and patience are within him.

**AŚWAPATI**

I listened to what you have said
And see that he is an excellent man.
What is his imperfection then?
Please answer to our curiosity.

**NĀRADA**

The thought of it brings me sadness.
He has only one flaw, but a very significant one.
It can erase all his high qualities.

Prince Satyavān
Is destined to have a short life.
Within one year from today
His soul will depart from his body.

**AŚWAPATI**

Alas! Śāvitri, my poor daughter.
I am stunned by what I hear.
I feel pity for you, my daughter, who is in love,
And whose love will not be completed.
The sage has stated very clearly.
Whatever he says you have to believe entirely.
My daughter, you have to consider it thoroughly.
How about finding another husband?
SĀVITRI
My father, the owner of my life,
How could you advise me to do such a thing?
A dice can be tossed only once.
You can give away your child only one time.
Once you have uttered your words
You cannot take them back.
These three things cannot be done twice.
Please, father, listen to me carefully.
Even though the prince has a short life
Or even if he is lack of virtues,
I have already chosen him
And I will not have any other man.

NĀRADA
Listen, the best of men,
Sāvitri’s heart is never second to anyone.
She is determined in her decision,
Never discouraged from customs and virtues.
This great quality is also found
In the wonderful Satyavān.
The man and woman should be together.
Please, Your Majesty, they belong to each other.

AŚWAPATI
I salute to the sage.
I prostrate to you, the heavenly Brahman.
I obey the words, the command
Of my venerable teacher.
Look, my beautiful daughter,
I’ve yielded to the wish of the sage,
And will give you, my precious,
To Satyavān.

NĀRADA
Honor be to you, my dear great king.
I wish you a joyful nuptial
And a good life together.
Glory and happiness be to you

MALE/FEMALE ATTENDANTS
We, your humble servants, officers, and attendants
Are merry, happy and contented,
Presenting all the blessings with gladness
To our admirable princess.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS
We pray for your prosperity and good fortune,
All the best and wonderful things.

MALE ATTENDANTS
We wish you a long life more than a hundred years of age,
And all the illness and diseases be away.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS
We wish you beautiful and glowing skin,
Fresh and radiant without tarnish.

MALE ATTENDANTS
Everybody who sees you is glad and blessed
Because your kindness is incomparable.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS
From now there will be only happiness.
MALE ATTENDANTS
No hardship, no harm to be seen.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS
The nuptial will be successful in every way.

MALE ATTENDANTS
And the two will be partners in love for eternity.

MALE/FEMALE ATTENDANTS
Your love is flowing to the man you love.
Two hearts and souls are united as one.
We wish you happiness, peace, and serenity,
Dwelling in felicity for hundreds of years to come.

CURTAIN

ACT 2

Setting: In front of Dyumatsena’s hermitage.

The front entrance of the hermitage is on the left side of
the stage, with three steps down from the hermitage to the
ground. There was a big tree on the right side of the
stage, with an altar underneath the tree. On the altar
there is a piece of Deer’s skin. A water goblet is placed
in front of the altar. There are bushes and wild flowers
further on the right of the altar. The background is the
wilderness. When the curtains are drawn we see the first
light of the sun. Sāvitrī is alone on stage, dressed like a
female Brahmin, sitting by the altar underneath the tree.
SĀVITRI
Alas! The thought of it brings me pain.
    I have been utterly blissful
    For one full year.
    Today is a very important day,
    The day that my beloved husband
    Will be departed from life.
    It is the sins we have committed in our past lives
    That make us suffer an enormous misfortune today.
I have devoted myself to meditation and religious practices
    To ask the almighty gods for mercy.
    I have been fasting for three full nights.
    Please, the venerable gods, grant me my wish.

Satyavān enters from the hermitage, walking down the steps
    and walks towards Sāvitri.

SATYAVĀN
My love,
    Your skin is extremely pale.
    Your practices are exceedingly determined.
    You have been exceptionally tolerant.
    For the past three nights
    You have not touched your food.
    Please, come and eat, my beautiful wife.
    I want to see you joyful once again.

SĀVITRI
I love you, my husband.
    Whenever I am away from your side
    My thoughts are occupied by you.
Please, your highness,
Do not travel far from me.
I would die and give up my own life
For you, the very much-loved one, my husband.

The sound of a Thai orchestra is heard, playing a sorrowful song. Sāvitri is crying and Satyavān is trying to console her. Sāvitri puts her head on Satyavān’s lap and sobs. When the music dies down, Satyavān slowly helps Sāvitri to sit up.

SATYAVĀN
My beloved wife,
You are more important than my life.
To be far from you side
Is like committing a murder to myself.
I care for you eternally,
Never leave you behind.
As long as I live,
I would cherish you, my love, my companion of life.

SĀVITRI
My king,
Who is the owner of my life.
I know that you love me
And I believe in every word you say.
It’s not that I thought that you would get tired of me,
And it’s not that I thought you would flee,
But everything in this world, large or small,
Though they may seem stable, they are perishable and impermanent.
SATYAVĀN
The love I have for you is as immense as the sea,
And it will never fade away.
Even though the earth and the sky will collapse,
I will still love you,
And my love will remain.

SĀVITRI
In every kingdom and every land,
It is hard to find a husband like you.
Ever since I came here to be your wife,
All I have received is happiness, day and night.

SATYAVĀN
I am only a forester
Who loves a beautiful princess.

SĀVITRI
The merits that I have done in my past lives
Helps me to be with you in the present.

SATYAVĀN
Love is like the elixir of life

SĀVITRI
That relieves the thirst in our hearts.

SĀVITRI/SATYAVĀN
Grief is lessened and diseases are destroyed
Because love is eternal in our hearts.

SATYAVĀN
The ascetic practices that you have been doing
Are pure, clean, and flourishing.
Now that three nights have passed,
Please come and eat and be nourished.
Fresh cow’s milk and honey,
I have gathered and prepared for you.
Please, my beautiful princess,
Come and eat with your husband.

SĀVITRI
Please, my virtuous husband,
I will take care of you when you eat.
I have never neglected my duty.
I will prepare the food for you.
As for me, I will wait
Until the sun leaves the horizon.
Then I will eat the food joyfully.
But for now I have to do what I am determined to.

SATYAVĀN
Since you have given a vow,
I will not oppose to you.
Please, let us go into the hermitage
And give offerings to the gods as we usually do.

The music is heard. Satyavān takes Sāvitri by the hand and
leads her up the steps to the hermitage. After they exit,
the stage is gradually getting brighter. The chanting from
a group of Brahmins is heard, at first softly, and then
louder and louder until we see them enter from behind the
hermitage. One of the Brahmins is carrying a torch. He
walks to the altar and lights the fire for Dyumatsena to sacrifice. One of the Brahmins also brings an oil (butter oil) goblet and puts it on the altar.

BRAHMINS
The greatest one,
You have shone the light to protect us.
Three parts combined in your glorious one,
One in the sky that shines the light,
One in the human body,
The heating light of man for pleasure, contentment, and serenity,
One on the earth, the blessing, burning fire
To be used to prepare food and to sacrifice to the divine gods.
Dark world and lonesome men, with hearts filled with sorrow,
The rising sun has brought everything into light and chased away the sadness.
When we see the light of dawn, our hearts and souls are at ease.
The winged musicians on branches of the trees are singing in melody,
As if the sounds of various instruments are harmonized
To praise their blessed lives.
And we, the Brahmins, are delighted, all of us.
We come here to praise the highest lord.
Please give us blessings, with prosperity and good health.
Sorrow swiftly disappears and calamity be gone.

At the end of the prayer, Dyumatsena, Šaivya, and the attendants enters from the back of the hermitage.
Dyumatsena is blind, so when he walks he has to be led by his wife, Śaivya. They sit on the altar. There are about 6 attendants that follow and they are young female Brahmins. They bring the offerings and set them on the ground next to the altar. When Dyumatsena sits down, the Brahmin’s prayer is finished so that he can continue with his prayer.

DYUMATSENA

Om...divine god of the blazing sun, bright and pure,
Who shines rays of lights from the sky, glowing in every direction,
Endowed with great power, for gods and man,
Please swiftly lessen our troubles
For everybody to be contented.
I would like to invite you
To step down from heaven
To the burning fire
That is rising in the goblet.
Please increase the happiness
For us, the one underneath your feet.
We give you our respect and obedience.

He puts one spoon of oil in the fire and continues.

Om...the mighty Agni, god of fire, the wondrous sun,
Please assume a human form and shine forth your light onto us.
I invite the powerful god to be the ambassador of heaven.
Please take all the offerings
That we have presented to you.
We hope that the gods from every direction
Will receive our gifts.
God of fire, please take all the offerings
For all the other gods.
And please give us blessings.
We are the ones underneath your feet.

He puts one spoon of oil in the fire and continues.

Om...the four mighty gods,
The ones who give protection from four directions of the world,
The glorious divine powers
Who dwell in celestial heaven,
On the earth, the land of human beings,
In the wild forest, in the tense stretch of bushes and trees,
In the hills and mountains,
In the water of mountain streams,
We ask all of you,
To have mercy upon us,
Showing us compassion,
No matter if we are rich or poor.
Please make us blissful like you did before.
Misfortune and danger be gone.
Please give us the best of health and do not say farewell.

He puts a spoon of oil in the fire.

When the prayer is over, a Brahmin blows a conch shell horn and music is played by a Thai orchestra. Dyumatsena blows the smoke from the fire in the direction of the sky.
Sā vitri enters from the back of the hermitage, with
bouquets of flowers. She walks to the altar, puts the flowers in front of Dyumatsena, and prostrates.

SĀVITRI
The duties that are assigned to me
Have been completed this morning.
I am here to see you, father [in-law]
And mother[in-law], to ask for your blessings.
I have devoted myself in meditation,
Never neglected, never slackened.
Please, father and mother,
Grant me a blessing for prosperity and peace.

DYUMATSENA
By the power of virtues we have gathered,
May you be happy and peaceful.
May sorrow and diseases be absent.
May they never come close to Sāvitri, my dear sweet daughter.

ŚAIVYA
May your passion be strong,
Surpassing all others in strength and beauty,
And be affectionate with you royal husband.
May there be no conflicts to loosen your love.
Mutual love, with hearts woven into one, will give you peace and happiness.

BRAHMINS
Honor be to you! We would like to give more blessings.
May you, the beautiful lady, not become a widow.
May you and the prince
Be together for eternity.

Sāvitri prostrates to Dyumatsena and Śaivyā, and then salutes to the Brahmins by placing the hands palm to palm and raising them to the forehead.

DYUMATSENA
Your ascetic practices have been completed successfully. Now I would like to warn you, my daughter, to take your food, the honorable one. You have fasted for three nights. You look mournful, not bright. Why do you still starve yourself? I’m afraid that you will fall ill.

SĀVITRI
I have endured for three days and I am still not hungry. I would like to wait until the end of the night because I have made a vow. Please have mercy on me and postpone any punishment.

DYUMATSENA
Since you have firmly made up your mind I agree to do what you request.

Satyavān, carrying an axe and a bag, enters from the hermitage. He comes down the steps and walks toward the altar. He salutes his father and mother.
SATYAVĀN
I am here to say good-bye to you, father and mother.
    I will go into the wild forest
    To gather delicious fruits for you.
    And I will cut the wood for the offering of Agni.
    I will hurry and will be back shortly.
    I would like to entrust young Sāvitri to you.
    She will serve you at this hermitage for me.

_Satyavān salutes his father and mother and starts to leave._

_Sāvitri takes a hold of his hand._

SĀVITRI
My beloved prince,
    Please have mercy on me, your servant.
    Please let me follow you to the forest
    In order to serve you.

SATYAVĀN
You have been fasting for three nights.
    I have seen the tiredness on your face.
    And the path in the middle of the forest
    Will be hard for you to walk upon.

SĀVITRI
    I believe I would not be weary
    When I journey with my great husband.

SATYAVĀN
The way of the forest is not safe, my love.
    There are often thorns on the path.
    There are also wild animals
Walking around.

SĀVITRI
They will not harm me
Because they are afraid of your great authority.

SATYAVĀN
I’m worried about you.

SĀVITRI
Please don’t be.
No matter what happens today,
My heart doesn’t want to be away from my husband.

SATYAVĀN
My heart is filled with joy.
But I am concerned about you, my love.
You have never been into the forest before.
You are used to living in the palace
Amongst loyal servants and attendants.

SĀVITRI
If you love me
Please let me accompany you to the forest.
Please, your highness,
This is the last time I ask you for a favor.

Sāvitrī cries.

SATYAVĀN
Please don’t cry!
I’ve yielded to your wish, my princess.
If you would like to come with me, I will not object.  
But you have to ask for permission  
From our father and mother, abounding in good fortune.  
They have been very kind to you.  
They would do as their daughter’s heart wishes.

*Sāvitri crawls towards Dyumatsena and Śāivya.*

**SĀVITRI**
My glorious father  
And my most gracious mother,  
Please have mercy on me,  
The one who has been loyal to you.  
I would like to depart to the forest  
With Satyavān, my husband, the owner of my life.  
I have come here to be your servant  
Almost one full year.  
I have never been outside  
The boundaries of your hermitage.  
I would like to leave this place for a while  
To accompany my husband to the forest.

**DYUMATSENA**
What do you think, Śāivya?  
Ever since our daughter-in-law has come here  
Her manner has been amiable and well-ordered.  
She has never disobeyed my command.

**ŚĀIVYA**
You have said it right.  
Our daughter is a very good girl.  
There is no fault we could find in her.
She has never asked for anything.
We should let her go with her beloved husband.

Sāvitri, our beautiful daughter,
Your father, who possesses greatness and power,
Has agreed with me that you, a girl of great charm,
Have been truly loyal to us, deep within your heart.

DYUMATSENA
If you, daughter, wish to go into the wild forest,
Please remember one important thing:
Do not obstruct any work
That your husband has to accomplish.

SĀVITRI
I salute you and accept the words of advice
That you, the virtuous ones, have taught me.
Farewell, father and mother,
And place your blessing above my head.

Satyavān and Sāvitri salute Dyumatsena and Śaivya. Satyavān uses his left hand to take the axe, and his right hand to hold Sāvitri’s hand. They walk away from the altar slowly while the Brahmins are giving them blessings.

BRAHMINS
May the noble Satyavān
And the graceful Sāvitri
Be together as your hearts wish,
For ever no less than one hundred years.
May you have a glorious son
To continue the royal dynasty.
May all your children be righteous and powerful
And be honored throughout every land.

When the Brahmins finish their speech, Śāvitri and Satyavān exit to the right.

CURTAIN

Act 3

Scene 1

Setting: In the forest.

The setting is the forest. The trees in the forest are not too thick. The atmosphere is comfortable. There are some real fruits on the trees that can be picked. There are some real tree branches that can be cut for firewood. On the right of the stage there is a big tree that is standing on a small mound. The mound is sloping down from right to left, so that a person can lie down on it. It is day time. Before the curtains are drawn, music from a Thai orchestra is played. When the curtains are open, Satyavān and Śāvitri walk out together, Satyavān with an axe in his hand, Śāvitri with a bag with flowers in it. The music stops.

ŚĀVITRI

Look here, Your Highness.

A mango, ripened on the mango tree
As if it was molded with gold.

When I look at it I know that its taste would be refreshing to the mind.
SATYAVĀN
It’s true that its taste would be sweet
But not as sweet as you, my little princess.
Nothing is as sweet as the words of yours.

SĀVITRI
Up to this time, hasn’t it faded away?

SATYAVĀN
It will never fade away, my love.

SĀVITRI
Time has passed for almost one full year.

SATYAVĀN
But for me I see it as only one fine day.

SAVIRTI
To listen to words such as these,
Who can help but be infatuated by you?

SATYAVĀN
To have a wife like this to be a partner in life,
Who can help but be infatuated by my own wife?

SĀVITRI
Look, I’m here to attend to you, but you keep on teasing.
This is not the time.

SATYAVĀN
And why is that?
We are in the middle of the forest.
Who would be traveling this way?

SĀVITRI
The gods!

SATYAVĀN
The gods themselves are filled with happiness.
Their pleasure is caused by the tenderness
Of being close to their beloved goddesses.
Why would they be watching us, my love?

SĀVITRI
To argue with you is like bringing trouble onto myself.
Your highness defends smoothly.
I give up. If you feel sympathy for me,
Please give me the golden fruit.

SATYAVĀN
Even my own heart I can give to you,
How could I not give you the fruit?

Satyavān picks the mango and gives it to her.

SATYAVĀN
This mango presents such a sweet scent.
When it’s time, please have it, my beautiful wife.
Now I have to cut some wood
For sacrifice to Agni like I used to.

Satyavān starts cutting wood. Sāvitri sits down under the big tree and takes flowers out of the bag. She ties them into bunches.
SĀVITRI

Flowers, beautiful flowers,
Many different colors like a pattern of a painting,
As if you decorated yourselves to attract insects.
You have such undeniable scent
Like a girl who wants to find a lover,
And dresses herself to become beautiful deceiving and mystifying man.
She then easily agrees to take his love.
But there are flowers with softer colors.
Their scent is floating in the air like the wind that brings you dreams.
The insects are delighted that these flowers know how to choose the best for them,
Like a well-born gentlewoman, with insightful judgment
And excellent propriety, pleasing to the eye.
She deserves a good gentleman who truly cares for her
With love in his heart superior than all others.

SATYAVĀN

Sāvitri, because I have been working hard,
My head is hurt as if it was cracking.
And with it also my organs and my heart,
They are so unexplainably painful.
I believe I have had a fever, my love.
I can feel an arrow piercing through my skull,
And fire burning furiously in my chest
As if I’m going insane because of the poisonous flames.
Please help me, my refreshingly beautiful wife,
Because I am unable to stand on my own.
This time the fever makes me feel like my heart is being torn into pieces.

Music is heard. Satyavān drops the axe and sways to the side. Sāvitri helps him to lie down under the tree, his head on her lap. Satyavān gets more and more restless because of the pain until he becomes quiet and motionless. He dies.

SĀVITRI

Oh, my unfortunate husband,
How could you have left your wife like this?
Where are you going?
Why didn’t you ask your wife to come with you?
You have left your wife
In the middle of a big forest.
I’m alone and my heart is filled with helplessness.
I would like to give away my life and follow you to wherever you are.

The orchestra plays a sad song (or a funeral hymn).
Sāvitri, with Satyavān in her arms, cries. The music changes the tone and Yamā, the god of death, enters from stage right. Sāvitri is frightened to see him.

SĀVITRI

When I see the glowing beauty of your shape,
Unlike the beauty of mankind,
I know that you are a mighty god
Who has come down to the earth.
The god who possesses elegance and virtues,
Please have mercy on your lowly servant.
To have come here in this forest,
What is it that you wish to do?

YAMĀ
Beautiful Sāvitri,
You have been immeasurably loyal to your husband.
Your love has never faded as time goes by.
You have the superiority of a yogi
That appears so clearly, worthy of admiration.
Because of this reason, I agree to converse
With you, lovely Sāvitri.
I am the god of death
Who possess ultimate power.
Satyavān, son of Dyumatsena, who is lying here,
Has lost his force of life.
That is why I bring this rope
To tie it and take it to the place that it belongs.
Please do not feel so sorry.
It’s not what you are supposed to do.
No matter how sorry you are
It cannot help bringing Satyavān back to life.

SĀVITRI
Honorable god,
I, the one underneath your feet, am bewildered.
I have heard the elders tell stories
That when it’s time for a person to die
One of your emissaries will come and take him.
But why this time
You have come here on your own?
I wonder, please explain it to me.
YAMĀ

The prince has great worthiness.
He has good features and virtues in every way.
He is like the star of good omen.
The prince should not be taken by an emissary.
That’s why I have come here by myself.

SĀVITRI

Please, the venerable god,
Have pity on me.

YAMĀ

Please understand.
It is time for your husband, that’s why I’m here.

SĀVITRI

Alas! I am a woman
Without a husband.

YAMĀ

Please, stop.
Do not beg for the life of your husband.
I cannot consent it, please do not linger here.

Music is heard. Yamā ties the rope around the “prāṇa” that has been hidden behind Satayavan. The prāṇa stands up. Sāvītri puts Satayavan’s deceased body down and gets up. Yamā leads the prāṇa and they both exit. Sāvītri follows them.

Scene 2
Setting: In the forest.

The background is slightly different from the first scene. The trees are thicker. When the curtains are drawn, Yamā and the prāṇa enter from stage right. Sāvitri follows them. When they reach the center of the stage, Yamā stops and turns to talk to Sāvitri.

YAMĀ

Sāvitri, please stop, you have walked
On this path with not a little difficulty.
At this moment you should turn back
In order to fulfill your duty
And to perform religious acts.
As for your royal husband,
You are free from any obligation
That you had owed him.

SĀVITRI

Wherever my husband is taken
I would like to follow him.
Even if he walked on this path alone,
By his own freewill,
I would follow his footsteps.
For the strong power of my devoted meditation
And genuine respect to the elders,
You, the mighty god, also have compassion for me.
There is nothing that can obstruct the way
Of a person who always seeks virtues
And refrains herself from worldly pleasures.
Obeying the teachers’ words unquestioningly,
She might not be neglected and troubled.
Sages glorify virtues as the most precious,
Worthier than any infinite wealth.
Virtues protect people who follow the righteous path.
The fruits of devoted practices should be received as the scriptures say.

YAMĀ

I am pleased to listen to your words,
Explaining the religious principles thoroughly,
Eloquent in speech with comprehensive wisdom,
Very reasonable, thus, deserving a prize.
Anything that your heart desires,
I will truthfully yield to it
Except for the life of your husband.
Please do not ask for it, I will not give it to you.

SĀVITRI

The father of my husband
Was once a glorious king.
Unfortunately, his eyes had become blind,
And impious enemies stole his throne.
Please give to my noble father
The perfect sight for his eyes
For him to be soaring
As the blazing sun and the burning flames.

YAMĀ

The wish that you have requested
I am very delighted to give you.
You have come far enough, Savirti,
Please return to your home.
SĀVITRI

I have been very close to my husband.
I have never felt exhausted because of hard work.
   In what condition my husband is in
   I would like to be the same.
To live close to a person with virtues
   Is a true merit.
To associate with a righteous and faithful person
   Will bring endless and favorable benefits.
To converse with people with religious practices
   Is to make the most excellent acquaintances.
I’d like to meet a person with the finest virtues
   And that is why I have followed you.

YAMĀ

The words that you have spoken
   Are estimable and worthy of study
To increase goodness and to fulfill wisdom,
   Even those of sages.
   I am very pleased.
Therefore, beautiful and amiable Sāvitri,
   I will grant you another wish.
   Except the life of your husband,
Anything you wish for will be yours.

SĀVITRI

The father of my husband
   Is banished from his own kingdom by the enemy.
Please bestow a wish upon him, the righteous king,
   And make him rule his people as before.
YAMĀ
In a little while, this great king
Will blissfully rule his kingdom.
Sāvitri, please stop, do not walk further.
This hardship will torture you.

SĀVITRI
You have tamed all animals, large and small,
With firmness in discipline.
You take the life of all animals when their times arrive,
Never before or after.
For this reason, we, the lowly humans, call you
The mighty god of death.
Please have mercy on me, your poor servant,
And please listen to the words of my intention.
The conduct of a good and virtuous person
That should be done to all other living beings
Is not to harm, not even to think of harming.
Action, speech, and thought should be filled
With compassion and loving-kindness.
It is the most essential
To humans and animals, great or small.
If an enemy comes to apologize
Forgiveness will be given with mercy.

YAMĀ
To listen to your Dharma talk
Is like a thirsty person
Who has drunk cool and refreshing water.
I am very pleased to hear your thought
And will give you your third wish.
Anything that you desire
Except the life of your husband
I will it to you.

SĀVITRI
My father
Is the ruler of a great kingdom
With power, honor, and superiority.
But he has no son.
Please give a son to my father
In order to continue our lineage.

YAMĀ
The king, your honorable father,
Will have a hundred children, all of them are male.
Now that I have given you three wishes,
Go back, do not endure this hardship anymore.
Please do not step forward from now on.

SĀVITRI
I am staying beside my husband.
No matter how long the way is I can walk.
I am determined to follow him further.
Please, the compassionate god, have mercy on me.
The glorious sun is your father.
You have been doing spiritual practices
with great discipline.
That’s why we call you the virtuous king.
Whoever possesses justice and virtues,
Everybody would like to make friends with.
You are kind, with the heart filled with compassion.
All living creatures have faith in you.
YAMĀ
You know how to speak, Sāvitri
I’ve never heard such words anywhere else.
Now, whatever you wish for
I’ll give to you without delay
Except for the life of Satyavān.

SĀVITRI
The wish that will bring happiness to my heart
Is to have children
No less than a hundred noble sons.

YAMĀ
This wish I am contented to give you.
Your sons will be renowned far and wide.
Please go back, the beautiful one.
Why do you keep walking?

SĀVITRI
To journey with a companion
Who is trustworthy is an honor.
You are like a walking virtue,
And that is why I have followed you.
To converse with a wise man is my aspiration,
To be endowed with merits to rejoice together.
The beautiful god of virtue and harmony,
You are the one that we can seek protection, happiness, and tranquility.

YAMĀ
Your words are ways to advance towards a better existence,
As sweet as honey, mixed with joyous moral lessons.
To listen to them brings prosperity to the mind.
Youthful lady, you are praised as the most excellent woman.
Make another wish to add them to five.
I will not decline, my dear girl.
This time make the most precious wish,
And I will grant it with delight.

SĀVITRI
The glorious god who gives us fortune and tranquility,
All the wishes that I asked from you
Have been fulfilled.
But I am here without my beloved husband.
For that reason, I have to ask you
For the life of Satyavān.
To stand by the words spoken
Is the quality of the virtuous king.

YAMĀ
Once they have been uttered, my words are everlasting,
And I will act as I have spoken.

He unties the rope from the prāṇa.

Here it is, beautiful princess,
I give you back your husband.
May you be safe without danger or ailment.
May your skin be pure and glowing.
May you be partners in love
And grow old together peacefully for three hundred years.
Music is heard. Sāvitri salutes Yamā, then takes the hand of the prāṇa, leads him to the right, and exits. Yamā exits on the left.

Scene 3

Setting: The same as scene 1

In the evening. The sun is setting. Satyavān lies down at the same place under the tree. Sāvitri enters from stage left, walks towards Satyavān, sits down beside him and puts his head on her lap. Music is heard. Satyavān slowly opens his eyes, looks at Sāvitri, smiles, and puts his arms around Sāvitri. When Satyavān starts speaking, the sun has already set.

SATYAVĀN
My love, my partner in life,
I had a sudden feeling of fright in my mind.
I thought that I had lost my breath of life.
But I had just fallen asleep.
When I opened my eyes I saw your pretty face.
I dreamt that there was a gentleman,
Violently pulling and dragging my body.
Please give me a kiss, my golden, my beautiful girl,
To relieve the terror of my nightmare.

Sāvitri kisses him.

SĀVITRI
Ah, my husband, my king, the one who governs me,
Who is resting peacefully on my lap.
The man that you said you had seen
Is in fact the virtuous god of death.
But now the god has retraced his steps
   And departed.
   My husband, do not worry.
   Please get up.
   We have to return to the hermitage.
   The night has fallen.
All the ghosts and spirits are wandering the forest.
The echoing sound of wild animals
Is making my heart trembling with fear.

_Satyavān tries to sit, but he’s still very exhausted._
_Sāvitri has to help support him._

SATYAVĀN
I am sorry, my wife, the one who brings joy to my heart.
   Everything is my own fault.
It is alarming to be in the middle of the forest at this hour
   Because everything is filled with darkness,
   Unable to see the way.

SĀVITRI
But because of the wild fire,
A tree is burning, giving light.
   I see it standing on the way,
Not too far from where we are.
   I will hurry to bring the fire
And burn the firewood to diminish the darkness.
SATYAVĀN
You wait here, I will go
And bring the fire to you.

Satyavān tries to stand up but falls down. Sāvitri has to support him.

SĀVITRI
Please do not force yourself.
You are not fully recovered.

SATYAVĀN
It is true, my love, I do not understand why
Today my body is exhausted and weak.

SĀVITRI
Because you were burned by the blazing sunlight.
You had to work hard in the searing weather.
Please get some rest
And spend the night in the forest.

SATYAVĀN
The pain has gradually been appeased.
Please, my love, my beautiful wife,
I am thinking about my father and mother.
Such time as this they must be waiting for me.
They were always worried about me
When I spent a long time in the forest.
Now and then they even came to look for me
Because I am the only thing they have.
They care for me as if I was their own precious hearts.
When I am not by their side, they always look for me.
I am like one of their hands.  
They are most lonesome when I am not there.  
Besides, they both are quite old.  
To lose a child would be unbearable.  
If my father and mother are harmed,  
I will not live to be seen by any man.

The orchestra plays a sad song. Satyavān cries. Sāvitri wipes his tears and consoles him.

SĀVITRI  
Your highness, most honorable one,  
Please believe your wife and have no foreboding.  
Because of the power of religious practices,  
I believe it would give a benefit.  
And all my devotion throughout the year  
May bring us the favorable fruit.  
May all the happiness and longevity  
Befall the lives of father and mother.  
And may the merit that I have done protect the honorable one,  
My beloved husband.  
May the power of faith and truthfulness  
Give the ones I love long and blissful lives.

SATYAVĀN  
I am very pleased to hear your words.  
My mind is clear so let me kiss you, my beautiful wife.

He kisses her.

No other women can be compared to you,
Beautiful and virtuous, the most beloved in my heart.
Right now the moon is giving her soft light.
We can see the way in this dark forest.
Please, my wife, we should hurry.
I have strength to walk so we should not wait any longer.

The music is heard. Satyavān stands up but he still doesn’t have enough strength so he takes some time to stand still.
Sāvitri uses her left hand to lift the axe and stands beside Satyavān. Satyavān puts his left arm around her shoulder and Sāvitri puts her right arm around his waist. They slowly walk to her left. While they are walking, they hear voices calling Satyavān from the back stage. They stop to listen. A couple of Brahmins enter. When they see Satyavān and Sāvitri they are very delighted and shout to other people backstage that they have found them. Dyumatsena, Śaivyā, and the chief counselor of Śalva enter from the left. Male and female attendants follow. Some of them have torch lights in their hands. Dyumatsena walks to Satyavān and embraces him. Śaivyā embraces Sāvitri.

DYUMATSENA
Nothing brings me more delight than finding you,
My precious son.
Joy is brought to our hearts once again.

ŚAIVYA
We had been waiting since you left.
When dusk approached our hearts withered because of fear.

DYUMATSENA
Especially today when Sāvitri had come with,
It had doubled our worries.

ŚAIVYA
You, daughter, had never walked in the forest.
We were afraid that you would be enfeebled and exhausted.

DYUMATSENA
If we lost both of you, our children,
We would not be able to go on living.

ŚAIVYA
That is why we were so delighted to have found you.
The sorrow in my heart was gone when I saw you.

DYUMATSENA
It is the result of our merits
That when we came into the forest
It didn’t take us long to accomplish our goal.

ŚAIVYA
If we had to spend longer time in this dangerous place,
It would bring us more sadness.

SATYAVĀN
You have undergone such great trouble.
I am responsible for all the blame.

SĀVITRI
Please pardon us just for once.
My husband was not neglectful.
But he was feeling unwell,
And I myself had to keep him company.
SATYAVĀN
You should have left me under the tree
And went back to inform them.

ŚAIVYA
I agree with what Sāvitrī had done.
Because you fell ill in the forest,
If you were left by yourself,
The wild animals may have harmed you.
And why don’t you tell us about you illness?
Daughter, please shine the light upon us.

SĀVITRI
Let us wait until we reach the hermitage and have some rest
And I will relate the facts to you.

SATYAVĀN
The sickness had almost obtained my life
But Sāvitrī had taken a great care of me.
When I had recovered, we agreed
To hurry and return to the hermitage.

DYUMATSENA
I know that you were worried about me.
My son and my daughter, you are such a remarkable couple.
You both were very kind to me
Because you knew that my eyes were darkened.

SATYAVĀN
I was being concerned, my father.
But I feel uncertain when I look closely at you.
The way you journeyed to this forest
Was like an ordinary, healthy person.
    I am now all at sea.

DYUMATSENA
What you said was right, how observant you are!
    There was a great miracle.
The sight of your victorious father
Has been lighted as it used to be.

SATYAVĀN
I am very delighted in this precious fortune
That happened to you, the meritorious being.

SĀVITRI
Honor be to you, the virtuous king!
Now I see that you have mercy and truthfulness.

SATYAVĀN
Who are you talking to, Sāvitrī?
    Please enlighten me.

SĀVITRI
The truth will certainly be revealed
    To the three of you, I promise.

DYUMATSENA
I myself have to inform you
That there is an extraordinary message,
    That both of you, children, aught to know.
I believe that you would be delighted.
    The respectable chief counselor,
Report the message to my children,
Precisely the same as you reported
To me and Śaivya this afternoon.

CHIEF COUNSELOR
Śalvas, where we lived,
Had suffered a great distress
Because a violently cruel situation
Had befallen the people who overthrew your power.
There was a disloyal counselor
Who gathered a large number of people
And attacked the King’s palace.
They murdered all the officers heartlessly,
But our enemies would not stop.
They started to pursue power among themselves.
All of them were struggling,
Killing relentlessly and destroying one another.
A chance is clear for the citizens to get together
And subjugated the horrid enemies.
The ones who overthrown you power
Were defeated, fled and scattered.
The people used their voice and invite
Dyumatsena, the man of illustrious lineage.
Everybody is ready to kneel to you
And offer the throne for you to reign.
Long ago we sought protection under your power.
Your virtues\(^5\) were a cool shade above our heads.
We are loyal, as the dust underneath your feet.
We will faithfully serve you as we used to.

\(^5\)The transcendent virtues, of which there are ten 1. almsgiving 2. morality 3. relinquishing of the world and worldly possession 4. wisdom 5. energy or fortitude 6. patience 7. truth 8. firm purpose or determination 9. charity 10. indifference or equanimity; also means completeness; perfection; the highest state.
SATYAVĀN
To listen to this pleasant message
Is like being bathed in clear, refreshing water
And feeling blissful in my soul.

ATTENDANTS
Feeling blissful in my soul,
We, your lowly servants, are also rejoicing.

SATYAVĀN
The holy merits
Bestow the fruit at the right moment,
Bringing joy and happiness.

ATTENDANTS
Bringing joy and happiness
To the ones who rule and the ones who serve.

SĀVITRI
I am glad that the respectable mother
Will be at ease from now on,
Departing the hard life in the wilderness.

ATTENDANTS
Departing the hard life in the wilderness,
Entering the beautiful royal palace.

SĀVITRI
All the miseries will be gone,
Indulging in happiness night and day.
Glory and prosperity to be found.
ATTENDANTS
Glory and prosperity to be found.
Peril and illness to be gone.

DYUMATSENA
I am grateful for this fortune,
Not because of my conferred honor.
Father and mother are of an old age,
Longing only for peacefulness.
But I am happy for my son,
Who will become a great and honorable person,
And Sā vitri, the most wonderful wife,
Partner in life and in transcendent virtues.
May the gods bestow a wish
Upon you and your beautiful wife
To live peacefully and auspiciously.
May the power of deity protect you!

Music is heard. The clouds in the back of the set are parted. Indra, Yamā, Varuṇa, and Agni are standing between the clouds. Bright lights are shining on them.

INDRA
We, the guardians of four directions,
Glowing with power and high authority.
The four of us have consented in out hearts
To bestow blessings upon you.
I, the great and supreme god, Indra,
Wish the four royalties
Eternal power, spreading far and high.
Enemies are defeated within and without the land.
YAMÄ
I, the god of death, grant you a wish
To be perpetually virtuous, never loosened,
Ruling over the citizens
As a big tree, giving shelter to all people.

VARUNA
I, the god of rain, ruler of precious water,
Wish you plentiful drops from heaven,
Falling all around the kingdom,
Refreshing and nourishing all plants and animals.

AGNI
I, Agni, the powerful god of fire,
Wish you growth in prestige of royalty and honor,
To be fully satisfied with all your desires,
Supremacy spreading among all humankind.

ATTENDANTS/COUNSELOR
Listening to the wishes of the great gods,
We, your servants, are filled with delight.
We would like to present a wish, doubling the fortune,
To our four great sovereigns.
May you rule the land without demolition.
All duties, great or small, be triumphant.
Every business completed as desired.
Fortune flowing like streams of gold.
Victory is prevailed over all enemies
Who dare to harm with undaunted hearts.
Majestic power strikes vile villains
And shatters them like Rāma conquers Rāvana, the demon king.

Whoever approaches with a devious heart,
Will utterly be perished and destroyed.
Whoever presents faithfulness and honesty,
Will receive high honor and ultimate supremacy.

END
Sāvitri
An Adaptation by Orada Lelanuja

Characters:
Narrator 1
Narrator 2

(Narrator 1 and Narrator 2 will take on other characters in the plays by adding some pieces of clothing to what they are wearing.)

Sāvitri – princess of Madra
Satyavān – Sāvitri’s husband

Scene 1
Scene one takes place in the throne hall of King Aśwapati of Madra. There is a square seat raised on four feet, fitted with a back, some religious offerings placed beside the seat. Narrator 1 enters. He is dressed in neutral clothing.

NARRATOR 1
Once upon a time, in the prosperous kingdom of Madra, there was a great and virtuous king whose name was Aśwapati.

Narrator 2 enters. He dresses the same as Narrator 1.

NARRATOR 2
Unfortunately, as years went by, the king didn’t seem to have an heir to his throne.

NARRATOR 1
So he left the worldly authority and pleasures and went into the wilderness.
NARRATOR 2
For 18 years he had been practicing religious austerities.

NARRATOR 1
In order to be granted one wish.

NARRATOR 2
The most precious wish.

NARRATOR 1
He wished to have a son.

NARRATOR 2
But when the goddess Sāvitri appeared before him, it seemed
like his only desire would not be fulfilled.

NARRATOR 1
For the only thing the goddess could offer him was a
daughter.

NARRATOR 2
King Aśwapati accepted the offer without any objection.

NARRATOR 1
Soon after he returned to the palace, his first and only
child was born.

NARRATOR 2
He named her Sāvitri, in honor of the goddess that granted
his boon.
NARRATOR 1
Young Sāvitri grew up to be beautiful and radiant.

NARRATOR 2
Like an image cast from the glorious goddess herself.

NARRATOR 1
But because of her god like quality, no man seemed to want her hand in marriage.

NARRATOR 2
So the king sent his daughter on a journey.

NARRATOR 1
To find a husband who is worthy of her.

NARRATOR 2
Today was the day that young Sāvitri returned from the wilderness.

NARRATOR 1
And her royal father was waiting anxiously.

NARRATOR 2
Accompanied by the heavenly, most respectable sage, Nārada.

Narrator 1 assumes the role of King Aśwapati by putting on a crown. Narrator 2 assumes the role of Nārada by putting on a white robe. They sit on the square seat. Sāvitri enters. She dressed in a full royal costume. King Aśwapati gets up to welcome her.
NARRATOR 1 (AŚWAPATI)
My daughter, my happiness, I am happy to see your beauty again. Since you left the kingdom, your mother and I have had no joy. Every night and everyday we were worried about our young daughter, afraid that when you went into the wilderness, you would encounter danger.

SĀVITRI
Power and goodness, equal to Your Royal Highness, the greatest love you have for me is the most valuable thing that saved me from harm.

NARRATOR 2 (NĀRADA)
Sāvitri, the rumors of your beauty and kindness have reached to heaven. Now I have seen you with my eyes, and I am very pleased with what I see.

NARRATOR 1 (AŚWAPATI)
Tell us, daughter, about your journey. Have you found the person whom you gave your heart to?

SĀVITRI
I have, father. His name is Satyavān. He is the son of Dyumatsena, the former king of Śalva.

NARRATOR 2 (NĀRADA)
Oh, my great king, your daughter has made the most terrible mistake. Young Satyavān’s heart is filled with virtues, bravery and great compassion. But amongst his superior qualities there is only one flaw, a very significant one. Satyavān is destined to have a short life. Within one year from today, he will depart from this life.
NARRATOR 1 (AŚWAPATI)
Oh, my poor daughter, we cannot let that happen. You have to find a new husband.

SĀVITRI
Father, how could you advice me to do such a thing? You can give away your daughter only once. Even though Satyavān has a short life, I have already chosen him. I will not have any other man.

Narrator 1(Aśwapati) looks at Narrator 2(Nārada) for advice. A brief pause.)

NARRATOR 2 (NĀRADA)
Listen, the best of men, Sāvitri is very determined in her decision. I believe that the man and woman should be together. You Majesty, they belong to each other.

NARRATOR 1 (AŚWAPATI)
(thinking. After a brief pause)
If you consent, my venerable teacher. Sāvitri, I will give you, my precious, to Satyavān.

Sāvitri prostates to King Aśwapati and Nārada and then exits. Narrator 1 and Narrator 2 take off the crown and the robe and resume their original roles.

NARRATOR 1
Princess Sāvitri married Satyavān.

NARRATOR 2
And moved to his father’s hermitage.

NARRATOR 1
(to the audience)Do you wonder why they have to live in the hermitage? (looking at Narrator 2)

NARRATOR 2
Dyutmasena was the former king of Śalva. Unfortunately he became blind and his enemy overthrew his power.

NARRATOR 1
He and his wife escaped to the hermitage, with their infant son.

NARRATOR 2
And Dyumatsena, the great king, had become a hermit, devoting himself to religious practices.

NARRATOR 1
Now 1 year had passed.

NARRATOR 2
Sāvitri had kept the fear to herself and breathed no word to her husband about Nārada’s prophecy.

NARRATOR 1
And this very day was the day that Satyavān was destined to die.

NARRATOR 2
For the first time, Sāvitri followed her husband to the forest, to gather fruits and to cut fire wood for his father and the fellow Brahmins.

Scene 2
In the forest. Satyavān and Sāvitri enters, Satyavān with an axe in his hand, Sāvitri with a basket of flowers.

SATYAVĀN

You shouldn’t have followed me, Sāvitri. You haven been fasting for three nights. You look so weak and pale.

SĀVITRI

My husband, today I don’t want to be away from you. I know my religious practices have been very severe but I am not feeling at all weak.

SATYAVĀN

Now, my love, sit here under the cool shade of the tree. I will cut some wood at the tree nearby.

Satyavān starts cutting the wood. Sāvitri sits under the tree. She takes the flowers out of the basket and ties them into bunches. Narrator 1 enters.

NARRATOR 1

As he was cutting the wood, Satyavān felt a great pain throughout his body. He felt as if an arrow was piercing through his skull and fire was burning furiously in his chest.
As Narrator 1 speaking, Satyavān feels the pain in his body and starts walking to Sāvitri. But because of the pain he starts crawling instead. Sāvitri, when seeing Satyavān, helps him to lie down and put his head on her lap.

NARRATOR 1
And on his wife’s lap, Satyavān died.

Narrator 1 exits. Sāvitri starts crying. Narrator 2 enters as Yamā, the god of death. He is wearing a black robe with a noose in his hand. Sāvitri is frightened to see him.

SĀVITRI
When I see the glowing beauty of your shape, I know that you are a mighty god. Please have mercy on me, your lowly servant. To have come here in the forest, what is it that you wish to accomplish?

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
Beautiful Sāvitri, your husband, Satyavān, has lost his breath of life. And I am here to take him to where he belongs.

He puts the noose around Satyavān’s head. Satyavān lifelessly gets up and follows Yamā. Sāvitri kneels before Yamā.

SĀVITRI
Great god, Yamā, please have mercy on my.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
Do not beg for the life of your husband. You are free from any obligation that you owed him.

Narrator 2 (Yamā) takes Satyavān and starts walking. Sāvitri follows them. Narrator 1 enters.

Narrator 1
And through the forest they walked. Which ever directions Yamā went, young Sāvitri followed without discouragement.

(exits)

Narrator 2 (Yamā)
Sāvitri, please stop. You have walked far enough.

Sāvitri
Wherever my husband is taken, I would like to follow him. There is nothing that can obstruct the way of a person who always seeks virtues. Sages glorify virtues as the most precious, more worthy than any infinite wealth. Virtues protect people who follow the righteous path and the fruits of devoted practices should be received as the scripture says.

Narrator 2 (Yamā)
I am pleased listen to your words and I know that you live according to virtues. For this reason, I will grant you a wish. You can wish for anything, except for the life of your husband.

Sāvitri
I wish for Dyumatsena, the father of my husband, to regain his eyesight.
NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
The wish that you ask for will soon be completed. Now, please go back home, Sāvitri.

SĀVITRI
To be close to a person with virtues is a true merit. To associate with a righteous and faithful person will bring endless and favorable benefits. To converse with people with religious practices is to make the most excellent acquaintances. Great god, I’d like to meet with a person with the finest virtues. And that is why I have followed you.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
I agree to what you have said and I am very pleased to hear your words. For this reason, I will grant you another wish.
You can wish for anything, except for the life of your husband.

SĀVITRI
I wish for Dyutmasena to gain back his kingdom.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
The wish that you ask for will soon be completed. Now, please go back home, Sāvitri.

SĀVITRI
The conduct of a good person that should be done towards all other living beings is not to harm. Action, speech, and thought should be filled with only compassion and loving
kindness because it’s the most essential to humans and animals, large or small.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
To listen to your words is like a thirsty person who has drunk cool and refreshing water. I will give you a third wish. You can ask for anything, except for the life of your husband.

SĀVITRI
I wish for my father, King Āswapati, to have a son, the heir to his throne.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
The wish that you ask for will soon be completed. Your father will beget honorable sons. Now, please go back home, Sāvitri.

SĀVITRI
You have been doing spiritual practices with great discipline. That’s why we call you the virtuous king. Whoever possesses justice and virtues, everybody would like to be friends with. You are kind, with the heart filled with compassion. All living creatures have faith in you.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
You know how to speak, Sāvitri. I have never heard such words anywhere else. I will grant you another wish. Ask for anything, except for the life of Satyavān.

SĀVITRI
I wish to have children: brave and noble sons.
NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
The wish that you ask for will soon be completed. Now, please go back home, Sāvitri.

SĀVITRI
To journey with a companion who is trustworthy is an honor. I have followed you because you are like a walking virtue. To converse with a wise person is my aspiration. You are the beautiful god of high merit and harmony, the one from whom we can seek protection, happiness, and tranquility.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
Your words are as sweet as honey, mixed with joyous moral lessons. To listen to them brings prosperity to the mind. I will give you the fifth wish. This time make it the most precious. And I will grant it with delight.

SĀVITRI
I wish for the life of Satyavan, my husband.

NARRATOR 2 (YAMĀ)
Once they have been uttered, my words are everlasting.

He unties the noose.

Here he is, the beautiful princes. I give you back your husband.

SĀVITRI
To stand by the words that have uttered is the quality of the virtuous king. I thank you for your kindness.

NARRATOR 1
Sāvitri, princess of Madra, saved the life of her husband because of her wit, virtues, and patience.

Narrator 2 enters, as himself.

NARRATOR 2
She restored the sight of Dyumatsena’s eyes.

NARRATOR 1
And gave him back his own kingdom.

NARRATOR 2
Her father, Aśwapati, begot noble sons.

NARRATOR 1
Soon after they moved to Dyutmasena’s palace, Sāvitri herself became pregnant.

NARRATOR 2
Her sons and grandsons became leaders and kings of great men.

NARRATOR 1
And this is the legend of a girl of virtues and determination.

NARRATOR 2
This is the legend of Sāvitri.

*Narrator 1 and 2 bow to the audience and exits, at the opposite directions.*
Conclusion

On January 14th, 2005, there was a sit-down reading of the full-length version of Sāvitri in Presser Hall, Room 12 primarily for Kyle Schmitt and Joselle Vanderhooft from Actor’s Theater of Louisville. Approximately one week before the reading, I asked a fellow graduate student in Theater, Jene Shaw, to direct the reading. After reading the script, Jene and I had a meeting about the questions that came up when she was reading it. The first question was how to pronounce the names of the Indian characters and places in the script. Because the Indian names are difficult for foreigners to pronounce, I decided to write the names in Roman with Sanskrit symbols and added a pronunciation guide in as an appendix.

Most of the questions that arose were questions about choices of words. Many of the words that were changed during this process had grammatical mistakes, but there were some words that I used in the script that sounded strange to her. For example, toward the end of Act 3, in the original script, Sāvitri says, “And I will inform the facts to you.” Jene told me that the word “inform” was not usually used in this sense, so we changed it to “relate” which is more common and understandable in this sentence.

I attended the first rehearsal of the reading. The roles were assigned that day and all the cast members are American college students, except for one who is an Indian America. Since the format of the text and the subject matters are quite different from most of the plays read by American students and they had to read it out loud without
seeing the script before, my first reaction was that this play didn’t sound so good in the English language.

Before the reading, a couple more rehearsals were held which I did not attend. At the reading, the actors were seated in a semicircle facing the audience. The order of the seating was assigned due to the relationship between the characters. The actors also changed seats between acts. Listening to the reading, I heard an immense improvement on how the lines were delivered. Each actor got into his or her character and read the lines with great confidence. During the reading, my reaction changed and I believed that this play could be done in English and sound beautiful.

The next day I had a meeting with Kyle and Joselle about the script and the reading. The script had been sent to them prior to the reading so they had spent some time reading it, studying it, and doing research on it. Most of the comments were positive and they presented me with some interesting questions. For example, they asked me about the notion of the word “sin.” They said that the word “sin” usually has a Catholic connotation to it and they wondered what the characters mean when using the word “sin.” I found this question fascinating and I had never thought about it before. As the question of this word came up and it seems to be a question that many Western or Christian people might ask, I decided to include the explanation of this word in the theory chapter under the issue of word choice.

The second question that arose is from the same sentence. Sāvitri and Satyavān seem to be a very virtuous couple, therefore, when did they commit these sins? Clearly, they
did not commit the sins in their current lifetime and the Thai text, though not openly, suggests that the sins were committed in the past lives. It is easier for Thai people who are familiar with the concept of reincarnation and the word “sin” in this particular context to figure out when they might have committed the sins. However, it might not be very apparent to a person from other cultures. Therefore, I added to the text, “It is the sins that we have committed in our past lives.”

Kyle and Joselle also asked me about the influence of Indian culture, both in Thailand and in the text, the concept of the forest, and the significance of the gods in the play, especially, Agni. Since I met with them before I started writing the historical chapter, these questions are answered and explained in the chapter. I also created an appendix to explain the roles of the gods/goddesses and their significance in Indian mythology.

I asked Kyle and Joselle how they interpreted the story, especially the character of Sāvitrī. From their research, they found different versions of Sāvitrī, each version with a slightly different portrayal of the main character. In many of them, especially the ones that are told in a storytelling style for children, Sāvitrī gets Satyavān back because she tricks the god of death. However, in the script, it was clear to them that Sāvitrī does not do such a thing. She received all the wishes from Yamā purely because of her virtue and determination. Kyle pointed out that what he learned from Sāvitrī was that she was honest in her intention and Yamā admires her for that. She doesn’t lie to him or tricks him. He knows that she only wants her
husband back and so he is willing to fulfill her request. This explains why Yamā grants Sā vitri more wishes after he releases Satyavān and it also explains his appearance at the ending of the play.

A few days after the reading, a production of the 13-minute version of Sā vitri was performed. It was done for the multicultural play series at the Miami University Art Museum called Da Jia Hao. American students directed and acted in the play with an exception of one actor who is originally from Sri Lanka. The director and all of the actors except one attended and/or took part in the reading of the full-length version. Thus, they knew the original story before it was adapted. I attended the rehearsals and though I answered some questions that came up during rehearsals, I did not get very involved in the process and the way the director and actors interpreted and presented the play. My reasoning was that I would like to see how the play would be done by people from a different culture. Since the adaptation is quite different from the full-length play, the production was different as well. For the most part, the production was done nicely and went according to the script. The only main difference of the interpretation is that in the performance of the 13-minute version, Sā vitri gets down on her knees after she makes her fourth wish and takes a hold of Yamā’s legs. Because Yamā is delivering his lines and simultaneously trying to make Sā vitri stop clinging to him, he forgets to say, “except for the life of your husband.” By attending the rehearsals and seeing the performance, it becomes clear to me why in many versions of Sā vitri, the authors make it look like Sā vitri tricks Yamā; it adds comical elements to the play.
and, in a short amount of time, provides an easier explanation as to how Sāvitri gets her husband back, especially for the younger audience members.

The 13-minute performance was accompanied by a program note that informed the audience about the background of the play and that the play was an adaptation of a longer text. From the audience’s responses, they agreed that creating the two narrators is an economical and effective way to make the longer story shorter. Even though at first some of them were confused at the way the narrators delivered their lines because it was not familiar to them, after a few moments, they came to understand what was happening. Some of them found the plays to be very dark and very comical at the same time because it centered on death and loss, but the presentation of it made it appear lighter.

Apart from the sit-down reading and the performance of the adaptation, there are many things that I have learned from the process of translating and working on this thesis. When translating the play, I did it instinctively and followed the rules of common sense. By researching translation theories, I came to understand my process of translation better. By translating instinctively, I didn’t fully understand at first why I made the choices that I did. To me, it just “felt right”. However, by reading about translation theories, I discovered that other translators in the past also made similar decisions as mentioned in the theory chapter. There are terms that have been invented, such as, “invariant core,” “translation equivalent,” etc. Learning about other translator’s techniques and adapting
them to my own practice help me to learn and understand how I might translate better in the future.
Appendix 1

The Gods and Goddess in Sāvitrī

Agni: Agni is the god of fire. He is one of the most prominent Hindu deities. More hymns are addressed to him than any other god with Indra being the one exception. He is a domestic god and is said to be the protector of men, honored as the director of all ceremonies and accomplisher of prayers. Agni takes part in the lives of men. He is a swift messenger between heaven and earth who brings sacrifice to the gods and maintains communications between the gods and men. He is associated with the sun and the powers of destruction and purification. It is also said that he is the one who formed the sun and adorned the heavens with the stars. The worshippers of Agni praise him in order to receive prosperity, wealth, and longevity. There are many images that depict the personification of Agni. Some depict him as a red man with three legs, seven arms, with dark hair and eyebrows, riding on a ram. While other hymns personify him as an immortal being who enjoys perpetual youth and travels in a carriage drawn by horses.

Indra: According to the hymns that praise him, Indra can be considered the most popular among the Hindu deities. He is said to be the king of the gods and the god of the firmament. In some hymns, Indra is the one who creates heaven and earth. In others, he is the son of heaven and earth. He is the personification of the atmosphere; the one who governs the weather and dispenses rain. Indra’s physical superiority underlies description of his powers and thus it follows that he blessings sought from him are of a physical rather than spiritual character. The pictures that depict Indra vary. In some images, he is portrayed as a man
with four arms; two of them holding a lance, one holding a thunderbolt, and one empty. In others, he is drawn with two arms only, with eyes all over his body. Yet in most depictions Indra is shown riding on an elephant, carrying a thunderbolt in his right hand and a bow in his left. Sometime he is described as being of a ruddy or golden color, having arms of enormous length and riding in a bright golden car drawn by two tawny or ruddy horses with flowing manes and tails. Apart from having a thunderbolt in his right hand, he also uses arrows, a hook, and a net.

Nārada: Nārada is the messenger of the gods who imparts information among the gods or from the gods to men. His duty has a strong resemblance to Hermes in Greek mythology. In The Mahābhārata, Nārada figures as a spiritual teacher, giving advice to the heroes. In Sāvitrī, he is also a spiritual teacher, helping Aśwapati with his decision.

Goddess Sāvitrī: Goddess Sāvitrī is often known as the goddess who grants Aśwapati his boon in the story of Sāvitrī and Satyavān in The Mahābhārata. Due to the popularity of the story of Sāvitrī saving her husband from the god of death, Yamā, Sāvitrī, as a person, becomes more widely known than the goddess herself.

The word ‘Sāvitrī’ is derived from the word ‘Savitru’ which in its turn is derived from the root ‘su’ = ‘to give birth to.’ The word ‘Soma’ which indicates an ‘exhilarating drink,’ symbolising spiritual ecstasy or delight, is also derived from the same root ‘su.’ It links therefore the creation and the delight of creation. Savitru, therefore, means the Divine Creator, On who
gives birth to, or brings forth from himself into existence, the creation. (Purani 2)

Due to the above description, goddess Sāvitri is often known as the one who gives birth to the legendary Sāvitri. In the Vedic hymns, the sun is commonly addressed in two names: Sūrya and Sāvitri. Sāvitri refers to the sun when it is invisible and Sūrya refers to the sun when it is visible to the worshippers. In some version of the story of Sāvitri and Satyavān, the goddess Sāvitri is referred to as a child of the sun.

**Varuṇa:** Varuṇa is “the universal encompasser, the all embracer” (McFarland 763). He is one of the oldest of the Vedic deities who is said to have invented the sky and who is the maker and the upholder of heaven and earth. He is the king of the universe and also the king of gods and men. He is also said to be the god of illimitable knowledge. Nowadays, Varuṇa is widely known as the god of waters. Since water is considered the opposite element of fire, he occupies the most prominent place in religious worship next to Agni, the god of fire. Water purifies things as well as destroys them. The ever flowing current of water in the river also awakens the ideas of life and infinity. Varuṇa is also associated with the sea, the tempest, and the waves. As the god of the ocean, he is often depicted as a sea monster, half fish half man. For the higher Aryans, he is represented as a spiritual existence who can destroy or save humans at sea according to their goodness and sins.

**Yamā:** Yamā is the god of death and is said to be the first mortal who died and discovered the way to the other world.
Therefore, his duty is to guide those who depart this life to the place where they belong. The characters and the conceptions of Yamā have been changed through the passage of time. He is often regarded as a king who dwells in the celestial light of heaven, the judge of men, and the god of death and justice. He rewards the good and punishes the wicked. As well as being seen as the god of virtues, he is also seen as the object of terror who possesses two insatiable dogs which guard the road to his dwelling. After a person dies, he will appear in front of Yamā and his deeds will be weighed in order to decide whether the soul would go to heaven or hell. Some believe that the souls of the pure and good will go to Yamā but some believe that Yamā is the ruler of hells and only the wicked will be sent to him for punishment. Yamā is often depicted as a green man clothed in red garments with a crown on his head and flowers in his hair. He is armed with a club and rides on a buffalo. Yamā is a god who possesses many different names. Some of them are: “King of righteousness,” “Lord of the fathers,” “He who judges impartially,” “Time,” and “He who puts an end to life.”
Appendix 2

Pronunciation

a – like u in but
ā – like a in father
i – like i in pin
ī – like i in police
u – like u in pull
ū – like u in rude
ṛ – like Ri in Rita
e – like e in prey
ai – like ai in aisle
o – like o in go
au – like ou in house
k – like k in kind
kh – like kh in inkhorn
ṇ – like n in nice
t – like t in water
th – like th in nuthook
d – like d in dice
dh – like dh in adhere
n – like n in not
p – like p in put
ph – like ph in uphill
b – like b in bear
bh – like bh in abhor
m – like m in mad
y – like y in yes
g – like g in go
gh – like gh in loghut
ṅ or ñ – like n in sing
c – like ch in check
ch – like chh in Churchhill
j – like j in jump
jh – like dgeh in hedgehog
ñ – like n in singe
t – like t in time
ṭh – like th in boathouse
ṁ, m, or ŋ – semi-nasal sound
d – like d in drum
ḍh – like dh in madhouse
r – like r in red
l – like l in lull
v – like v in very (like w after consonant)
ś – like sh in shut
ṣ – like sh in shut but with the tip of the tongue turned backward
s – like s in since
h – like h in him
ḥ – final h aspirated sound
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