

Nigantha Nataputta

In the Samannaphala Sutta, Nigantha Nataputta is introduced as the teacher of Catuyamasamvara. "A Nigantha is surrounded by the barrier of four-fold restraint. How is he surrounded?.....He practises restraint with regard to water, he avoids all sin, by avoiding sin his sins are washed away, and he is filled with the sense of all sins are washed away, and he is filled with the sense of all sins avoided.....So surrounded by the barrier of fourfold restraint his mind is perfected, controlled, and firm.

The teaching of Nataputta is very obscure. Catuyamasamvara as mentioned in the Samannaphala Sutta consists of the four characteristics of the Jainas. The real Catuyamasamvara belonging to the Parsvanatha tradition, is found elsewhere in the Pali Canon itself.

Nigantha Nataputta preached thus to his followers or Savakas: a slayer of living creature (panam atipateti), a stealer of a thing (not given to him) (adinnam adiyati), a subject of sensual passion wrongly (kamesu miccha carati), and one who tells a lie (musa bhanati) are all condemned.

Here are mentioned the four causes of sin. In the Anguttara the five ways of falling into sin, according to Nigantha Nataputta, are outlined. They are: destruction of animates (panatipati hoti) taking what is not given (adinnadayi hoti), passionate enjoyment of evil (abrahamacari hoti), speaking a lie (musavadi hoti), and living on liquor and drink (suramerayamajjappamadatthayi hoti).

Both these references are neither correctly recorded nor in order. The Nikayas appear to have confused between the Vratas of Parsvanatha and Mahavira. The Parigraha (attachment to the mundane affairs), a fourth cause of sins according to the Parsvanatha tradition, included the passionate enjoyment, was not mentioned in the Nikayas, while the Abrahamacarya, separated from Parigraha by Nigantha Nataputta, is mentioned there.

Non-violence is the fundamental principle of the Jainas which is recorded in the Pali Canon. The Niganthas do not use cold water as living being exist therein. They take a vow not to go beyond a loimited area, so that the possibility of destroying life while moving about is reduced to a minimum. The Kayadanda (physical deeds) is more blamable than Manodanda (mental deeds) in their opinion. Intention (bhava or manodanda) is the main source of violence, and if the injury is caused by the body intentionally (bhavena), it will be considered more blameable. Meat eating is completely prohibited in Jainism. It is said that while Siha Senapati served meat to Buddha and his followers, the Nigantha had protested and criticised such activities.

Nakedness or nudity (acelakatva or Digambaratva) with a mind controlled and restrained from all sorts of attachment and the practice of severe austerities with right knowledge are the main sources of omniscience and salvation. Pali literature too records the Jaina claim to the omniscience of Nigantha Nataputta. The Pali Canon is also familiar with the rudiments of Syvadvada and Navatattvas. Buddhist philosophical literature which developed later establishes and refutes the more advanced Jaina doctrines about epistemology and logic.