

PANCHALI SABATHAM

(THE VOW OF PANCHALI)



An adapted play

By

RASIAH PANCHALINGAM

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3/4/99

FANCHALI SABATHAM

The voice of Fanchali

Ranchali Panchaligam

Publisher

Artists Circle

Point Pals

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(The vow of Panchali)

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Rasaiah Panchalingam.

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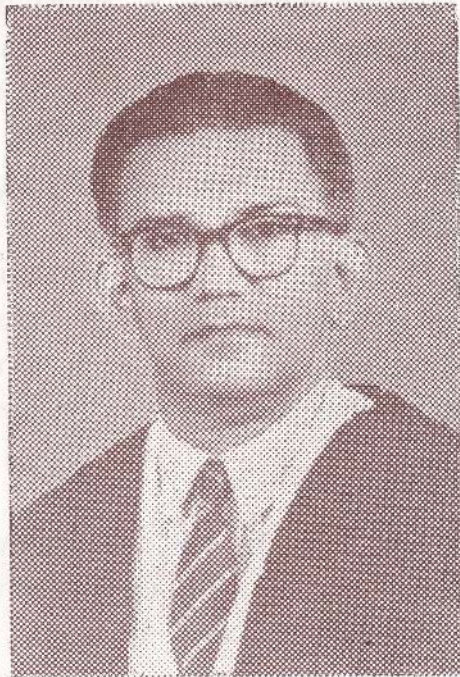
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FOREWORD

DEDICATION



Mr. K. POORNAMPILLAI

**B. A (Lond), Post Grad. Teachers' Trained
(Selly Oak) Birmingham.**

**Former principal of
Hartley College,
Point Pedro, Sri Lanka.**

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FOREWORD

I am immensely pleased on the release of 'Panchali Sabatham' a dramatic episode in exquisite English version. The Language adopted in the play is so lucid that it appeals to the mind of readers by portraying a vivid and vivacious scene of events with no sign of impairing the vigour of the original source. Great aptness has been shown in establishing the theme by stressing on the ethical disposition and morality of royal men. As one starts reading the play, one experiences the insatiable urge and joy because of the inducing arguements put forward through lively characters.

The contribution of Mr. R. Panchalingam, the eminent playwright to the literay world is indeed commendable as it is one of the few pioneer and daring attempts to bring out such fine work in English. This praiseworthy work should be circulated globally so as to enable the entire reading population to reap good of it.

Mr. M. Nadarajasundaram,
Dean,
Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce,
University of Jaffna,
Jaffna.

Hartley College

Point Pedro,

1999-10-02

It gives me great pleasure to write this message on the occasion of the release of an English Play "Panchali Sabatham" which is an episode of "Maha Bharatham". No body ever thought of translating "Panchali Sabatham" to English and Stage it to the audience. But I praise the work done by Mr. Rasiah Panchalingam who Staged this English play with the help of the Students of Hartley College and the English Teachers Messers A. Rajakumaran, S. Sathiyaseelan, and R. Thiruchelvam at the Drama competition in the English Day at Point Pedro. We want our Hindu traditions and Tamil culture to spread all over the world by staging these kind of plays from "Maha Bharatham" and "Ramayanam", Effort should be made to Translate not only in English but also in other languages too that the people all over the world will understand the culture of our Tamil woman, which is reflected through the characters like Panchali.

I hope this service of Rasiah Panchalingam will continue in other characters of "Maha Bharatham" and "Ramayanam" so that the entire world will understand the real culture of our ancient Tamil heroes. My best wishes to the author and his Colleagues for the splendid work done by them to publish this issue.

N. Gunaseelan

Prinacipal.

Preface

The position of women in a society, in fact, serves as an excellent index of its socioc-cultural and spiritual status and "Panchali Sabatham" (The vow of Panchali, a prominent female character in the great epic, Mahabharatha), one of the major and most exciting episodes of Mahabharatha, vehemently implies the today's popular theme of emancipation of women. The violence and cruelty inflicted and servitude and slavery practised upon women are well expressed through it. The episode has its own uniqueness since the dignity and integrity of womanhood emphasized through the character Panchali who has sown inspiration among the minds of sophisticated women of today and shaped their character and personality.

This play has been, in fact, adapted from the 19th edition of "Mahabharata" (1977), a marvellous volume in English, authored by C. Rajagopalachari. This work of mine is intended to do an inestimable good by propagating the ideals of great women who prospered with perfection of life in India, among the entire nations of the world. I very modestly trust this work would invoke profound interest in the readers.

I have endeavoured my best to give life and spirit to this play. However there may be deficiencies which are beyond my perception and knowledge and I shall be very much obliged if such deficiencies are brought to my notice by any individual or organization.

Some of my sincere friends have volunteered their services with great devotion and concern to ensure the successful publication of the play. I am indebted to them for ever.

I offer special thanks to Mr. M. Nadarajasundaram, the Dean of the Faculty of Management studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka and Mr. Gunaseelan, the Principal of Hartley College, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka for writing foreword to the play. I was greatly imbued with the advise and persuasion given to me by Mr. V. Sunthareswaran, Instructor in English of the University of Jaffna. in my endeavour of achieving my objective and I am ever grateful ti him. I Place my most grateful thanks on record to Mr. K. R. Rasanathan and Mr. C. K. Cumaraswamy, the enthusiasts who have rendered wholehearted support in my attempt of completine this work.

I am ever grateful to the Management and the Staffs of Tamil Poonka Printers for their neat and elegant work in bringing this magnificent compendium within a short span of time.

An adapted play
PANCHALI SABATHAM

An episode from the
Indian great epic

MAHABHARATHA

Characters:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 01. DHIDERASHTRA: | a king (father of
Duryodhana) |
| 02. GANDARY : | wife of Dhiderashtra |
| 03. SAKUNI : | an uncle of Duryodhana
an Atrociously wicked person |
| 04. DURYODHANA : | Son of Dhiderashtra |
| 05. DUHSASANA: | One of the brother of
Duryodhana |
| 06. VIDURA : | a warrior and a preceptor |
| 07. KARNA : | a trusted friend of Duryodhana |
| 08. VIKARNA : | One of the Brother of
Duryodhana |
| 09. PRATHIKAMI: | Charioteer |
| 10. YUDHISHTHIRA : | Eldest among the five brothers
of PANDAVAS |

- 11. BHIMA : One among the five brothers of Pandvas
- 12. ARJUNA : One among the five brothers of Pandvas
- 13. SAHADEVA : One among the five brothers of Pandvas
- 14. NAKULA : One among the five brothers of Pandvas
- 15. PANCHALI : Wife of Pandavas
- 16. Lord Krishna: The Incarnation of God.

MAHABHARATHA

Characters



01. DHRISHTHIRA : A friend of Pandavas	01. DHRISHTHIRA
02. GANDARYU : A friend of Pandavas	02. GANDARYU
03. KAKI : A friend of Pandavas	03. KAKI
04. PURYODHANA : Son of Dhritrashtra	04. PURYODHANA
05. DURYODHANA : One of the propit of Pandavas	05. DURYODHANA
06. VIKIRANA : A friend and a protector	06. VIKIRANA
07. KARNA : A trusted friend of Duryodhana	07. KARNA
08. VIKARNA : One of the brother of Duryodhana	08. VIKARNA
09. PRATHAKAMI : Character	09. PRATHAKAMI
10. YUDHISHTHIRA : Eldest among the five brothers of PANDAVAS	10. YUDHISHTHIRA

PANCHALI SABATHAM DRAMA

ACT I

SCENE I Dhritarashtra's Palace
Duriyodhana and Sakuni well planned to seize the Pandavas' assets, therefore they invited Pandavas' and arranged for a gambling. First they went to Dhritarashtra. Sakuni opened the conversation, Enter Duriyodhana and Sakuni.

Sakuni: O, King, Duriyodhana is won with grief and anxiety. You are paying no attention to his unbearable sorrow.
Why this unconcern?

Dhriserashtra: I do not see why you should be -disconsolate. What is here that you already do not enjoy? The whole world is at your feet when you are surrounded by all kinds of pleasures like the very Gods, why should you pine in sorrow? You have learnt the Vedas, archery and other sciences from the best of masters. As my first born, you have inherited the throne. What is left, you to wish for? Tell me.

Duriyodhana: Father, like anybody else, rich or poor, I eat and cover my nakedness, but I find life unbearable. What is the use of leading such a life?

Dhritarashtra: What are you talking?

Duriyodhana: Contentment with one's lot is not characteristic of a kshatriya. Fear and pity lower the dignity of kings, My wealth and pleasures do not give me any satisfaction since I have witnessed the greater prosperity of Yudhishthira. O King, the Pandavas have grown, while we have shrunk.

Dhritarashtra: Beloved child, you are the eldest son of my royal spouse and me and heir to the glory and greatness of our renowned race. Do not cherish any hatred towards the Pandavas. Sorrow and death will be sole result of hatred of kith and kin especially when they are blameless. Tell me, why do you hate the guileless Yudhishthira? Is not his prosperity ours too? Our friends are his friends. He has not the least jealousy and ancestry. Why should you be jealous or hatred towards us. You are equal to him in heroism and ancestry. Why should you be jealous of your brother? No. You should not be jealous.

Duriyodhana: The man without common sense, but immersed in learning is like a wooden ladle immersed in savoury food which hit neither tastes nor benefits from. You have much learning of statecraft but have no state wisdom at all, as your advice to me clearly shows. The way of the world is one thing and the administration of state is quite another. Brihaspati has thus said:-
Forbearance and contentment, though the duties of ordinary men, are not virtues in kings. Kshatriyas's duty is constant seeking of victory.

Sakuni: It is enough if you merely send for the son of Kunti to play the game of dice. Leave the rest to me.

Duriyodhana: Sakuni will win for me the richest of the Pandavas without a fight, if you would only agree to invite Yudhishtira.

Dhriserashtra: Your suggestion does seem proper. Let us ask Vidura about it. He will advise us rightly.

Duriyodhana: Vidura will only give us the platitudes of ordinary morality, which will not help us to our object. The policy of kings must be

very different from the goody maxims of text-books, and is sternest stuff of which the test is success. Moreover, Vidura does not like me and is partial to the Pandavas. You know this as well as I do.

Dhritarashtra: The Pandavas are strong. I do not think it wise to antagonise them. The game of dice will only lead to enmity. The passions resulting from the game will know no bounds. We should not do it.

Duriyodhana: Wise statemanship lies in casting off all fear and protecting oneself by one's own efforts. Should we not force the issue while yet we are more powerful than they? That will be real foresight. A lost opportunity may never come again, and it is not as though we invented the game of dice to injure the Pandavas. It is ancient pastime, which Kshatriyas have always indulged in, and if it will now serve as to win our cause without bloodshed, where is the harm?

Dhritarashtra: Dear son, I have grown old. Do as you like. But the line that you are taking does not appeal to me. I am sure you will repent later. This is the work of destiny.

(Duriyodhana and Sakuni Leave)

Who is there ? (Enters Servant)

Servant : My Lord

Dhritarashtra: Arrange the hall for the games and call Vidura immediately.

(Servant Leaves)

O My God! Is my son proceeding on a wrong path?

(Arrival of Vidura)

Welcome, Vidura

Vidura : Brother, Did you call me?

Dhritarashtra : Brother, my eldest son wants to play dice with Pandavas so as to collect their assets through this game. I advised so much, he could not accept my advices. Please do go and invite Pandavas and make arrangements for the game.

Vidura : O King, this will undoubtedly bring about the ruin of our race by raising up unquenchable hate.

Dhritarashtra : If fortune favours us I have no fear regarding this game. If, on the contrary fortune goes against us, how could we help it? For, destiny is all powerful. Go and invite Yudhishtira on my behalf to come and play dice.

SCENE II

ACT I

PANDAVAS PALACE

Vidura arrives Pandavas Palace and is welcomed by Pandavas. Vidura invites Pandavas for them to have a look at Duriyodhana's newly built hall and to play the game of dice there. Enters Vidura

Yudhishthira: Welcome, Father Welcome

Vidura: Well... Well.. Yudhishthira, Bheema, Arjuna, Nagula, Sahadeva are you all keeping fine?

Yudhishthira: We are all fine?

Why are you so cheerless? Is it well with all our relations in Hastinapura? Are the king and the princess well?

Vidura: Everyone in Hastinapura is well. How fares it with you all? I have come to invite you on behalf of king Dhritarashtra to come and see the newly erected hall of games. A beautiful hall has been erected there even like yours.

The king would like you to come with your brothers, see everything, have a game of dice and return to your Capital.

Yudhishtira : Wagering games create quarrels among Kshatriyas. A wise man will avoid them if he can. We are ever abiding by your advice. What would you have us do?

Vidura : Everyone is aware that the playing of dice is the root of many evils. I did my best to oppose this idea. Still the king has commanded me to invite you and I have come. You may do as you like.
(Exit - Vidura.)



ACT I

SCENE III

Duriyodhana's Palace

Pandavas arrive Duriyodhana's Palace and they are welcomed by Dhritarashtra. Pandavas take rest and are ready to play the game of dice.

Dhritarashtra : Welcome, Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Bheema, Nagula, Sahadeva.

Yudhishtira : Well, Fine.

Dhritarashtra: See Our Palace.

Duriyodhan : Welcome Brothers. We will enjoy.

Yudhishtira : Well

Duriyodhana : Shall we proceed to play the game.

Yudhishtira : Well, What type of game?

Sakuni : Gambling.

Duriyodhana : This is one of the Majestic Games.

Yudhishtira : O, King. Gambling is bad. It is not through heroism or merit that one succeeds in a game of chance. Asita

Devala and other wise rishis who were well versed in worldly affairs have declared that gambling should be avoided since it offers scope for deceit. They have also said that conquest in battle is the proper path for the Kshatriyas. You are not unaware of it.

Sakuni :

What is wrong with the game?

What, in fact, is a battle? What is even a discussion between verdict scholars? The learned man wins victory over the ignorant. The better man wins in every case. It is just a test of strength or skill, that is all, and there is nothing wrong in it. As for the result, in every field of activity, the expert defeats the tyro, and that is what happens in a game of dice also. But if you are afraid you need not play, but do not come out with this worn excuse of right and wrong.

Yudhishtira : Well, Who is to play with me?

Duriyodhana : Mine is the responsibility for finding the stakes in the form of wealth and gems to play the game. My Uncle Sakuni will actually cast the dice in my stead.

Yudhishthira : It is not, I think, customary for one man to play on behalf of another.

Sakuni : I see that you are forging another excuse.

Yudhishthira : Well, I shall play
(The game gets set ready to be played. Both parties keenly indulge in the game)

Thurchadhanan : We won, cows, sheep, cities, vil lages and citizens and all other possessions were lost by Yudhishthira
Well Done, Uncle

Sakuni : Is there any thing else that you can offer as wager?

Yudhishthira : Here is the beautifull sky - complex- ioned Nagula. He is one of my riches. I Place him as a wager.

Sakuni : Is it so? We shall be glad to win your beloved Prince.

Yudhishthira : Here is my brother Sahadeva. He is famous for his infinite knowledge

in all the arts. It is wrong to bet him, still I do so. Let us play.

Sakuni: Here, I have played and I have won.
(Yudhishtira lost Sahadeva too)
O, Yudhishtira, to you, Bheema and Arjuna, being your full brothers, are no doubt dearer than the sons of Madri. You will not offer them, I know.

Yudhishtira: Fool, Do you seek to divide us?
How can you, living an evil life, understand the righteous life we lead? Here, I offer as a wager the ever victorious Arjuna who successfully voyages across oceans of battle. Let us play.

Sakuni: I cast the dice

(Yudhishtira loses Arjuna also)

Yudhishtira: O King, Bheema, my brother, is our leader in battle he strikes terror into the heart of demons and is equal to Indra, he can never suffer the least dishonour and he is peerless throughout the world in physical strength. I offer him as a bet (He loses Bheema too).

You are hanging by a slender thread over a bottomless abyss. Drunk with success, you do not see it, but it will engulf you.

(Vidura turns to the Assembly)

Yudhishtira had no right to take Panchali as by then he had himself already lost his freedom and lost all rights. I see that the ruin of the Kauravas is imminent and that, regardless of the advice of their friends and well-wishers, the Sons of Dhritarashtra are on the path to hell.

Duriyodhana : Viruda is jealous of us and he is afraid of the Pandavas. But you are different. Go forth and bring Draupadi immediately.



SCENCE IV

ACT I

DRAUPADI'S RESIDENCE

Prathikami reaches Draupadi's Residence and insists that Draupadi should visit the Palace but Draupadi refuses.

Enter Prathikami

O, Revered Princess, Yudhishtahira fell under the spell of the game of dice and has wagered and lost even you. Now you belong to Duriyodhana. I have come by Duriyodhana's command to take you to serve in his household as maidservant which will hereafter be your office.

Draupadi :

Prathikami, what do you say? Which prince would pledge his wife? Had he nothing else to pawn?

Prathikami :

It is because he had already lost all other possessions and had nothing else left that he played offering you as a stake.

Draupadi :

O, Charioteer. Return. Ask of him who played the game whether in it he first lost himself, or his wife. Ask this question in the open Assembly,

bring me his answer and then you
can take me.

(Lights off for a minute only, Stage
lighted)

Prathikami : Princess, the mean - minded Duriyodhana desires you to go to the Assembly and ask your question yourself.

Draupadi : No, Return to the Assembly and put the question and demanded an answer.

Exit - Prathikami.



ACT I

SCENE V

DURIYODHANA'S COURT

Prathikami made known to the Court of Draupadi's absence. Duriyodhana ordered Duhsasana to produce Draupadi to the Court

Sakuni: He would not come

Duriyodhana: O Prathikami Shame ... Shame.....
O Duhsasana
This man is fool and is afraid of Bheema. Go and fetch Draupadi even if you have to drag her here.

ACT I

SCENE VI

DRAUPADI'S RESIDENCE

Duhsasana reaches Draupadi's Residence and demanded her of her presence in the Court again. She refused and then he held her to the Court.

Duhsasana: O, Beautiful Princess. Come Why do you delay? You are now ours. Be not shy, beautiful lady. Make yourself agreeable to us, now that you have been won by us. Come to the Assembly. (She was dragged by Duhsasana to the Court).

ACT I

SCENE VII DURIYODHANA'S COURT

At Duriyodhana's Court, Duriyodhana ordered to his brother Duhsasana to divest her clothes. When Duhsana started to strip the clothes of Draupadi, she pleaded Lord Krishna for His Almighty's Compassion. Draupadi took a vow for revenge on Duhsasana for his atrocities.

(Enter Draupadi.)

Duriyodhana : Welcome Panchali,
Our beautiful Princess in the World.
You see your position.
See your beloved husband Empty
Vessels.
Deprived of all possessions.

Draupadi : O, Elderly Great People, Why you
are silent?
How could you consent to my being
staked by the King who was himself
trapped into the game and cheated by
wicked persons, expert in the Art?
Since he was no longer a free man,
how could he staked anything at all?

O, Dear You have no heart, you have no tears to shed for me, why don't you rise against this wicked action. If you have loved and revered the mothers who bore you and gave you suck, if the honour of wife or sister or daughter has been dear to you, if you believe in God and Dharma, forsake sake me not in this horror more cruel than death.

Bheema :

(Bheema Stood Up)

Even abandoned professional gamblers would not stake the harlots who live with them, and you, worse than they, have left the daughter of Drupada to the mercy of these ruffians. I cannot bear this injustice. You are the cause of this great crime. Brother Sahadeva, Bring Fire. I am going to set fire to those hands of his, which cast the dice.

Arjuna :

Bheema,

You have never spoken thus The Plot devised by Our enemy is entan-

gling us also in it meshes and inciting us to wicked action. We should not succumb and play their games. Beware

Duriyodhana : Panchali, Come and Sit on my lap.

Vikarna : O, Kshatriya Heroes, Why are you silent?

I am a mere youth, I know, that your silence compels me to speak. Listen. Yudhishtira was enticed to this game by a deeply plotted invitation and he pledged this lady when he had no right to do so, because she does not belong to Yudhishtira alone. For that reason alone the wager is illegal. Besides, Yudhishtira had already lost his freedom, and being no longer a free man, how could he have a right to offer her as a stake? And there is this further objection. It was Sahuni who suggested her as a pledge, which is against the rules of the game under which neither player may demand a specific bet. If we consider all these points, we must admit that Panchali has not been legally won by us. This is my opinion.

Voices from
the assembly }
Karna :

Dharma has been saved: Dharma
has been saved

O, Vikarna forgetting that there are elders in this Assembly, you lay down the law though you are but a stripling. By your ignorance and rashness you are injuring the very family which gave you birth, just as the flame generated by the arani* destroys its source, the stick. It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest. At the very beginning, when Yudhishtira was a free man he forfeited all he possessed and that, of course, included Draupadi. Hence Draupadi had already come into Sakuni's possession. There is nothing more to be said in the matter. Even the clothes they have on, are now Sakuni's property. O, Duhsasana, seized the Garments of the Pandavas and the robes of Draupadi and hand them over to Sakuni.

Duriyodhana :

Duhsasana! Go and remove the robes immediately.

Draupadi :

O, Lord of the World
God whom I adore and trust, abandoned me not in this dire plinght. You are my sole refuge. Protect me. Kanna,

* an upper and lower piece of wood used for producing tire by attrition.

Govindha, Maayavaa, Krishna,
Madhusoodhana Save me. (Lord
Krishna appears in front of
Draupadi and issues robes as and when
Draupadi needs the robes)

(Bheema Loudly uttered an oath thus)
May I never go to the blest abode of
my ancestors if I do not rend the breast
and drink the heart blood of this sinful
Duhsasana, this shame of the Bharata
Race.

Draupadi :

(Draupadi takes vow)

O, Wicked Duriyodhana !....

I will never tie my hair unless I get
the blood from your thigh for same.

(All the Characters who are now on
the stage stand still freezed)

THE END.

The Scene gets closed.



Gayaththiri Mantra

OM ----

BHUR BHUVASS SUVAH

THATH SAVITHUR VARENYAM

BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI

DHEEYO YO NAH PARACHODAYAATH

Garabhin...

OM
BHIM BHUVES VARUNA
BHIM BHATHUR VARE
BHIMGO DEVASYA DHEEMAH
DHEYO YO NAH PARACHCAYA



About the Author

Mr. R. Panchalingam who hails from a very respectable and (noble) prestigious family at Point Pedro, Sri Lanka, is an erudite personality with conspicuous keenness and conscious urge in committing himself in literary pursuits. His unswerving devotion holds him in great esteem in the public eye, but he is never intoxicated by vanity and pomposity. He is endowed with a very cheerful disposition elegantly mingled with humility and modesty.

He has directed and staged many Tamil and English plays, the participants of which are students from leading schools in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. His Plays have been awarded for their meritorious performance.

At present, Mr. Panchalingam is reading for B.A degree, with Drama and Theatre as subject, from the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He is a prominent social worker also, who eagerly embraces opportunities to dedicate for social upgrade. He is immensely ambitious to produce creative works further, in future.

*Vairamuthu Sunthavesan
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English Language Teaching Centre,
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