

“SATHYAKRIYA” – THE POWER OF TRUTH

To whom should a Buddhist pray, in times of grief and strife ?
No, not to the countless gods who inhabit the Universe....
Vishnu, Saman, Skanda or the guardian deities four:
They like us, are helpless and cannot erase
The fruit of our past actions – good or evil;
They who count on us – human beings, to pass on merit
For their own lives to come....
When the good they did in some early distant day,
That brought them onward there –
to that brief state of bliss and happiness,
Is spent in full, exhausted.
Nor shall a good disciple of the Buddha,
Pray or chant hymns of praise to any human being,
Who proclaims he is a messenger
From an unseen almighty being, who secretly visited him
And made this proclamation.

So, with none to help us, where do we go from there?
What solace shall we find? To whom shall we cry for help?
The Power of TRUTH, mightier than the mightiest god,
Is ever there to help us; a sure source of comfort:
This power that lies within us, intrinsic, strong,
Ours and ours alone; an inward force to lean on,
when laden with troubles and woe.
Yet, to seek that power, the lofty power of Truth,
Our sorrows to overcome,
Five pre-requisites should be ours,
in true and rightful manner, thus:

Saddha – that unwavering faith in the Three Refuges,
The Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha; in the Noble Eightfold Path,
No other guru but the Buddha has shown this Middle Way
Of pure and righteous living.
Sila – which means to be truly virtuous, undefiled,
In thoughts, in words, in deeds;
To abide by the *Panca-seela*, the five daily rules of good conduct;
to kill not nor harm any living being,
to take not what belongs to another by force or fraud or greed,
to control the passions, be undeluded,
to utter no falsehood, no unkind, evil, empty words
to refrain from food or drink that dulls the mind, hides the view
to reason clear and sound, for a good and gentle life.
Chaga – Generosity, to be charitable,
giving freely, devoid of greed,

First and the best to the holy ones who adorn the Sakyamuni's creed;

Then to the sick and to the poor,

To one's kinsmen, friends, whosoever that may need or ask.

Panna – Wisdom, the perfect ability to see

that life is fleeting, impermanent; that sorrow abounds at every turn

though we see it not in full perspective,

in the humdrum of daily mundane life.

Bahushruta – to possess vast stores of merit from the past,

Virtues accrued with wisdom: Loving Kindness - *Maitri*,

Compassion – *Karuna*, Perfect Balance – *Muditha*,

Equanimity – *Upeksha* – for all alike

whether they be high or low, rich or poor...

Possessing these five salient features, an armour to shield all ills,

Then, in a moment of trouble, grief or despair,

Contemplate on the virtues that lie in oneself:

Seek solace in, and pray unto this power of Truth in manner thus,

“Through many years have I, in earnest, followed a virtuous life,

Based on the rules of good conduct,

No harm have I caused intentionally to any living being,

This is the Truth. May the Power of this Truth,

Lighten my burdens, ease my grief,

And give me strength and relief.”

HOW A BUDDHIST CAN PRAY FOR HELP

Prayer is a form of begging for help from an unknown, unseen entity. In the Buddhist context, prayer of this form has no meaning. It is because the individual holds sole responsibility for his or her every action. The Buddha says “no one can help us but ourselves”. A Buddhist does not beg for help. He understands life. How could he see so much sorrow and ills around him, the blind, the crippled, the retarded, the mentally deranged, the sick and poor and still believe it is the will of some unseen person; or believe that these are the special chosen ones of that unseen person’s creation.

There is no way to justify the unfairness we see all around us every single day. It is the Buddha’s unique explanation of this state of reality that can jolt an intelligent mind to ponder on the Truth of Life. Yet, it would be heartening for any good Buddhist to note that there is still a practical, fool-proof way to pray.

PRAYER - THE BUDDHIST STYLE.

When faced with sorrow or distress of any sort, a Buddhist too could use a unique form of prayer. It is different to the conventional praying we see among those of other faiths. They kneel and pray to an unseen, unknown being. A Buddhist prayer is different. It is certainly no lamentation. It could take the following forms:

*Reflect on the Truth that is enshrined in the unique and perfect characteristics of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

*We also could ‘pray’ or rather reflect on the goodness that lies within ourselves. This is more powerful and mightier than any other form of prayer. Our own good thoughts, words and deeds are a power that lies within us and for which we need no outside help.

Each person is a master unto himself. We do not have to be servile. The mind of man is supreme. Truth is the greatest force on earth. A disciple of the Buddha whether monk or layman, uses Truth to overcome ills and distress. The power of truth when put into action is called *Sathyakriya*.

REFLECTION ON THE VIRTUES OF THE BUDDHA, THE DHAMMA & THE SANGHA.

In the Buddha's teaching, there are numerous instances that show the efficacy of *Sathyakriya* or the Power of Truth. The first of these is the reflection on the incomparable qualities of the Buddha; these characteristics of the Buddha's excellence are limitless, boundless. They cannot be enumerated in full by any living being. Over countless aeons in time, the future Buddha – as the Bodhisatva fulfilled the Parami or Ten Aspirations of;

Dana-Generosity, *Sila*-Morality, *Nekkhamma*-Renunciation,
Panna-Wisdom, *Viriya* -Energy, *Khanti*-Patience,
Sacca-Truthfulness, *Adhittana*-Determination, *Metta*-Loving Kindness,
Upekkha-Equanimity, in innumerable births.

This made the Bodhisatva a unique being, not a god but a superior human being who has no equal. Condensed into nine qualities and called the Nava Arahadi Budu guna, they hold truth about the All Enlightened One – the greatest of men – the Samma Sambuddha a human being *par excellence*.

Our prayer could be a reflection on these salient features of the Buddha. Reflection on these points of truth calms one, and soothes a ruffled, disturbed, distressed mind. That is all there is to it. A mind that is calm can work wonders for a person. That mind would help the person to analyse the truth of life, the reality of life; that all is impermanent, *anicca*; that beneath every happiness is the inexorable characteristic of sorrow, *dukkha*; that there is no soul *anatta* - a small being within a big one. Reflecting on the fleeting nature of happiness, we gain the strength to tide over our difficulty or distress. It is a meditation on the virtues of the Buddha - *Buddhanussati*. So also, the truth about the Dhamma – condensed into 6 salient virtues – *Dhammanussati*; and the truth about the Sangha condensed into nine salient virtues – *Sanghanussati*. This simple form of *Sathyakriya* brings comfort and peace upon a distressed mind.

Make it one of your regular prayers for overcoming a problem.

In the *Karaneeya Metta Sutta* – the Truth of Goodness, the way to progress in life, in one who practices Loving Kindness – *Maitri*, we see again the application of the Power of Truth in our everyday life. Some monks who had gone to forest abodes to meditate in peace and quiet, were disturbed by beings who inhabited the forest. They came in various frightening forms and tried to drive away the bhikkhus. The monks came to the Buddha and related what had happened. The Buddha expounded the *Karaneeya Metta* which lists the virtues of one who would bring upon oneself happiness.

It was given as a topic for meditation while radiating loving kindness to every being, big ones' small ones and those of medium size, long ones, short ones, and high or low, seen and unseen ones, far and near; may they all be well and happy by the truth thus proclaimed. With this queer 'magical' chant to guard them, never expounded by any spiritual teacher before or after the Buddha, the monks were sent back to the same forest abodes to continue their meditation undisturbed by evil spirits.

When natural disasters occur, when the rains fail to come in due season, when floods wreak havoc, *pirith* brings relief to those affected.

Ratana sutta is a clear example of how Sathya Kriya or the Power of Truth worked for a City afflicted with disease and other ills. In this paritta the virtues of the Buddha the Dhamma and the Sangha are extolled and a kind of plea is made to the facts embodied in these words of sublime truth to bring about relief from misery to the people of the city.

Vesali was the capital of the Vajji state in ancient India. The Vajjis and Lichchavis were two of the main clans living in this city. Lichchavis lived in Vesali. Once a great and complex disaster came upon this city. It was a threefold fear – the fear of illness, fear of inhumans and fear of famine. People perished in large numbers. The dead bodies could not be speedily removed and so they rotted emanating a foul stench. This caused more disease and danger.

The Buddha came to know about this calamity and gave instructions to his disciples to chant the Ratana Sutta, a paritta dwelling on the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha to bless the people of this city. Venerable Ananda Thero, the Buddha's chief attendant monk went ahead of the group of Bhikkhus led by the Buddha who too joined the group chanting the paritta and sprinkling water upon the afflicted city. The threefold fear vanished; a torrential shower of rain fell upon the city and the rotting corpses were washed away.

The surroundings were clean once more. The city was alive and prosperous again. In the opening lines of this *paritta*, the *Ratana Sutta* or *Jewels* referring here to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, there is an invitation, a plea to beings in every direction of the earth and in the air around to come and hear the virtues of the Noble Triple Gem. It has the characteristics of a song of praise of the many unique qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. These words proclaim the truth. By the force of this truth the city regained its former glory and the people were well. *yanida bhutani samagatani, bhumma ni waya ni...*

Even today, the efficacy of the *Ratana Sutta* is such that, during times of stress, illness and other afflictions both to individuals or to groups or to cities or countries as a whole, this *paritta* is chanted as a *Sathyakriya* or plea to the power of truth to bring relief.

Human beings, heavenly beings, even animals are pleased to hear the chanting of *pirith*. *Pirith* is the Buddha's own words we hear, unlike in a sermon where aspects of the Buddha's teaching are expounded by a monk or lay person in his or her own words.

The tone of *paritta* is melodious, the words are meaningful, so is the magical quality of *pirith* which is unsurpassed by any other sound.

Thus, *Ratana sutta*, *Karaneeya Metta Sutta*, *Girimananda Sutta* are all examples of how *Sathyakriya* or the power of truth brings solace and relief to afflicted persons.

Another chant—the *Jayamangala Gatha* are stanzas where the manifold qualities of the Buddha are woven into 8 beautiful verses and recited at festive occasions like weddings and other ceremonies to bless the persons concerned.

Bahun sahassa mabinimmita ...

Mara with his mighty army riding the elephant *Girimekhala* trumpeting in all its ferocity, the Buddha subdued by His generosity and other virtues. By the grace of this truth may victory be ours!

The violent demon *Alavaka*, who tried to overpower the Buddha by commands and harsh unpleasant words, the Buddha subdued by patience, wisdom and self-control. By the grace of this truth, may happiness be yours.

The mighty elephant *Nalagiri* in drunken stupor charged like a forest fire, a thunderbolt intent on killing the Buddha. But the Lord spread Loving Kindness with soft gentle words and subdued the beast. May the grace of this truth bring happiness.

Brandishing his sword, the killer Angulimala ran a great distance to harm the Buddha but with His psychic powers the villain was subdued. By the grace of this truth may happiness be yours.

Cinca pretending to be heavy with child with sticks tied to her bosom, made foul accusations during a large gathering. With His serenity, calm and peaceful demeanor, the Buddha subdued the woman. May the grace of this truth bring you happiness.

Saccaka haughty and ready to argue blindly and ignorantly with the Buddha, was subdued by the Lord's wisdom. By the grace of this truth, may happiness be yours.

The wise and powerful Naga Nandopananda, was subdued and gently directed to the Dhamma by the Lord's Disciple Maha Moggallana Thera through his wonderful psychic powers. May the grace of this truth bring you happiness.

The majestic and radiant Baka Brahma who was misled by heresies was subdued by the Lord through wisdom. May the grace of this truth bring you happiness.

These stanzas are called Stanzas of Victory. The power of the Truth contained in these words is relied upon to bring happiness and victory.

BLESSINGS FROM PIRITH CHANTING

Many times, in His life, The Buddha went to the bedside of sick people, even sick disciples and chanted virtues that bring happiness and relief and thereby healed the physical pain of illness. *Maha Moggallana Bojjanga and Maha Cunda Bojjanga pirith* are some such instances where at the bedside of sick disciples the Buddha extolled the virtues of reflecting on the seven *bojjangas* - the Seven Factors of Enlightenment:–

Sati (Mindfulness), *Dhamma vicaya* (Investigation of the Law); *Viriya* (Energy); *Piti* (Rapture); *Passaddhi* (Tranquility); *Samadhi* (Concentration); *Upekkha* (Equanimity); Following this, it is recorded that Maha Moggallana Thera and Maha Cunda Thera felt immense relief from their pain.

When the Buddha was ill it is said that Maha Cunda Thera chanted *paritta* at the bedside of Lord Buddha to relieve His pain.

From the lives of the disciples comes many heart-warming incidents that show how the Power of Truth – *Sathyakriya*, worked wonders.

On one occasion, among all his many virtuous noble disciples, the Buddha picked Thera Angulimala to bless a pregnant woman in distress. The Buddha in His all-seeing excellence, believed that Angulimala who had been a notorious killer before he entered the Sangha and became pure and worthy - an arahant, had the best strength of *Sathyakriya* to bless life; the life of a mother and a yet-unborn infant in distress and danger. With just a few lines Thera Angulimala expressed the truth about himself;

*“Oh, sister, ever since I became an arya of pure and righteous conduct,
with intention, have I never harmed any living being. This is the truth.
May the Power of this Truth bring you relief and safe delivery of the child.
May you both be well.”*

The efficacy of the Angulimala *Paritta* is so great that even today thousands of years after the event, the chanting of,

***“yatho han bhagini ariyaya, jathiya jato nabhi janami,
samcicca panam jivita voropetha; tena scena sotti te hotu,***

Sotti gabbassati is a regular feature in Buddhist homes when a mother is ready to bring forth a child. The all-important phrase in this *sutta* is “from the moment I became an *arya* – a noble disciple of the Buddha”. It is the watershed in Angulimala’s life, the moment when he changed from a notorious murderer to a saintly arahant. It would inspire people even today who have deviated from the path of righteous living to turn back and return to a life of harmlessness and good conduct.

Princess Yasodhara who was the consort of Prince Siddhartha in his lay life, also performed a noteworthy *sathyakriya* – wherein she reflected on her own virtues to make a wish come true. When Prince Siddhartha left the palace, the young princess was heartbroken. She who had been his constant companion and helpmate of countless former lives, supporting him in

the fulfilment to perfection of the ten aspirations – parami leading to full enlightenment, withdrew from royal life and duties. She gave up luxurious living, and imposed upon herself the garb and conduct of a recluse like the life her Prince led.

When many other princes sought to wed her again, she declined all their offers guarding her purity and with utmost determination kept her faith in her Lord. Yasodhara's association with the Bodhisatva was unequalled by any other. Yet, when the Buddha visited Kapilavastu, all His kinsmen and people were there to see Him, but not Yasodhara. She remained in her chamber and sought the Power of Truth – the fidelity she possessed as no other woman did, to make the Supreme Buddha – Lord of gods and men, to come and see her.

Yasodhara's *sathyakriya* worked because she was truly virtuous and the Buddha not seeing her among the gathering, read her mind, and accompanied by his two chief disciples Sariputta and Maha Moggallana, went to see Yasodhara and to pay His tribute of gratitude to the one single woman who stood by Him through 4 great cycles of time and more as he gathered wisdom and merit needed to become the All-Enlightened One. For, without her help and companionship, her faith in Him and in His aspirations, her unswerving devotion, the Bodhisatva would not have attained His goal in 4 great cycles of time what others like Him would take 8 or 16 great cycles of time. Yasodhara later became Arahant Theri Baddha Kaccana and in her farewell to the Buddha years later in her 78th year mentioned these virtues for the world to know.

There is also an instance of how the force of *sathyakriya* is demonstrated in the life of a female lay devotee – Cula Subadra, a daughter of Anathapindika, the Buddha's Chief lay benefactor. Cula Subadra was wedded to the son of *Ugga* – a disciple of the niganthas or naked ascetics. She lived with her in-laws, a long distance away from Sravasti. She was told by her new family that some 'arahants' were coming for a meal to their house. When they came, she saw them as naked ascetics and was moved to revulsion and did not join in the serving of meals. Later when questioned why she did so, she said that the arahants she worships are not of this type and extolled the virtues of the Buddha's noble disciples, saying that they are:

Her husband's family was surprised and asked if beings possessing such qualities existed and if so that they too would wish to give alms to them. Cula Subadra was asked if she could invite the Buddha and his noble disciples to their house next day for alms. She agreed to do so. But the Buddha and his disciples lived many, many miles away in Savatthi. She had to keep her promise.

The only way she could do this now was to perform a *sathyakriya*. She prepared for it with great care, bathing and anointing herself with perfume, then with eight handfuls of jasmine flowers which she strewed in the air she turned her eyes towards the direction of the Jetavana Monastery and reflected on her own virtues and on the virtues of the Buddha and the arahants so they may see her making this invitation and come the next day. Early the next morning as the Buddha was coming out of his fragrant chamber He saw the white flowers adorning the entrance and saw his all-seeing power the wish of Cula Subadra.

The Buddha accepted the invitation and with 500 arahants was to go to Cula Subadra's home. Anathapindika in his regular visit early morning to see the Buddha invited the

Buddha to his house for the noon meal. The Buddha declined saying that an offer has already been accepted for that meal. Anathapindika was puzzled as he was the first visitor to the monastery that morning. Who then could have invited the Buddha he wondered. It was then that the Buddha said that he was to go to – ‘*my daughter* - Cula Subadra’s house. Cula Subadra was a *sotapanna* and as she had entered the stream of a once-returner the Buddha called her ‘*my daughter*’.

Anathapindika was happy as it was his own daughter who was to give alms to the Buddha that day. Cula Subadra having made her wish was still uncertain if the Buddha would come. The Buddha read her mind and felt that it ill-behooves a disciple who was a *sotapanna* to have a cause for worry. He willed that she sees His aura of red, yellow and blue halo, light up her path to indicate the acceptance of her invitation.

Cula Subadra seeing it, knew for certain that the Buddha would come with a retinue of 500 arahants to be offered alms. The in-laws were impressed by the saintly manner of the Buddha and His disciples. At the end of the offerings, the Buddha stated in these words that a virtuous person however far they be, is seen like the lofty Himalayas.

Like the Himalayas, the good are visible even from afar; like arrows shot in the night, the wicked are not seen even though they may be near. Dhammapada V. 304

Dure santo pakasenti himavanto’ va pabbato

asant’ ettha na dissanti, ratti khitta yatha sara

The story of *Ayu Waddhana* is also another instance where *sathyakriya* was performed to bless an ill-fated child. A man and woman took their son along to visit an ascetic who had developed powers of insight. The ascetic wished long life to the man and woman but left out the child in his blessing. When questioned by the parents as to why he did so, the ascetic said that he foresaw that the child would not live long as a demon was hovering near to devour the child. The child had only seven more days to live he said. He also said that he did not know how to prevent it but that Gotama, the Buddha may know a way.

The parents went to the Buddha and related this sad story. The Buddha advised the parents to guard the child in a pavilion built at the entrance to their house. For seven days, a group of bhikkhus were sent there to chant *pirith*. On the seventh day, The Buddha came and even the devas were in attendance. The demon could not get access to the child at the critical moment as the child was under the powerful force of truth in the *paritta* chant. At the end of the period the child saluted the Buddha in reverence. The Buddha then said, “May you live long”. The child thereafter lived for a hundred and twenty years and so was named *Ayuwaddhana* – ‘of long life.’

The story of *Adhimutta*, a novice monk shows how he kept his word even when he foresaw danger to his own parents and family. The monk was trapped by robbers in a forest and later freed when he made a promise that he would not tell anyone that there are robbers in the forest. *Adhimutta* saw his parents coming but did not warn them as he was bound by his promise. The parents were taken by the robbers when they entered the forest and when they declared they were *Adhimutta*’s kinsmen, the robbers knew that *Adhimutta* was a truthful person and had kept his word. They were moved by this act of truth and sent all the captives away free, praising the truthfulness of the monk.

From the Jataka Tales that tell the story of the Bodhisatva's past births comes the story of the little pigeon-like bird called watuwa. A forest fire broke out and the parents flew away to save their lives. They could not carry the little bird to safety. This little one's wings were too tender to fly on its own.

The parent birds flew away leaving the little one behind. The little bird – our Bodhisatva, concentrated on its plight. “no wings strong enough to fly, here am I left to die; This is the truth. May this truth exercise its power; may I be saved. The forest fire circled a good distance away from the little one and no harm came to it. It is believed that even today no fire approaches the area where the little bird was left. (Wattaka Jataka)

In the Sama Jataka, there was once this wife and husband who had a little son named Sama. They lived a life of chastity ever since their child was born. A serpent's venom blinded the two people and Little Sama cared for them, brought them food and water. One day a king out hunting mistook the child for a deer and shot an arrow that wounded the child. Just before the child passed out, he stated who his parents were and that as they were blind it was he who brought them food and water.

“When I am gone, my parents would surely die” he said. The King inquired into this and brought the parents to the child. The mother and father held the child in their arms and appealed to the power of truth – that certain strength of character they possessed – the life of chastity they had led. May the power of this truth – the brahmachari way of life, a solid truth in their life – help to bring back their child to life. It is said that Sama miraculously regained his life.

Once the Bodhisatva was a wealthy brahmin youth who left all his possessions and went to the Himalayas to meditate. Within a short time, he developed powers of insight. As is the custom, this ascetic once came to the City of Benares and met with the King. The King gave him alms and ordered a temple to be built for him in the royal garden. The Bodhisatva visited the Palace daily to give spiritual guidance to the King.

Twelve years went by and one day the King had to leave the Palace to attend to some duties. The king entrusted the ascetic's care to the Queen. But one day the Queen's dress was in disarray and seeing this, the ascetic's passions were roused. He began associating with her intimately. The people in the city came to know of this and even though the king was informed of this happening, he did not believe any of it as he had implicit trust in the ascetic. On his return to the palace he questioned the Queen who said it was so. Yet, he disbelieved her too and went to the ascetic and questioned him. The ascetic thought that if he denied this association the King would still believe him. But in this whole wide world, there is no force and no help as mighty as that of the Truth.

One who is untruthful, cannot attain full enlightenment at the foot of a Bodhi tree therefore, whatever happens I must speak the truth and so he admitted to the misdemeanor. One who is afflicted with passions is blinded and does not see reason. The ascetic hastened to the temple, and meditated in earnest and regained the powers of insight which had gone away. He then informed the King that he would leave the City and return to the forest. The King

was sad to see him go. But back in the Himalayan forest the ascetic developed keen insight and was born in the brahma world.

Truth is a Bodhisatva aspiration. A *parami* or great virtue practiced by a future Buddha in the *sansaric* journey. It could be called the greatest of virtues, for a Bodhisatva may do other wrongs, but never would utter an untruth. A bodhisatva is a seeker of Truth, so how could he ever be untruthful? This is a virtue that stays steadfast in every birth leading to Buddhahood.

In the Sutasoma Jataka, the Bodhisatva was King Sutasoma. The Satya Parami or Perfection of Truth was demonstrated in all its glory when the King kept his promise to the demon *Porisada* and came back knowing very well that he was coming into the jaws of death.

Sathyakriya could also take the form of reflecting on one's own virtues; good deeds that one has done, kind thoughts and pleasant words that one has uttered. These become one's armour against ills, sorrow, pain of mind and difficult situations. As mentioned elsewhere, Angulimala performed sathyakriya using his own virtues; Princess Yasodahra likewise reflected on her own virtues to perform *sathyakriya*. We also know how the Buddha when afflicted with illness went into a state of perfect concentration on the supreme knowledge of Buddhahood that He had attained - Nirvana. He was then able to overcome pain in His body through this *nirodhi samapatti suwa* or reflection on the bliss of *Nibbana*.

Sathyakriya performed by reflecting on one's own qualities is more efficacious than reflecting on someone else's good qualities. Even though the quality reflected upon is a very insignificant, trivial one, it brings forth immediate effect when it is one from your own life.

A strange incident is recorded of how a mother and father used the power of Truth to cure their child bitten by a venomous snake. It is from the *Kanha Deepayana Jataka*.

The Bodhisatva was an ascetic named Deepayana. The parents took the stricken child to the ascetic and he was asked to administer some medicine or perform whatever supernormal power he had to cure the child. The Bodhisatva said he did not become an ascetic to cure patients. So, he used the power of *sathyakriya* in this manner: he reflected thus:

"Ever since the time I became an ascetic, only seven days did I willingly live as one. Thereafter, for over fifty years I lived the life of an ascetic with no desire for such a life. This is the Truth. May the power of this bring relief from pain and neutralize the venom in the body of Yagnadatta, this little child and may he live". Instantly the venom descended from head to chest and the child opened his eyes and called his mother.

The ascetic then said that he had done what he could. 'Now it is your turn to do what you can' he told the father. The father kept his palm upon the chest of the child and uttered these words, his act of sathyakriya:

"Whenever strangers came to my house I did not wish to give them food. What I gave was not done willingly. Yet, these wise and learned ascetics did not know that I gave unwillingly. This is the truth. By the power of this truth, may Yagnadatta be well, may the venom in his body go away; may he live". Instantly the venom passed away from the chest

to the lower region but the child could not stand up. The father now turned to the mother and told her that he had done his part and that she should now do what she could to make the child fully well. She then said that she too has a certain truth in her life, but it cannot be told in his presence.

The father re-assured her and said she could say whatever she wished and he would not be offended. What was important was to make the child well. This is the truth she uttered: *“The ill-will I have for the highly venomous snake that stung you, is no different to the dislike I have had for your father. Both are equally repulsive to me. Yet, to this day I have not made this fact known to anyone. This is the truth. May the power of this truth drive the venom from Yagnadatta’s body, may he be well, may he live”*. Instantly the venom left his body and the child was well again. This shows how a truth even though it is not one that is good or acceptable, has wonderful power.

To practice *sathyakriya* is not an easy task. One must live by the Truth and only then would one obtain its wholesome effect.