

## **A Study on the Teacher -Student Inter-Relationship Reflected in Vattakkandhaka in the Vinaya Piṭaka**

**D.L.N. Kalyani<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

In the field of education, the teacher-student inter-relationship plays a major role. Teachers are the pioneers in shaping the personality of students and building a good society. Scholars of educational philosophy have recognized the importance of positive teacher-student inter-relationship. A number of discourses can be identified in early Buddhism that explained positive relationships, ethics and values to the lay and sangha community in order to build a harmonious society. At present, in the field of education, issues related to respect, trust, communication, ethical behaviour and values can be identified as the obstacles for maintaining an effective teacher-student inter-relationship. Therefore, in order to overcome these challenges, it is very important to examine the teacher-student inter-relationship in the Buddhist context. The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical guidelines and values related to teacher-student inter-relationship in Vattakkandhaka of Vinaya pitaka and suggest strategies to improve teacher-student inter-relationship. The research question in this study is what ethical guidelines and values provided in Vattakkandhaka in Vinaya pitaka can be applied to overcome the above educational issues.

For this study, exploring existing literature on teacher-student inter-relationships provide a broader context to the topic. Yan. Y. (2019) discusses the importance of teacher-student inter-relationship, main theories which related to inter-relationship. Singh.B.K (2021) has discussed the teacher-student relationship in the light of Buddhist concept of education. Wijayathilaka and Senevirathna (2005) provides broader concepts of the teacher prescribed in the Vinaya pitaka. Senadeera and Senadeera discuss (2017) the competitive and exam-oriented education in Sri Lanka which produces the distant of relationship between the teacher and the student.

The specific objectives identified for my research: to identify the concept of teacher -student inter-relationship, to explore the ethical guidelines and values in Vattakkandhaka of the Vinaya pitaka related to teacher -student inter-relationship

---

1. Zonal Education Office, Horana, 12400, Sri Lanka. kalyaniN1972@gmail.com

and to suggest practical strategies based on Vattakkandhaka to improve teacher-student inter-relationship.

This study helps to bridge the gap between Buddhist philosophy and contemporary educational issues. The ethical guidelines and values explored and practical strategies suggested will help educational practitioners, educational institutions to make effective relationship in the field of education.

The scope of this research is limited to the Vattakkandhaka in Vinaya Pitaka and mainly focused on Upajjhayavatta, Saddhiviharikavatta, Achariyavatta and Antevasikavatta. Limitations of the study such as cultural biases, linguist challenges in interpretation and constrains in diverse perspectives can be identified. The strategies suggested may vary based on cultural diversity within the Sri Lankan education sector.

## **Methodology**

The research methodology that is utilized in this study is qualitative method. To collect primary data Buddhist discourses are used and the scholarly articles, related texts and researches related to the topic are used for collecting secondary data. The data collected through textual analysis is presented in themes.

## **Results and Discussion**

Vattakkandhaka is a text in Vinaya piṭaka which contains observances, obligations or duties of monastic community. It comprised of fourteen vattas, of which the last four vattas Upajjāyavatta, Saddhiviharikavatta, Achariyavatta and Antevāsikavatta point out how to enhance the wellbeing of the monks through the proper practice of mutual responsibilities between the pupil and the teacher.

In the context of Vinaya Piṭaka, Upadhaya and Achariya play a crucial part in nurturing and bringing up novices within the monastic community and shaping the ethical and disciplinary aspects of a student's monastic life. Saddhivharika disciplined and guided by the Upadhaya is expected to adhere to specific duties towards the Upadhaya emphasizing a respectful and supportive relationship. Antevāsika has specific roles and relationships with their respective teachers. Duties of Upadhaya and Achariya outline the ethical guidelines and values for teachers and duties of Saddhivharika and Anthanthevasika provide the ethical guidelines and values for students.

The inter-relationship between teachers and students in the Vattakkandhaka emphasizes ethical conduct, respect, and the proper transmission of knowledge. It includes specific rules on how a student should approach a teacher, the etiquette to be observed during teachings, and the responsibilities of

both parties in maintaining daily life. The emphasis on proper conduct ensures that the transmission of knowledge is not only accurate but also conducive to the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. It is stated that the teachers should have fatherly attitudes towards their students and students should serve their teachers as their own father.

Students bear the responsibility of maintaining the monastery where they reside and study. In addition to acquiring knowledge, they are tasked with caring for their teachers, gaining valuable training for future roles as sincere and responsible citizens in society. According to Vinaya pitaka, a good student is characterized by a loving attitude towards their teacher, demonstrating honour and respect. Students are encouraged to engage in self-reflection and take responsibility for their actions. They are tasked with achieving work that bring honour, contributing positively to the monastic community. The Vattakkhandhaka emphasizes that a good student practices concentration and meditation for personal development and a deeper understanding of the teachings.

This outlines essential principles for effective teacher. The teacher should exemplify the behaviours they impart to others, ensuring they are well-regulated when guiding their students. The qualities outlined for an adept teacher include being well-educated in every aspect, devoted to discipline, and possessing knowledge of Vinaya, implementing it in their actions. The ideal teacher has the qualities of, contemplating ways to promote prosperity in students, maintaining high moral conduct, disseminating knowledge without discrimination, and embodying calm and patient attitudes. This teacher is hailed by everyone and, in times of a pupil's illness, fulfils the duty of caring for them and ensuring proper medication. The ethical guidelines and values outlined above aim to cultivate a harmonious and respectful relationship between teachers and students.

Practical strategies can be suggested to enhance teacher-student inter-relationship based on Vattakkadhaka. Teachers should provide comprehensive support to students, addressing both spiritual and practical aspects of their lives. Compassionate care, guidance, and instruction should be emphasized for an effective relationship. Disciplinary matters should be dealt judiciously and the teachers should guide them towards rectifying behaviour and earning back trust if disciplinary actions are taken. They need to encourage students to handle various situations, resolving conflicts, and participating in communal affairs which instil values. Teachers should be exemplified, well-educated, devoted to discipline, and possess knowledge of discipline. They should maintain high moral conduct, disseminate knowledge without discrimination.

Students should bear the responsibility of maintaining the institution they learnt, and caring for their teacher by expressing honour and respect. Ethical guidelines should be cultivated emphasizing the importance of concentration and meditation. Students should engage in spiritual practices for personal development and a deeper understanding of the teachings.

## Conclusion

The ethical guidelines and values outlined in Vattakkandhaka form the basic foundation for cultivating a harmonious inter-relationship. Practical strategies derived from Vattakkandhaka, guidance for studies, handling of disciplinary matters and inculcation of values of humility and responsibility in students, spiritual practices, culture of respect, and the qualities of the teacher are very important to build positive teacher-student inter-relationship. The Vattakkandhaka provides a timely guide to establishing strong teacher-student inter-relationships and addressing current educational challenges. The strategies suggested in this study can be useful for educators and institutions to build positive teacher-student inter-relationship.

**Keywords:** Society, Student, Teacher, Teacher-Student Inter-Relationship, Vattakkandhaka

## References

- Anonymous. (1963). *The Book of the Discipline*. Volume V, Translated by I.B.Horner, London: Luzac & Company LTD.
- Singh, B.P. (2021). *Teacher -student Relationship in the Light of Buddhist Concept of Education*, Journal of Research & Method in Education, [www.isorjournals.org](http://www.isorjournals.org).
- Yan.Y. (2019). *The Research on Teacher-student Relationship from the Perspective of Educational Philosophy*, China: Open Journal of Social Sciences.
- විජයතිලක, ආර්. සහ සෙනෙවිරත්න, ආර්., (2005). *විනය පිටකයෙන් හෙළිවන ගුරුවරයා*. මහරගම: ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය.
- සේනාධීර, එස්. සහ සේනාධීර, ඒ. (2017). *යහපත් ගුරු සිසු සබඳතා තුළින් ඵලදායී අධ්‍යාපනය*. කොළඹ: ඇස්. ගොඩගේ සහ සනෝදරයෝ (පුද්ගලික සමාගම).