POSDCoRB Management Process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province*

[1]Sarin Rattanadilok na Phuket and Nakamol Chansom
[1]Rangsit Business School, Rangsit University, Thailand.
[1]Corresponding Author's Email: sarin.r62@rsu.ac.th

Abstract

This research article consists of three objectives: 1) to study the organizational setting of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province. 2) to study the administration process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province through the scope of the POSDCoRB management process. 3) to discover additional administrative factors affecting the administrative process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province. The qualitative research data was collected from 10 administrative personnel from 10 Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province using an unconstructed interview as a data collection tool. The collected data then went into the analysis process using the component analysis technique.

The study found that 1) Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temples in Phuket Province have an average age of 158 years old, a geographical area of 44 rai, four organization sizes; small, moderate, large, extra-large. Temples are legally required to have a Sangha abbot and temple warden who partake in the temple's administration roles. They strictly have to be male. 2) All factors within the POSDCoRB management process of each Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province differ vastly depends on the Sangha abbot's administrative style of the specific Buddhist temple. 3) Temple's management process was designed to accommodate the fidelity of Buddhists. This unique aspect required an additional factor of Faith (F) to finalize the correct management process. Thus, integrated into the original POSDCoRB management process, the tailor-made management process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province became POSDCoRB+F. The paper concluded with compact recommendations for Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple administrative personnel to promote understanding of the distinctive administrative process for Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple.

Keywords: POSDCoRB Management Process; Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple; Sangha; Faith Management

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Introduction

Belief and religion have long been one of the three core values within the foundation of Thai's social and cultural heritage since before the Thai historical era. One of the most essential and primarily inherited religions in Thailand since ancient time is undeniably Buddhism. Thai Buddhists eventually and naturally integrate Buddhism into multiple essences within Thai daily routines, ceremonies, festivities, and traditions. At the same time, Buddhism also provides Thai Buddhists the religious cosmology, understanding karma, including merit and sin explanation, creating fear of wrongdoing, which supports the act of benefaction and eventually led to the current Thai society.

While Buddhism and its teaching are essential to Thai society, it cannot propagate itself without its core components, which are the Buddhist temple and the collective of the most faithful religious follower, which are the Buddhist monk, or Sangha, whom in turn generally reside within the vicinity of a temple. Mahatma Gandhi stated that people worshiped and went to the place of worship out of necessity (Prabhu, and Rao, 1967). Srathong (2017) stated that Buddhist temples existed in Thailand since ancient times, usually built when there was a migration of people as a place of faith and religious ceremony and a school, government center, and most importantly, a place to expand Buddhism. Unfortunately, during the past few years, Thailand's Buddhist temple and monk situation are far from comfortable. While newly registered temples per year reach 402 establishments from 2019 to 2020, the alarming decrease in Buddhist monks of 65,380 and the number of abandoned temples of 5,494 in 2020 (National Office of Buddhism of Thailand, 2021) raised an administrative question of what is the issue that formulated such a reverse direction. While external factors such as the trending increase in atheism (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2019) and the cultural shift within Thai younger generations' general lifestyle are prevalent, it does not disregard administrative discrepancies. Therefore, studying the administrative process within a Buddhism temple became a vital tool for creating an optimal solution for a temple to reach a successful organizational status or prevent it from plummeting into an abandoned position.

The apparent limitation of a Buddhist temple as an organization is that the religious organization is far different from a commercial company or a usual public-related organization. Factors such as the Code of Buddhism Discipline that commanded most of the Sangha activities, the additional regulations mandated by the Sangha Supreme Council of Thailand, National Office of Buddhism, creating unique layers of barriers to proper management.

With all of that in mind, the author aspires as a business management enthusiast to integrate administration knowledge, mainly the POSDCoRB management process pioneered by Gulick and Urwick (1937), into a religious organization management process. The author intended to discover the compatibility and develop a new management technique regarding the administration of a temple into a prosperous form, which in turn may help the macro-level of Buddhism into a sustainable part of Thai culture and society that it should be.

Objectives of the research

1) to study the organizational setting of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province.

2) to study the administration process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province through the scope of the POSDCoRB management process.

3) to discover additional administrative factors affecting the administrative process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province.

Research Methodology

1st Step: Population and Sample

The population of this research is the management staff, including Sangha abbot, vice abbot, assistant abbot, and temple warden employed in a registered Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province that also acquired Wisukhamsima. The population total is 32 temples. The author started with Wat Chaithararam as the first sample temple, as Phuket locals generally recognize the temple as the most successful temple within the province, then used the snowball sampling technique to choose the sample. The sample temples are as following:

1) Wat Chaithararam
2) Wat Kiti Wanaram
3) Wat Latthi Wanaram
4) Wat Muang Mai
5) Wat Kosit Wihan
6) Wat Thepwanaram
7) Wat Kathu
8) Wat Choeng Thale
9) Wat Mongkol Wararam
10) Wat Tha Ruea

2nd Step: Research Tools

Non-structural interview questions were created for this qualitative research to collect the data from the designated samples. The author divided the interview into three main parts.

Part 1: Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province

Part 2: POSDCoRB Management Process, which has seven sub- parts, including 1) Planning, 2) Organizing, 3) Staffing, 4) Directing, 5) Coordinating, 6) Reporting 7) Budgeting.

Part 3: Additional administrative factors, which have four sub- parts, including 1) Amulets, Relics, Holy Objects, 2) Venerable Sanghas, non-Sanghas, animals, mystic beasts related to the temple 3) Architecture, Sculpture and Painting within the temple.

The interview was then examined by specialists into a better, more direct version, which was then being used in the actual interview to gather information.

3rd Step: Interview Process

The author carried out the interviewing process between January through May. The author contacted either the temple warden or the Sangha-abbot to designate the interview date and time and give the interviewee spare time to prepare for the interview through personal interaction, phone contact, and third-person arrangement. Most of the interviews

took about 2 hours. Some interviewees postponed the interview to a later date due to the tight schedule.

4th Step: Data Analysis

The author used the component analysis technique to separate each part and sub-part to do an in-depth analysis of each POSDCoRB management process component.

Research Result

Part 1: Organizational Setting of Temple and Resided Sangha

The 1 objective is to study the organizational setting of the Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province. From the research result, it was found that the oldest temple within the sample is 264 years old, while only two temples are aged less than 100 years old, implied that the majority of the temple established within Phuket Province was settled for at least a century. On the other hand, the exact ages are inconsistent due to historical discrepancies, loss of written records, and the re-establishment of some of the temples. With that in mind, the average age of a temple is more than 158 years old. Each temple differs in terms of geographical size, having a minimum of 6 rai up to 110 rai. The average area is 44 rai.

The organization size for each temple can be measured with the amount of expenditure spent for each temple, specifically the fixed spending per month for each temple. The author categorized the organization size into four categories: small, moderate, large, extra-large. While the expenditure may seem directly correlated to the geographical size of the temple, it is not accurate, as there is no strong correlation between the variable. At the same time, the number of Sangha and non-Sangha resided or worked within the temple also more or less shows no correlation to the expenditure whatsoever.

Legally, every single temple must have a Sangha abbot responsible for inspection, supporting, and overseeing the majority of activities related to the stationed temple. Sangha abbot may get promoted into a chief abbot, responsible for a larger area, including multiple temples. The tier levels including sub-district, district, province, up to hon-level or countrywide directional region level. Some of the Sangha abbots within the sample also elected Sangha abbot assistance. Meanwhile, there appeared to be a lack of vice Sangha abbot present in any temple during the interview process, as many interviewees stated that it is rather difficult and inconvenient to elect a vice-Sangha abbot that met the condition required by the National Office of Buddhism. Each temple is also required to have at least one temple warden to partake in activities that Sangha are restricted to do so. The temple warden also acted as an auditor of the temple. Although it may seem apparent, Sangha-abbot, Sangha-abbot assistance, and temple warden are strictly required to be male. This unique organizational structure is essential to understand the administration process within the latter parts.

Part 2: POSDCoRB Management Process

The 2 objective is to study the administration process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province through the scope of the POSDCoRB management process. From the research result, it was found as follows:

Sub-part 1: Planning

I. Planning Process: The general direction of each policy and regulation stemming from a temple planning process is primarily influenced by the general temple context and Sangha abbot's management style. The different qualitative factors resulted in a more or less unique policy style as mentioned earlier and regulation. While some temples may proceed toward a more straightforward goal, such as creating a well-maintained holy ground for the comfort of visited Buddhism, certain temples may strive to become a tourist attraction or a preserved urban forest that also acted as a wild animal refuge. While different ideology may occur, the general thought process in the planning direction is more or less similar, as all planned policy and regulation has to be in some way related to the community around the vicinity of the temple or the Buddhism that visited the temple.

II. Planning Staff: Personnel related to the planning process also differs from temple to temple; however, every planning needs to include Sangha abbot within the process, either as the point-person or the decision-maker. While some of the temples only operate on the plan solely crafted by the Sangha abbot, many temples operated in a committee or council style. The committee generally includes the non-Sangha assistance and vice-Sangha abbot and Sangha abbot assistance if present. The more oversized council style also includes the important person or spokesperson from the community around the temple.

III. Planning Problem: Buddhist temples usually suffered from the different working ideologies between Sangha, non-Sangha, and the community. This problem stagnates the usual planning process, resulting in delaying or revising the plan to settle the conflict of interest or prevent the possible future dispute.

Sub-part 2: Organizing

I. Organization Structure: Temple's management tree appeared to have two general approaches; centralized and decentralized. The approaches can be identified with the distribution of decision-making power of the temple's Sangha abbot, with the former having all the decision-making made solely by Sangha abbot, regardless of the election of a vice abbot or abbot assistance. The latter differentiate through the distribution of decision-making power to anyone within the temple, including the vice abbot, abbot assistance, non-Sangha abbot, and any council member. The factors that led to the different approaches are primarily based on the aforementioned organizational size of each temple. Most of the larger temple favors the decentralized approach, with less crucial activities being transferred to elected personnel. The opposition centralized organizational approach can be found within the smaller organization, with all decisions being made by the Sangha-abbot.

II. Organizing Problem: While both approaches of organization structure are viable, both of them run a risk to different problems. The centralized approach would face a high risk of organizational stagnation if the Sangha abbot became incompetent, either through the lack of necessary skill set, old age, or even death. Meanwhile, the Decentralize approach has to deal with the problem when the responsible personnel of the activity distributed from Sangha abbot cannot operate normally due to any circumstance. However, the problem is much less severe compared to the centralized approach issue.

Sub-part 3: Staffing

I. Non-Sangha: Temple legally must have at least one non-Sangha personnel, which is the temple warden. The recruiting of a temple warden and any other staff member is similar in all sample temples. The recruitment process must be either suggested or approved by the Sangha abbot, with additional suggestions or approval from Sangha and non-Sangha within the temple. Some higher-profile staff such as the temple warden or council member are also implied to require the Buddhism community around the temple's acceptance. While the warden is strictly required to be a male (ONAB, 2007), other staff members do not have similar restrictions and allowed the recruitment of any gender. The job qualification in the non- Sangha recruitment process mainly involved work quality, discipline, regulation acceptance, and the compatibility toward work-life inside a temple.

II. Sangha: Sangha, by the standard, is not exactly a run-of-the-mill staff in the typical organization, as Sangha is not legally considered an employee of a temple. However, to become a Sangha in a temple, a Buddhist must be approved by the National Office of Buddhism, the police force regarding criminal record, and the Sangha abbot of the temple. The Buddhists who wanted to become a Sangha were also required to engage in the ordination process. At the same time, such a process may differ from different temples, the general requirement being the process of staying overnight within the temple before the ordination. After the ordination, the Buddhist will become a Sangha, which is also required to study theology to maintain the Sangha status, up to first-degree non-Pali theologist course (The Secretariat of the Senate, 2019). Many of the sample temples also elect particular policy on accepting new Sangha and residence rules ex. Prohibition of a tattoo on visible body parts, restriction of telephone usage.

III. Staffing Problem: Main staffing-related issues are stemming from the heavy scarcity of human resources. While the community generally venerates temple staff and Sangha, the pay for the labor within a temple is relatively small to non-existence. Most of the staff within many people also worked for free. This created an apparent problem of job attractiveness, resulting in less workforce within a temple. This problem is less severe on non-Sangha, as the temple can alleviate the problem by hiring a third-party human resource provider. However, the brunt of the problem lies within the Sangha side, as the temple cannot

explicitly recruit Buddhists to become a long-term Sangha with the benefit. Any new Sangha human resource must be acquired through the normal process of ordination only.

Sub-part 4: Directing

I. Directing Process: Directing process within a temple is typically revolved around the daily routine of a Sangha, the service the temple provided for Buddhists visited the temple and the out-of-temple activity. The general directing process within a temple recorded through a schedule book, work board, calendar, or even in some temple using the abbot's memory. The organizing process also applied when Sangha abbot distributed decision-making power for any personnel, resulting in a multi-layer directing.

II. Communication: Normally, the communication part of directing occurred verbally during the Sangha designated eating period in the morning and after the praying period during the morning and afternoon. Extra supervision such as emergency or distance-restricted cases will generally be dispatched through telephone and Line direct-message application. Most of the documented supervisions are used only for policy level or vital regulation from higher authority. Some more prominent temples even have a broadcasting system to provide supervision for Sangha.

Sub-part 5: Coordinating

I. Coordinating Process: Coordination within temple organization usually becomes apparent during the non-routine activity or project such as Sangha's robe offering ceremony or temple's specific festivities. The coordination process usually involved project planning, key person communication, meeting, organizing the activity and place, and other related tasks. There are two approaches for a temple in coordinating process, Sangha centric and non-Sangha centric. The former will have the Sangha abbot as the primary coordinator around work project, with other staff and personnel being the component within the project, while the latter having Sanghas including the abbot partaking in a supporting role while electing an ad hoc coordinator or board of staff to fulfill the core part of the project.

Sub-part 6: Reporting

I. Authority Reporting: Sangha abbot from each Buddhist temple must report their temple's general status to the sub-district chief abbot and the National Office of Buddhism of Thailand. While many reports are different from temple to temple, all temples shared two similar reports required by the authority; annual income and expense report and Sangha report. The two report period and frequent, however, still differed from each temple. The extra report includes formal responses, building, high-valued objects, construction, maintenance, wear and tear, and emergency reports, including fire, tree topple, and suspicious person trespassing within the temple vicinity. Most reports are currently created and formalized by the National Office of Buddhism, which made reporting relatively for the temple to work with compared to the past.

II. Sangha Report: Most Sangha-to-abbot reports are concerned with the traveling of Sangha out of the temple, general work reports, and emergency reports, usually about the damaged building within the temple. The report process is similar to the aforementioned directing process, mostly done through verbal communication within the eating period or after the praying period. Emergency or distance restricted reports are also done through telephone or Line direct message application. In some temples, reports considered necessary by the Sangha abbot will need to be in documentation form.

Sub-part 7: Budgeting

I. Financial Situation: Each temple in Phuket typically has fixed revenue from donation, selling souvenirs, amulets, and renting space fees. The revenue average of all sample temples is about 110,000 baht per month, excluding the large sum of donations during the Sangha's robe ceremony, which differed from temple to temple and year to year. The expenditure concerning utility and maintenance also has a similar average amount of 108,000 baht per month. The average saving of the temples is about 2.8 million baht. (these calculations excluded Wat Chaithararam from the equation, as it is considered an outlier statistically, having the revenue of 2 million-baht, expenditure of 1.8 million baht per month, and the saving of about 500 million baht)

Part 3 Additional administrative factors

The 3 objective is to discover additional administrative factors affecting the administrative process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province. It was found that faith is a distinct additional factor permeate within the temple's administrative procedure, thus becoming a new component of faith management. This additional factor can be seen through three forms as follows:

Sub-part 1 - Amulets, Relics, Holy Objects: Most of the temples once crafted or acquired amulets, relics, holy objects, with some still regularly made amulets into a form of souvenir. Many sample temples claimed that the creation or acquisition of amulets, relics, holy objects were strictly not used for commercial gain but rather to gain faith and support from Buddhism who seeks to acquire them. On the other hand, some more orthodox temples shunned the creation of new amulets and relics, deeming them to be the astray of Buddha's teaching.

Sub-part 2 - Venerable Sanghas, non-Sanghas, animals, and mystic beasts related to the temple: While non-Sanghas, animals, and mystic beasts, for example, Lady Chan and Lady Mook who defend Phuket against invaders (Srikanok, 1996), inauspicious elephants that Wat Chaithararam's abbots bestow their care on, naga that presence as sculptures within many temples decorations, and the golden sea dragon called Hai Leng Duke (Phuket Municipality, 2020), may be venerated in another temple, the sample temple mainly utilized venerable Sanghas as a faith creation tool. Based on the interview, Venerable Sanghas is the most effective method of creating a massive and long-lasting faith from Buddhism. Many

Buddhists do not put their faith into the temple itself, but rather the venerated Sanghas, regardless of either alive or deceased. Most of the venerated Sanghas are the founding Sanghas abbot of each temple, while some stemmed from the heroic or benevolent act of providing shelter during wartime or curing widespread disease. Many amulets, relics, sculptures, and paintings within a temple were also created to honor the venerated Sanghas.

Sub-part 3 - Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting within the temple: Temples in Phuket generally have buildings with the same layout and architecture, such as Buddha image hall, chapel, bell tower, and crematorium. Some temples also erect particular buildings such as pagoda, ponds, and canteens. Sculpture and painting within the temple usually will be the image of Buddha varied in size. Many sculptures and paintings were also created with the image of important Sanghas, animals, and mystic beasts. Like amulets, relics, and holy objects, architecture, sculptures, and paintings are built or created to attract more Buddhist visitors, creating more faith in them.

The new body of knowledge

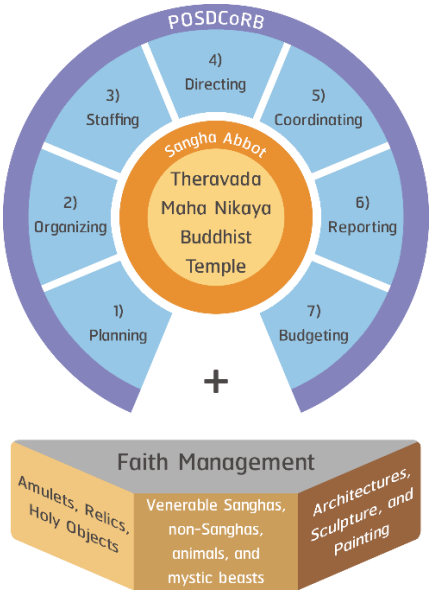


Image 1: POSDCoRB+F Management Model

The new body of knowledge formulated by this research is the additional of faith management through three forms: an addition to the POSDCoRB management process consisting of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. All of these components are generally administrated by Sangha Abbot as the primary administrator of the temple. The author can conclude that the Management Process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province must acknowledge faith management as an essential part of its administrative process. Along with the original POSDCoRB management process, the integrated process became an original management

model of POSDCoRB+F, as F stands for faith management, which generally related to 1) Amulets, Relics, Holy Objects. 2) Venerable Sanghas, non-Sanghas, animals, and mystic beasts related to the temple 3) Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting within the temple.

The model usability lies in its ability to entirely explain the administrative environment of a Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket. With the responsible Sangha Abbot as the point-person of the temple, each component, including will be interlaced with Sangha Abbot in terms of direction within the process of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting, as well as the newly composed faith management. The model will also be helpful for any Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket to study and understand the process involving the ministration of a temple, whether they are Sangha or non-Sangha.

Discussion of research results

A temple can easily be viewed as a highly centralized organization from the first research results, with the epicenter being the Sangha abbot. Some may argue that temple and abbot are one of the same. Some temples even have their name after the venerated Sangha abbot, and some abbots have the name preceding the temple. Phrakhru Adulsamakkayatorn, Phrakru Sopanarattanabanthit, Phrakru Wijitsilajarn, and Anothai (2015) support this claim, stating that temple management is a direct duty of an abbot.

The centralized approach has a latent problem that occurred within the sample temple from the centralized approach in management, the problem about abbot's incompetency, which came either from the lack of appropriate management skillset, the dulled mind from aging, or even from the dead of the abbot, which creates a stagnate within the process of temple management, and may lead to the loss of faith which is an essential yet intangible resource for a temple. This claim is also supported by Phra Narong Sangkhawichit (2007). The author assumes that without a competent abbot, the faith management within a temple will not be effective. The author discovered that this problem could be prevented through mentor-apprenticeship, having another Sangha prepared for a seamless transition between abbot generation. This also means that the abbot retirement system has to both be set in place and executed. An interviewee also suggested normalization on creating some form of Sangha executive board to reduce the centralization within a temple. A solution which the author also found viable.

The author also discovered the differences within the temple reporting process from each temple to be quite confusing and not standardized. While the two annual income and expense reports and Sangha reports are similar for every temple, many temples have an additional report distinctive from other temples. This may lead to confusion and unnecessary workload toward the Sangha abbot. The same problem also occurred within other factors, albeit in minor forms.

For faith management, factors like the cleanliness and comfortability of the temple vicinity creating faith from Buddhists and tourists is supported by Silalai, Kuanprasong, and Thiangthangtham (2019); Peuchthonglang (2015), while materialistic factors on amulets, relics, and holy objects also supported by Sawangsri (2006).

Conclusion

From studying the POSDCoRB management process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province, all of the factors are either entirely controlled by the abbot or have a working process through the abbot in some way. Many abbots also have a different approach in each process, creating a unique management style within each temple. The author concluded that all factors within the POSDCoRB management process of each Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province differ mainly depending on the Sangha abbot's administrative style of the specific Buddhist temple. The conclusion also led to the second finding regarding faith management within a temple.

Temple's management process was designed to accommodate the fidelity of Buddhists. This unique aspect required an additional factor of Faith (F) to finalize the correct management process. The action of faith creation is done mainly by utilizing venerated Sanghas, either alive or deceased, with the additional support of amulets, relics, and holy objects, along with architectures, sculptures, and paintings. Thus, integrated into the original POSDCoRB management process, the tailor-made management process of Theravada Maha Nikaya Buddhist Temple in Phuket Province became POSDCoRB+F.

Recommendation

The author has recommendations as following:

1. Research Recommendation

1. 1 Temple should create a new organizing process concerning reducing centralization within the temple organization to prevent the stagnation of the management process. This can be done through the mentor-apprenticeship system or board of management system.

1. 2 Temple should focus its resource by utilizing venerated Sanghas or the current abbot if the temple needed more faith from Buddhists, but not at the cost of forsaking other faith creation methods such as keeping the temple clean or servicing religious activities for the visited Buddhists.

1. 3 Responsible authority, specifically the National Office of Buddhism of Thailand, should standardize the report form required from each temple.

2. Recommendation for Further Research

2. 1 The research interview process was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand during 2020-2021. Many POSDCoRB managerial factors, especially budgeting, were

more or less affected by the pandemic effect. Further research should take this into account while progressing with research.

2.2 Preliminary categorizing of the temple type before declaring the population parameter is highly recommended. As temples may heavily differ in a general context and managing environment, sorting out the similar temple then working on in-depth research will help with the validity of the research.

2.3 The author recommends a larger team of interviewers. To perfectly understand every managerial process of a temple, multiple views, including Sangha abbot, Sangha in the temple, and community around the temple is essential.

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