

The Buddhist Integrative Model in Promoting Master Teachers in Upper Northeast of Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the characteristics of master teachers in the upper northeastern area to analyze the Buddhist moral code to promote master teachers and propose the model of integrated Buddhist for promoting master teachers in the upper northeastern area. Interview questions and relevant focus group discussions were used as instruments in the analysis, which was performed using a mixed-method design. The data were analyzed by using descriptive content analysis (DCA). Research results revealed that 1) the characteristics of master teachers are divided into three parts: self-improvement, autonomy, and coordination with communities; 2) Buddhist moral code associated with promoting master teachers comprises of Iddhipāda 4, Ariyasacca 4, Saṅgahavathu 4, Kalyāṇamitta-dhamma 7, Pañcadhamma 5, Brahmavihāra dhamma 4 and Aparihāniyadhamma 7. 3) The model integrated Buddhist for promoting master teachers consists of 3 parts: 1) desire to be a master teacher; 2) Buddhist moral code brought to be a practice guideline for achieving 8 codes of self-improvement; 3) development with 3 components: self-improvement, autonomy, and coordination with communities.

Keywords

Integrated Buddhist Model; Master Teachers; Thailand

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Introduction

Thai society today is changing from a moral society where people help one another to an economic society where most people give more importance to material possession than peace of mind [1] [2]. People lack morality and ethics as a framework for living a life. In particular child and adolescent problems, the government and the monastic order of the Sangha have worked collaboratively to encourage educational institutions and stakeholders to bring Buddhist moral principles as a learning strand in the learning area of social studies, religion, and culture, and organize training activities about morality to achieve the objectives and principles of National Education Act B.E.2542 (1999), Section 6, Section 7 and Section 8[3].

Office of the National Education Commission stated [3] that learning reform would be successful when teachers modify teaching behavior by majorly emphasizing learners. Consequently, a policy on developing and generating master teachers is established for teaching and learning development. This idea is not new as many studies are presenting the same opinion as the master teacher idea is one of the essential elements in education development [4] [5] [6] [7]. Based on this, Provincial primary education offices are responsible for evaluating teachers who have outstanding performance that can be role models for other teachers by giving them a diploma or other certificates [1]. Emphasis is placed on seeking teachers who have outstanding performance, possess a model of learning management that can be a role model and can reform learning in educational institutions in an effective and efficient manner [8]. Teachers who possess such qualifications will be honored to be master teachers and leaders in learning reform, bringing benefits to learning reform with a learner-based model. In addition, those

teachers must gain trust from parents, be good colleagues in educational institutions, and good members of society[9]. Pleasant characteristics of good teachers according to Buddhist teaching or Buddhist moral principles consist of 7 Kalyāṇamitta-Dhammas (Sevenfold qualities of a good friend) [10] [11] in Tipitaka:

Piyo (lovable) – being the beloved one of students or other people. A good teacher should possess 4 sublime states of mind.

Garu (respectable) – teachers who behave well in status, have good practice and abide by good principles. Five power (confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom or understanding) will help teachers to possess such qualifications.

Bhāvanīyo (adorable) – to assist an instructor in gaining interest as a high-quality individual with experience and wisdom, as well as self-training and self-development.

Vattā ca (being a counselor) – to be a person who is trying to teach students to be a good person, that is, to use the knowledge and competence in honesty for the benefits of others.

Vacanakkhamo (being a patient listener) – to assist an instructor in being patient in the face of hardship while remaining motivated to resolve it.

Gambhiraṇca-Katham-Kattā (able to offer deep discourses or treat profound subjects) - to explain complex events or deep concepts in order to gain a simple understanding, to behave as if speaking from a teaching course, or to attain each degree of Dhamma before teaching.

No-Catṭhāne-Niyojaye (never exhorting without reason) – to avoid deceiving others and bringing them to destruction. Therefore, to be consistent with the intention of the basic education curriculum 2001, teaching guidelines should be efficient so that students will have knowledge, understanding, and become good problem solvers. Teachers

are necessary to emphasize practices and problem-solving in accordance with the Four Noble Truths (Ariyasacca) or scientific methods. Students are allowed to practice and explore knowledge by themselves until they gain knowledge, understanding, and find causes of problems and methods to solve those problems. By doing these, they will have decision-making skills and can apply the obtained knowledge to solve problems [9]. Teaching and learning of Buddhism focus on how a student can think, do, solve problems rationally and logically. It is not trial and error. Procedures in problem-solving are similar to the scientific method. Consequently, the researchers are interested in studying the integrated Buddhist doctrines for promoting master teachers in the upper northeastern area so as to learn about characteristics of master teachers and guidelines to promote master teaches using Buddhist moral principles.

Research Objectives

This study has its aims to develop a model for promoting master teachers in the research area. In so doing, the objectives of this research were: (1) to study characteristics of master teachers in the upper northeastern area; (2) to study and analyze Buddhist moral code in promoting master teachers in the upper northeastern area; (3) to propose integrated Buddhist model for promoting master teachers in the upper northeastern area.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted using a mixed research method design between quantitative and qualitative studies; using a questionnaire to ask 375 participants, including executive officers, officers (a total number of populations = 6737), for a qualitative study; using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of 24 key participants and in-depth interview of 20 key informants or the master teachers in the upper northeastern area in Khon Kaen and Udon Thani provinces. The master teachers who were awarded and honored at the education service area level or higher while the key participants for holding FGD who was awarded and honored at education service area level or higher in Khon Kaen and Udon Thani province in 2017.

Research Results

Master teacher characteristics:

Characteristics of master teachers in the upper northeastern area were divided into three parts as follows:

Part 1: Self-improvement or self-development – teaching and learning were managed on the basis of a learner-based model, enhancing learners to achieve learning and self-development naturally to their full potential. Teachers should have creative thinking and academic ability. Emphasis must be placed on the learning process of learners, knowledge, morality, and integration of various matters suitable for education levels. Learners must be provided to gain experience from real practices, be able to think on their own, be able to do in a skillful manner. Teachers should coordinate cooperation with parents,

guardians, and people in communities to develop learners to reach their maximum potential.

Part 2: Autonomy – being a role model in personal and family aspects. Teachers should have morality, ethics, good human relationships. They should sustain the custom, traditions, art, culture of the country. They must have ethics in the teaching profession and the spirit of being a teacher. They must be accepted by teachers, learners, and communities.

Part 3: Coordination with communities – Teachers must be accepted and given faith by communities in their ability, personality, and great contribution. They should be community leaders in academic approach, build good relationship and cooperation between educational institutions and communities in education management and development. They must be able to encourage communities to participate in supporting the learning of learners and be able to lead schools to help communities and cooperate with communities in environmental conservation.

Buddhist moral code of master teachers:

The analysis of Buddhist moral code in promoting master teachers in the upper northeastern area found that the Buddhist moral code associated with promoting master teachers comprises Iddhipāda 4, Ariyasacca 4, Saṅghavathu 4, Kalyāṇamitta-dhamma 7, Pañcadhamma 5, Brahmavihāra dhamma 4 and Aparihāniyadhamma 7.

Iddhipāda 4 (Paths of Accomplishment): if teachers wish to be a master teacher, they must possess Iddhipāda 4 consisted of 1) Chanda (aspiration to in doing the wholesomeness) – teachers should be satisfied with what they are having suitable for their profession, live their lives in harmony with their financial status, be satisfied with what they are receiving, live sufficiently and not be too ambitious to lose their minds. They should not bring their disadvantage to judge their duty performance. They should bring their advantage to motivate their working; 2) Viriya (effort or energy or will) - Teachers must have attention and effort in their responsibilities. They must not abandon their duties. Once they perform any duty or task, they must complete it successfully. They must take care of themselves and the people around them to practice goodness. They should keep on seeking knowledge for themselves for self-and professional development; 3) Citta (thoughtfulness)- Teachers must not abandon their commitment. They must have determination, stay steadfast in their work until they succeed. When they perform any task, they should try to study its details for thorough understanding. They must be aware that being a teacher is an honorable profession as it helps develop children to have knowledge and abilities and become quality adults and strength of the society and the country in the future; 4) Vīmaṃsā (investigation or discrimination)- Teachers must be interested in learning in the directions and goals related to their responsibilities by adhering to rational and logical practices that lead to work success.

Ariyasacca 4 (the Four Noble Truths): 1) Dukkha (suffering) – to know problems and analyze which levels problems are, to whom problems are related so as to identify actual problems and to make understanding of problems or status of suffering straightforwardly. It is the way to

confront problems; 2) Samudaya (the cause of suffering) – to know how to analyze problems that students are having, promote students to achieve learning, and analyze causes of problems and solution guidelines of those problems.; 3) Nirodha (the cessation of suffering) – to access the status for ending suffering or problems using an appropriate method and arranging the importance of problems and solve problems immediately, correctly, and rationally.; 4) Magga (the path that leads to the end of suffering) – training is provided for practicing how to end the suffering or problems [12].

Saṅgahavatthu 4 (Bases of Social Solidarity): 1) Dāna (generosity/charity) – to give or share for the benefit of others. It helps instill unselfishness in people. Teachers devote themselves or time to encouraging students to grow and have developed in all aspects and to have generosity in guiding students or teachers.; 2) Piyavācā (kindly speech) – to speak nicely and sincerely, do not speak rudely or aggressively, to speak something useful suitable for places and times, to speak nicely both in public and behind a closed door; 3) Atthacariyā (useful conduct) – to do something useful for the society, to help each other and make a sacrifice for public benefits, for colleagues, and for students directly and indirectly.; 4) Samānattatā (equality consisting in impartiality) – teachers must behave themselves to be a good role model for their students and other people both inside and outside schools. They should not be involved with allurement and give fairness to all.

Kalyāṇamitta-dhamma 7 (Qualities of being a good friend) consist of: 1) Piyo – being the beloved one of students or other people. A good teacher should possess the Four Sublime States of Mind; 2) Garu (respectable) – the way teachers behave properly in status, have good practice and good principles to live. 5 power (confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom or understanding) will help teachers to possess such qualifications; 3). Bhāvanīyo – to assist an instructor in gaining interest as a high-quality individual with experience and wisdom, as well as self-training and self-development; 4) Vattā ca-according to Buddhism, there are 4 teaching methods: Sandassanā (elucidation), Samādapanā (Incitement to take upon oneself; inspiration towards the goal), Samuttejanā (Filling with enthusiasm) and Sampahaṃsanā (Filling with delight and joy); 5) Vacanakkhamo – to assist an instructor in being patient in the face of hardship while still being determined to resolve it; 6) Gambhīraṇca-Kathāṃ-Kattā - to explain complex events or profound concepts in order to gain clarity, to behave as if speaking from a teaching course, or to attain each degree of Dhamma before teaching; 7) No-Catthāne-Niyojaye – to leave misleading other persons into destruction.

Pañcadhamma 5 (the five ennobling virtues): they are an instrument that upholds precepts, enabling practitioners to have progress, be free from karma, gain safety. They consist of 1) Loving-kindness and compassion – to give happiness and help others to get away from suffering; 2) Right livelihood – teachers must make an honest living, know how to spend their money and live their lives in a sufficient manner, they should possess moral shame and moral dread, and must teach students to see the importance of making an honest living; 3) Sexual restraint – teachers must be self-disciplined and control themselves to refrain from all

aspects of sexual activities. They should warn students about how to make friends or love in school age, 4) Honesty – teachers must be honest and speak the truth. They should not lie to themselves or other people. They must be honest to their duty; 5) Mindfulness and clear comprehension – this qualification will help people live their lives without carelessness; they are mindful of making a decision as they know what is good and what is bad.

Brahmavihāra dhamma 4 (Sublime states of mind) consist of 1) Mettā (loving-kindness) – to wish students to have happiness through love and kindness, and see value in students; 2) Karuṇā (compassion) – to have a desire to help other people to release from suffering as much as one can while he/she is not in trouble, to be generous to teachers, personnel, students who are having problems; 3) Muditā (sympathetic joy) – to be glad to see when other people are happy; 4) Upekkhā (equanimity) – a mind filled with equanimity, the ability to see without getting caught up in what one sees, is plentiful, exalted, immeasurable, free of malice and ill-will. Teachers accept and understand differences in each student.

Aparihāniyadhamma 7 (things leading never to decline but only to prosperity or conditions of welfare)– they are Dhamma principles useful for governing. People who keep practicing 7 conditions of welfare will enjoy progressive steps in their lives. The 7 conditions include 1) as long as those people meet frequently and hold many meetings. Meetings or discussion are held for knowledge exchange and operation planning among administrators, teachers, parents, students and stakeholders; 2) as long as they meet in unity, rise in unity, and carry out their responsibilities in unity; 3) as long as they do not enact something that has not already been enacted, abrogate nothing that has already been enacted, and act in accordance with the ancient principles that have already been formed; 4) as long as they support, respect, venerate, and honor the elderly, as well as pay attention to their important words; 5) as long as no women or girls in their families are incarcerated or kidnapped; 6) as long as they support, love, venerate, and honor those internal and external objects of worship, as well as those righteous ceremonies performed before them; 7) As long as the rightful protection, defense and support for monks shall be provided so that monks who have not come may enter the realm and those who have entered the realm may live in peace.

Model of integrated Buddhist doctrines:

The model of integrated Buddhist for promoting master teachers in the upper northeastern area consists of 3 major parts as follows:

1) teachers who wish to be master teachers, 2) Buddhist moral code to be practiced for self-development in everyday life and teaching and learning management, which comprises 8 dhammas as mentioned above, 3) development is seen in 3 major components: self-development, autonomy, coordination with communities in being master teachers. The model of integrated Buddhist doctrines for promoting master teaches in the upper northeastern area is a guideline for teachers who wish to improve themselves to be master teachers in applying Dhamma principles of Buddhism to self-development practices. Buddhist moral code applied to

self-development will enable master teachers to have a better quality of life, morality, ethics, good human relationships, and they will be able to live in the society peacefully and happily in a sufficient manner, being accepted by teachers, learners, and communities.

Discussions

In regards to the characteristics of master teachers, master teachers must have preparedness in self-development or development of the process of teaching and learning management: teaching and learning management is based on a learner-based model. Learners will be encouraged to discover and grow their full potential by natural means. Teachers must have creative thinking and academic ability. Emphasis is placed on the learning of learners, knowledge, morality, and integration of various matters to meet education levels. Learners are given opportunities to gain experience from real practices, be able to think on their own, be able to do in a skillful manner. Teachers should coordinate cooperation with parents, guardians, and people in communities to develop learners to reach their maximum potential. Teachers should have morality, ethics, good human relationships. They should sustain the custom, traditions, art, culture of the country. They must have ethics in the teaching profession and the spirit of being a teacher. They must be accepted by teachers, learners, and communities. For coordination with communities, teachers must be accepted and given faith by communities in their ability, personality, and great contribution. They should be community leaders in academic approach, build good relationship and cooperation between educational institutions and communities in education management and development. They must be able to encourage communities to participate in supporting the learning of learners and be able to lead schools to help communities and cooperate with communities in environment conservation, consistent with the Royal guidance of King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great on 24 June 1989 that "teachers should practice themselves to be fluent and skillful in knowledge and teaching methods so that they can teach subjects correctly, completely and comprehensively. They should be honest, polite, disciplined, hard-working, patient, and possess loving-kindness and compassion so that students will understand clearly knowledge and goodness of teachers and they will have faith in teachers and listen to teachers willingly, making all education work that each person has made an attempt with tiredness will be moved forward smoothly and successfully as they expect"[9]. This is consistent with National Education Act 1999, Chapter 4 that role model teachers must possess self-development, know how to behave themselves, and coordinate with communities[3]. It is consistent with a research study conducted by Jongkol Polprasat [13] and Warasiri Wongsunthorn [14] that found that teaching and learning management behavior of role model teachers relied on teaching and learning management with various instructional media that were made easily and in harmony with lessons. Emphasis was placed on a learner-based model with the belief that the most important goal of education management is enabling learners to achieve learning while role model teachers must develop themselves at all times, they should possess teacher spirit, understand

behaviors and students' personalities, which helps them advance in their careers.

Based on the research results, teachers who wish to be master teachers must adhere to the Buddhist moral code as mentioned above. Master teachers apply the Buddhist moral code to develop themselves, behave themselves properly, and coordinate with communities, making them have a better quality of life with morality, ethics, good human relationship, and able to live peacefully and happily in the society in an acceptable manner and accepted by teachers, students, and communities. It is consistent with constructivism; an important learning philosophy focused on the premise that learners construct new understanding and information by incorporating what they already know. This theory views knowledge as cognitive restructuring built from existing experience and structure. New knowledge will be a tool to build a new cognitive structure accordingly. This model of learning focuses on existing information or knowledge to be the foundation of new knowledge. Learning is then the process occurring inside learners, and learners build it on their own [14]. It is consistent with social learning theory introduced by Bandura [15], describing that people learn by watching behaviors of other people (Observational learning) from 2 characteristics as (1) imitation, a person learns new behaviors by observing behaviors of other people, and he/she follows those behaviors, (2) learn effects of behaviors (Vicarious learning), a person learns new behaviors from observing behaviors of other people and understands effects that those people have from their behaviors.

Suggestions

Policy suggestions: the research results found that master teachers must possess a Buddhist moral code; 4 bases of success, 4 noble truths, 4 bases of sympathy, 7 qualities of a good friend, 5 Dhamma, 4 sublime states of mind, 7 conditions of welfare and 5 qualities of a preacher, agencies related to promoting efficiency of teachers should promote and support teachers to apply the earlier mentioned Buddhist moral code to their everyday life

Suggestion for implications: based on the study results, it is found that teachers who wish to be master teachers apply the Buddhist moral code to their daily life in order to have a better quality of life, morality, ethics, good human relationship, be able to live peacefully and happily in the society, be able to live a life adequately, accepted by teachers, students, and communities, and finally be able to become master teachers

Suggestion for future research: 1) other appropriate Buddhist moral codes should be studied to promote master teachers; 2) a study should be conducted on creating innovation for promoting master teachers.

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