

Buddhism and Leadership for Teaching Excellence

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Buddhism is frequently viewed as a traditional, conservative religion. I.R. Sinai (1964) wrote a volume in which he argued that Buddhism would adversely affect Burma's opportunities for development. Actually Buddhism has many progressive principles such as Buddhist epistemology that may contribute to a Buddhist kind of leadership that could foster teaching excellence.

Elements of Buddhist thought relevant to educational leadership will be identified, based on the works primarily of influential Thai Buddhist thinkers such as Buddhādāsa Bhikku, Phra Payutto, and Samana Photirak. UNESCO recognized Buddhādāsa Bhikku as one of the great intellectuals of the 20th century. From this analysis a model of Buddhist leadership will be developed.

Teaching excellence will then be discussed. A tetrahedron model of teaching excellence will be presented which is primarily influenced by the thinking of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, bell hooks, the Universal Design for Learning Model (UDL), and principles for a new teacher reform in Indonesia (Che-Chung, et al., 2014).

The final part of the paper reflects on how Buddhist leadership and particularly Buddhist epistemology can contribute to leadership for teaching excellence and education for sustainability, a theme currently being emphasized by UNESCO.



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