



## Buddhist temple management for religious tourism: A case study of Tham Khao Roop Chang temple, Songkhla province, Thailand

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### Abstract

The aim of this research was to use qualitative research to investigate temple management for religious tourism at Tham Khao Roop Chang temple, which is situated on the Thai-Malaysian border and supervised by a foreign abbot. Data were collected from related documents and from the field through participant observation and in-depth interviews with 16 key informants consisting of monks, nuns, workers, local residents, the temple committee members, and tourists who were selected using purposive sampling. Specifically, the informants were selected from amongst those who gave the most information and participated in the rituals and activities at the temple or who had been seen in the temple for more than 3 years. Triangulation was a way of assuring the validity of data and conclusions were drawn from a descriptive analysis. It was noted that the temple has beautiful architecture and caves; therefore, its administrative plan emphasizes the maintenance of the environment along with human development based on the principle that humans are the mechanism driving social development. Staff work collaboratively without a fixed management structure, Tasks are assigned to monks, nuns, and workers. The abbot plays an important role as a facilitator and provides Buddhist teaching to heal people's minds. Direction is traditionally manipulated; no dictatorial power is exercised to control the temple. Only motivation-building strategies are used to encourage people to appreciate the value of Buddhism. Coordination with internal and external parties is maintained through merit makers in the locality and a social network of religious tourists has been created by word of mouth and through social media channels. The abbot applies his Singaporean characteristics to manage the temple focusing on cleanliness and tidiness to maintain the landscape and culture with the aim of making the temple one of the most prominent religious tourist attractions in the region.

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### Introduction

Buddhist temples are important for many reasons. Firstly, they are regarded by Buddhists as being the place where the Triple Gem or Rattana Tri (the three holy gems of

the Buddha, Dhamma or sacred texts, and Sangha) are housed and mark memorable places (Dohring, 2000). They are also places where members of the community can gather and perform traditional activities, as well as being sources of cultural and artistic activity, and places where people can come and rest their minds. All of these functions reflect the importance of Buddhist temples in communities. Further, temples not only provide benefit to communities at a local level but, some temples have interesting histories or have outstanding architecture and decoration and can attract many visitors from around the country, which generates income for

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those temples. According to Tepsing (2015), Bodhiyan temple in Kelantan State, Malaysia used to be a neglected Siamese temple but it has been restored by the building of a large Buddha image and the construction of the longest dragon walls in Malaysia funded by Chinese people. This temple has become a popular tourist attraction and the income generated has been used to renovate the structure of the temple in order to attract more tourists.

In a capitalist society, the growth of temples follows the increasing number of people who visit a country as so-called religious tourists and religious tourism forces temples to change many things to accommodate these visitors. Stausberg (2011) suggested that religion and tourism have a dynamic relationship. The notion that tourism and religion should be separated is nowadays outdated. The relationship between Buddhism and tourist attractions can be found in many countries and temples manage to attract visitors in many ways. In Thailand, for instance, a lot of Buddhist temples have been trying to make their surroundings more beautiful and to build sacred images and more magnificent structures to attract people who follow the Buddhist faith to visit them. According to Silawanna (2007), the motivation behind most temple tourism is that most visitors want to see the beauty of the temple and worship a Buddha image. Thus, temples have become highly efficient tourist attractions, especially those located near tourist areas.

Buddhist temples in Thailand can be divided into two groups—Hinayana and Mahayana—with most of the Buddhist temples in Thailand belonging to the first group, known as Hinayana or Theravada (Bunchua, 2005). To build a temple, permission must be obtained from the Department of Religious Affairs, and the temple is designated as a “Wat Thai” (Thai temple). Nowadays, Thai temples have become

popular religious tourist attractions because of their architectural beauty and the activities provided for tourists, including merit making ceremonies, sermons, prayers, and the acceptance of donations, from which tourists are promised spiritual benefit in their life, as these temples continuously attract a great number of pilgrims and visitors from the Buddhist faith.

Tham Khao Roop Chang temple is located on the Thai-Malaysian border in the deep south of Thailand (Figures 1–2) in Padang Besar sub-district, Sadao district, Songkhla province, and 12 km north of the Padang Besar Immigration Checkpoint. Known as “Dragon Elephant Mountain Monastery”, it was built by Malaysians and Singaporeans, in 1968 in the Na Tham community where there are 50 Buddhist households (Khaonu, 2015). This area used to be a jungle, full of limestone caves and distance from any communities. However, people gradually moved into the area and settled there until Na Tham became an established community. During the time that the community was becoming established, the monk, Phra Thong arrived from Songkhla and built an abbey near the hills. Phra Meng San, who was a Buddhist monk in a Mahayana sect from Singapore, then came and joined the abbey (Sootsri, 2015). Later, Phra Meng San was nominated as the abbot, and the abbey was developed to become Tham Khao Roop Chang monastery and registered as a Thai temple. Phra Meng San played a key role in the development of the temple (Zhu, 1993). Phra Meng San intended to change the temple into a Chinese temple dedicated to the Mahayana sect, but the application was refused by the board of provincial ecclesiastics since they wanted the local Buddhist temple to be maintained. For this reason, Tham Khao Roop Chang temple is now registered as a Thai temple in the Hinayana sect.



Figure 1 Temple location



Figure 2 the hybrid architectural style of Tham Khao Roop Chang temple, Songkhla province

Phra Meng San passed away in 2010, but his image is still a part of Tham Khao Roop Chang temple today. He was famous for performing miracles (Sudchathum, 2002). While he was alive, he succeeded in raising funds to construct many buildings, alter the landscape, and create the artworks of the temple. Some of the funds were donated by foreign visitors of the Buddhist faith. The present abbot, Phra Hoshi, is also Singaporean. He truly believes in Thai Hinayana Buddhism and was ordained in Chiang Mai and afterwards moving to Tham Khao Roop Chang monastery (Sheng, 2006). The reason that Tham Khao Roop Chang temple has been chosen as the case study in this research is not only because of the amazing life story of the founder, but also due to the fact that neither the founder nor the current abbot were Thai, but Singaporean. Furthermore, the temple is registered as a Thai temple, but it has hybrid artistic and architectural styles (Figure 2) and many ceremonies are conducted following Mahayana traditions. The temple is very popular among tourists, especially Malaysians living south of the border, who come for pilgrimage as well as to appreciate the temple's art works. In addition, some parts of the nearby landscape consist of natural caves, so the temple has natural tourist appeal which fits in well with the man-made parts of the temple. It has been noted that many visitors stop at this temple to pay homage to the Buddha images before travelling to other provinces further north. As a result, most of the festivals or traditional ceremonies taking place here are attended by Malaysians and Singaporeans. Lastly, this temple is self-reliant—it rarely receives funds from the Thai government, but is still able to maintain its cultural heritage. These reasons underpin the researcher's decision to study the management of this temple in terms of religious tourism.

#### *Research Objective*

The aim of this research was to investigate the management for religious tourism at the Tham Khao Roop Chang temple, Songkhla province, Thailand.

#### **Literature Review**

This study was based on Fayol (1984) who identified the components of management as planning, organizing, commanding, controlling, and coordinating, and the notion of Gulick (1937) of the components of management, which are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. However, the author adapted these ideas of the components of management, so that the aspects considered in this study were: planning, staffing, directing, and coordinating, since religious organizations are not the same as other organizations in that they prefer to rely on faith rather than authority when implementing management.

From a review of relevant literature, it was found that Sasom (2010) studied the management and administrative system of Buddhist temples, focusing on Phra That Chae Hang temple in Nan province. The results showed that the temple emphasizes clear and transparent management and that the administrative system is arranged in the form of a

committee which takes care of each section, with staff responsible for performing tasks to ensure fast and effective results from any work undertaken. The factors affecting the temple management were found to be internal, which included the leadership of the abbot, the personnel, the budget, and their effectiveness, while the external factors included the monks committee, the public sector, and private institutions. However, that study focused on Northern Thailand where the environment and social context are different from in the South. Furthermore, the temple is ancient having been built more than a thousand years ago. Though it is one of the most prominent tourist attractions in the region, not many tourists visit it for purposes of pilgrimage. In addition, the temple is located far away from the border, so the management system is conducted to serve local people. In contrast, Tham Khao Roop Chang temple is located on the southern border of Thailand. Its management focuses on both Thai and foreign visitors, especially those from Malaysia and Singapore, who are seeking religious guidance. Aphakaro (2011) studied the pattern of learning of religious tourists in Thailand and the network of temples constituting tourist attractions in Thailand, and found that both Thai and foreign tourists are interested in learning and practicing in accordance with Buddhist doctrines, especially meditation. Most of the participants mentioned that the monastery provides an appropriate place to find information and knowledge about Buddhism as well as providing a good model of mental training. Most Buddhist temples emphasize the practice of meditation along with artistic and architectural works to attract visitors, especially those temples which are famous for their unique landscape and architecture. Aphipanyo (2013) studied a number of models of Buddhist tourism management in Southern Thailand and found that each temple's management process has its own identity and tries to add value to Buddhism based on Dharma principles. However, all the temples emphasized architectural and cultural beauty. Religious tourism management thus offers an option for tourism business in Thailand, and the literature suggested that Buddhist temples can be tourist attractions where visitors can rest, and elevate and refine their minds by appreciating the beautiful art. Most Thai monasteries share a similar context in that the abbots are all Thai. However, Tham Khao Roop Chang temple is different, as the abbot is Singaporean. This factor may offer a different perspective on monastery management. No previous study of a temple where the abbot is a foreigner has been conducted. Therefore, this study sheds light on a different model of management of a Buddhist temple located on Thailand's southern border.

#### **Methodology**

Tham Khao Roop Chang temple was chosen as the subject of the case study, which was based on documents, both primary and secondary data, and field work. Primary data were collected from research article in journals, research reports, and theses and on websites, while secondary data were gleaned from text books and temple documents. The field work was conducted using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and notes taken during the observation of the

conditions and management of the temple. The research tool used was semi-structured interviews which were recorded. The key informants included monks, nuns, workers, local residents, the temple committee members, and tourists visiting the temple for pilgrimage. Altogether 16 informants were selected by means of purposive sampling to form a critical case sample of participants who took part in rituals or activities or had come sight-seeing in Khao Roop Chang temple for more than 3 years. Sampling was conducted in appropriate situations in order to reach the targeted group within a short period of time and the sample selected was able to provide both relevant data and many details.

The data were triangulated within and across different data types; for instance, the methodological triangulation from in-depth interviews was checked against the data from observations to ensure that the data collected were consistent. In addition, the data triangulation collected from interviewing the same informants at different times was compared, to check its validity and credibility. The data collected was presented in the form of a descriptive analysis together with interpretation of the data from which conclusions were drawn.

## Results

The art and culture at Tham Khao Roop Chang temple are perfect for religious tourism, which is a reflection of the management skills of the two Singaporean abbots. However, this study focused on the period when Phra Hoshi held the position, specifically from 2011 to the present. The management of the temple depends on the abbot who is supported by the Tham Khao Roop Chang Foundation. The management can be divided into physical and social planning. The physical planning at the temple does not need to focus on construction as the existing buildings are sufficient for the temple's needs. Therefore, the focus is on maintenance work such as daily waste management, preventing visitors writing on the cave walls, maintaining the water system which brings water from the cave to storage tanks, and the prevention of flooding in the cave. These management processes auger well for the temple's future as it is being maintained and prepared as a religious tourist attraction. The main workforce at the temple comprises those who work in the temple. Currently, the most significant work being undertaken focuses on the preservation of the temple as a serene place where people from diverse nationalities can come and practice their religion according to Buddhist traditions. As a monk said:

*Building is complete. I am just maintaining and cleaning it. Completion was 7–8 years ago. Only maintenance work is needed now. If we build something more, it will turn out worse. The one who built this temple was a Chinese monk with a good vision. Everything is in a good place now. We only need to maintain it.* (personal interview, May 15, 2015)

Social planning emphasizes human development as humans are the most important factors in a society. To achieve a goal, people must understand the principles underlying the society of which they are a part and behave appropriately—

morally and ethically. The temple represents an important means of developing humans rather than objects. The prosperity generated by temples can be used to create physical beauty and the conditions appropriate for a multicultural society. Whilst appropriate material objects are necessary for peaceful living, spirituality needs to be fostered and practiced continuously. The acculturation of morality and responsibility is the most important mission of the temple; as a monk said:

*Everything must be clean and beautiful, so people who come to practice meditation can feel relaxed. After that, we can gradually build up people. If we plant trees now, they will grow by the end of the year. Building people is different. Though we have 20–30 years, we might not be able to build good people. We have to teach them ethics; have them realize the importance of good deeds and accept them. It's different from planting trees where we just give them fertilizer, water and then they grow. Building good people needs time.* (personal interview, May 15, 2015)

Human development does not mean developing monks, nuns, temple dwellers, or workers, but refers to residents in the nearby communities, pilgrimage tourists, and general tourists who visit the temple. Anyone who enters the temple compound must follow the temple's rules, which include eating vegetarian food, avoiding all vices such as lotteries, bathing in sacred water, and making sacred objects. The monks, nuns, temple dwellers, and workers will provide support to help visitors achieve the goal of spiritual development. The temple often invites visitors to pray in the vihan yot<sup>1</sup>.

Human planning is important for the future management of the temple as it can reduce the workload of the temple administrators and foster cooperation between the temple and the local community. The temple's success can be seen from the fact that local people acknowledge the importance of moral behavior. Phra Meng San decreed that when the nine-tiered roof of the vihan was finished, continuous praying would be arranged as a celebration. Therefore, to fulfill his wishes, the temple holds an annual praying ceremony which not only helps people to practice spirituality, but also increases donations and produces funds for the temple.

The temple's planning focuses on the maintenance of the existing activities. The temple maintains the virtuous traditions instituted by Phra Meng San. Various projects are supported and undertaken to raise funds, and tourists are invited to join activities in the temple. Many Malaysian and Singaporean Buddhists join activities, which allows the temple to earn a lot of money. When funds are raised, local people are able to benefit from the temple's support. The temple tries to convince tourists to repeat their visits and to participate in religious ceremonies in the future including praying, paying homage to the Buddha images, or meditating. The temple is ready to support visitors with accommodation and vegetarian meals and the temple's staff are on hand to facilitate their desire to practice under the temple's rules. Despite many strict rules, the visitors can enjoy pleasant surroundings, beautiful buildings, and a great natural environment, which can help them purify their minds.

<sup>1</sup> The vihan yot is the ordination hall located inside a Wat. It is here that monks and lay Buddhists perform or participate in various rituals. On the roof of the vihan yot there are nine pagodas.

To achieve its goals, the temple also focuses on providing two types of staff. The first group includes monks, nuns, and staff who have no fixed tasks assigned to them. The second group are workers at the temple who are divided into two groups—permanent and temporary. There is a permanent female cook who takes care of cooking vegetarian food and helps the nuns. Another four permanent workers are assigned to take care of general tasks in the temple such as sweeping the grounds, performing maintenance and building work, writing signs, and facilitating and preparing ceremonies hosted by the temple. They act like a family in which the tasks are not strictly separated. However, workers usually take care of the tasks that they are good at. For instance, one worker is good at using the waste blowing machine, so he takes care of collecting waste and has it done within 30 minutes. Another worker takes away the waste. Male workers sweep the external grounds while a female worker takes care of the waste in the cave and guides the tourists who visit the cave. There are also workers who are responsible for the rubber trees around the temple. In addition, there are temporary workers including both Thai and foreign workers. Most of the foreign workers are Malaysian and Singaporean. The Thai workers are local people who help the temple during special festivals. Some foreign workers are looking for jobs or are unemployed. They come to work in the temple on the recommendation of their friends who have worked there earlier. One of them said:

*"I come back and forth. Sometimes I stay here for a month or a few weeks. If there are jobs in Singapore, I won't come. I work as a ship welder. I come here because of a person who came to help the temple 10 years ago. Now he can't do it himself, so he asked me to come. Living and eating at the temple is fine for me."* (personal interview, April 2, 2015)

The temporary staff are workers who do not have a regular, fixed schedule of work or find that their jobs in Singapore are hard, competitive, and not satisfying. They say that working at the temple allows them to exercise physically. They feel a part of the temple because the abbot is also from Singapore. Every time they come to the temple, the abbot will pay all their travel costs. Most of the foreign workers can communicate in the Thai language (partly because they have Thai wives). They can adapt themselves and work well with the temple's permanent workers. They feel that they are part of the same family under the temple's roof where the abbot is the head of the family. One of the workers said:

*"We live like a family. We usually help each other rather than working separately. We can play and, if necessary, help each other. It is the rule of the temple that everyone must help each other, do our specific tasks, and if nothing special to handle, we have to help others."* (personal interview, April 3, 2015)

The efficiency of the temple's workers can be seen from the fact that though there are only a small number of workers, they are able to manage the temple properly. From the temple entrance to the innermost cave, there is no waste visible because everyone respects the rules and discipline. After finishing the morning praying at 5:30 a.m., the workers start sweeping the ground and collecting waste before 7:00 a.m. They take a one-hour break and start working again at 8:00 a.m. Tourists are impressed by the cleanliness and tidiness of the temple. In summary, the staffing of the temple is based

on an informal system where everyone helps each other to maintain the temple's facilities and facilitate the visits of tourists. They work as employees who get paid on a monthly basis and are controlled by the temple's rules.

The performance of each person is directed by the abbot who must encourage each person to do the jobs assigned to them effectively to achieve the temple's goals. The abbot controls both the temple maintenance workers and those responsible for the temple's ceremonies by directing them to perform their tasks effectively. This system has been in place since the time when Phra Meng San was the abbot and is maintained by the present abbot. The abbot's direction is successful and the workers do their jobs enthusiastically because the direction of the workers is based on the principle of morality established by the late abbot Phra Meng San. Exercising power arbitrarily or using strict rules, or changing some norms may result in a loss of faith in the system. The abbot avoids ordering workers to perform tasks which go against the traditional practices. Furthermore, increasing the number of workers may create a burden on the temple and cause problems with the existing workers in terms of communication, opinions, or task assignment. If the abbot wants the workers to do tasks, he avoids forcing them. Instead he convinces them by telling them the benefits of doing the tasks as can be seen from this interview:

*"If he has something for us to do, he will say do it when you have time. He just says that and it makes us feel like... okay we should do it no matter how tired we are. He treats us as family members, not as employees."* (personal interview, April 2, 2015)

The abbot's direction is traditional. Orders are given in the form of a request for voluntary collaboration. The abbot also points out how to do the task effectively. Tasks like maintenance of the temple's facilities, such as mending a leak in a roof or the cave walls or a crack in the building walls, are not assigned to outside contractors but assigned to the temple's workers to fix. If there are any tasks which require a larger workforce, some outside workers, including the staff from the Department of Fine Arts, will be hired temporarily. However, most of the work is done by the temple's workers although some Singaporean workers do come to help with repair work. Since the time when the late abbot was still alive, very few outside Thai workers have been used for repair work mainly because the abbot was not Thai, so filing notifications or requests to the Thai authorities was difficult and the temple tried to avoid the risk of being questioned about their activities.

Self-management and self-reliance have helped the temple save expenses. In addition, the temple's staff are provided with opportunities to learn and develop themselves. The temple deals with physical problems such as leaks or damaged structures by using local knowledge and labor. For instance, buckets are used to collect rainwater to prevent visitors from slipping and falling on the wet floor. If the temple walls are damaged, the workers can repair them without demanding any extra payment. Everyone is willing to do jobs without asking for money. The abbot's direction ensures that tasks are performed efficiently and the management of the temple is focused on maintaining the existing system rather than creating a new one. The abbot's management is based on two factors. The first is that the temple can raise funds with the

support of foreigners and it is easier to hire foreign workers than to hire local workers or supervisors. The second is that the temple committee or foundation committee has enough power to control its income and expenses, such as the workers' wages and including asking for people to help, and employing part-time workers. The workers also feel motivated to work by being able to request loans if they are short of money at the end of the month and can borrow money from the temple. Finally, the temple's workers, as well as local people, are given food contributed by Buddhist visitors. The distribution of food is carried out on an equitable basis, which reflects the temple's policy of maintaining equality and fairness.

There are also people willing to help the temple in arranging ceremonies or festivals without asking for money or waiting for the abbot's orders. Firstly, in the case of Thai traditional ceremonies, such as offering robes to the monks or the light-waving rite, there are local (Thai) people who will assist, while in the case of Chinese festivals such as the traditional vegetarian festival and Phra Meun worship, local Chinese people who know the temple and can speak Chinese will come to help. Phra Meun worship is held three times a year. It lasts 15 days each time, with eight rounds of 30 minutes of chanting per day. The word "Meun" (ten thousand) indicates that the pilgrims have to say the Buddha's name ten thousand times each time they worship. The temple gains more income every time the festival is held, but it is a hard job for the people who come to help with the activity. The abbot is able to direct the activity smoothly because of the committee and the workers' support as well as the support of visitors of diverse nationalities, local Thai people, and local Chinese people. Although the abbot is a foreigner, the temple's management is conducted for the local people's benefit. As a tourist said:

*"I visit this temple every year to make merit, and during the vegetarian festival, friends will come from Hatyai. The priests are moral and some of the money raised is donated to public charities and the local school. The maintenance of the environment is good, the surroundings clean, quiet and management is wonderful, so I want to return." (personal interview, May 15, 2015)*

To maintain the status of the temple, coordination with internal and external parties is needed. Internal coordination is required to persuade people to work together and support one another. This coordination operates horizontally rather than vertically. The monks can coordinate with the local people while collecting alms in the morning. They can have conversations and inform the people about the activities of the temple or ask for favors. This is the typical way of building the relationship between the local community and the temple. Although the temple has some ceremonies which are different from other Thai temples, the discipline of the monks can create faith among the people which makes them willing to do favors for the temple. The local people are grateful for the distribution of food and supplies, the giving of scholarships to local students, and the many other things that the temple does, and they are therefore willing to help whenever the temple asks. Additionally however, the temple sometimes needs to coordinate with the Thai authorities and there is a Thai nun at the temple who is responsible for doing this. The relationship between the temple and the Thai authorities is good since the late abbot had

the temple registered legally in compliance with Thai law.

Coordination between visitors and supporters of the temple is the responsibility of the pilgrims themselves. They communicate with one another by word of mouth. Regular pilgrims act as the main coordinators who contact each other and build a network between the existing pilgrims and newcomers. They invite people to participate in the temple's activities. As most of the activities involve Chinese traditional ceremonies, most of the participants are Chinese people living in cities who occasionally meet together. Coordination is done by representatives within the networks who may contact each other via LINE or other social media and schedule dates to make merit together. Much of this coordination involves both Thais and foreigners and the amount of money the temple receives is a reflection of the number of visitors to the temple, especially Malaysians and Singaporeans. The temple does not advertise, but people come nevertheless. What motivates them is the temple's environment, located as it is within a beautiful natural setting, as well as the architecture and decoration of the buildings and the compound around the temple. The temple does not use any proactive publicity strategies. People know about the temple through word of mouth or social media. People who see photographs taken by visitors may feel interested and want to visit the temple themselves. A monk said:

*"We don't make advertisements. People come by coach every day, and when they go back, they tell the others. That's the way new people come. Some take photos and post them on websites. We don't have to do anything. The tourists do the public relations for us. If they find our temple worth visiting, they will tell the others to come." (personal interview, May 15, 2015)*

## Discussion and Conclusion

The artwork, culture and landscape of Tham Khao Roop Chang temple are unique. While some temples are famous for their culture rather than their landscape, others are known for their landscape rather than their culture, Tham Khao Roop Chang temple has a good combination of landscape and culture. The artwork and environment at Wat Tham Khao Roop Chang have been adapted or added to in response to use; however, the natural environment has also been preserved, which is essential to sustainable tourism. This is consistent with the sustainable tourism concept outlined by Swarbrooks (2000) that *"sustainable tourism principles must maintain and promote the diversity of nature, society, culture. A responsible tourism development plan to expand the existing tourism base by adding value, and service standards for the tourists take longer"*. The adaptation of the landscape around the temple has been carried out in two ways: work done outside the cave and work done inside the cave. The work outside the cave has been conducted to combine the beauty of the natural environment with that of the buildings. The area in front of the cave has been improved and structures such as the temple doors, the vihan yot and the monks' residences have been constructed with connecting pathways decorated with flowers. One of the most impressive points is the front of the cave where there are stone formations, the cave itself, trees, a waterway, a bridge, and a Naga stairway. The landscape in the cave has been adapted to

make it harmonious with the rocks and stalagmites and Buddha images have been placed along the paths. There are clear direction signs on the bridge, and many lights have been used to decorate it. These things can influence the faith of visitors. This was suggested in the study by Aphipanyo (2013), of religious tourists in Southern Thailand, Aphipanyo found that each temple inserts different values which show the significance of sacred places, believers creating remarkable architecture, and a cultural identity. That study recommended religious tourism management as a way of developing resources for Buddhist tourism in the Southern Thailand.

Tham Khao Roop Chang temple uses art and the landscape to attract visitors. The temple's environment is managed to ensure the cleanliness and tidiness of the buildings for the convenience of and in order to impress visitors who come to practice Buddhism. When the surroundings are clean, the visitors can pay attention to Buddhism and are able to purify their minds. The temple management focuses on the development of humans rather than objects, which reflects an attempt to respond to social expectations. Because day-to-day society is influenced by capitalism and people appreciate objects but ignore the true value of life, the temple emphasizes human development by raising awareness of religious values. When people fill their minds with religious values, their minds will be purified. The study of Aphakaro (2011) suggests that visitors will realize the value of humanity after they practice and understand the Dharma and acknowledge the value of mind development. The temple can raise the visitors' awareness of the value of precept observation and of Buddhist culture and that they can adapt their daily lives to be in accordance with Buddhist principles.

The temple expects that tourists will revisit, so the architectural and natural environment is well-maintained. Ceremonies are held regularly conducted by the temple members. Staffing is managed loosely based on utilizing the expertise of each worker. The workers are responsible for their regular jobs, with which they are familiar. If there are emergencies, they can help one another without being formally ordered or requested to do so. Some of them get paid on a monthly basis by the temple while others volunteer to help temporarily. They work together like family members. Power manipulation does not affect their performance. The workers do their jobs on the basis of their faith and goodwill. Chaocharoen (2013), a religious scholar, said that religious places are like unorganized religion. The people who believe in them do not have to be under the power or control of anyone. No one has the right to order the others to do anything. This is the way it should be. One can do what one believes in and not do what one does not have faith in.

The people working at the temple do so under the abbot's direction, orders, and guidance. However, the abbot uses morality rather than power to direct them. They are told the benefit of doing tasks such as writing signs or not dropping waste in the temple. This reflects the fact that the abbot applies his Singaporean cultural characteristics in waste management. The abbot's direction is conducted by convincing the workers to expect good results from doing the tasks they are asked to do. This coincides with the notion of Gulick and Urwick (1937) who suggested that how a task progresses depends on the

decision making, practical order, guidance, and support given by the leader.

More direction is needed during festivals or ceremonies because of the large number of people participating, including workers and local people who come to help, as well as visitors who come to attend these events. Effective direction is necessary in these cases as it is then that the temple can earn money for the improvement of the local economy. Obadia (2011) suggested that most Buddhist festivals or ceremonies in the era of globalization focus on commercial benefit related to the local economy. The temple is not financially supported by the government, so some of the temple workers must work voluntarily. The abbot needs to have effective management skills to direct the workers to perform their tasks, explaining to them that they should think of the benefit of doing things, rather than forcing them to do them. Proper support should be given to everyone. The abbot does not position himself as the boss. Any communication with the workers is focused on the temple's benefit. Fayol (1984) stated that equality must be a consideration when discussing management or direction. Mutual goals should be created on the basis of public benefit. Coordination should be conducted taking into account the faith of the monkhood and the visitors to the temple in order to build a good relationship between the temple and the people. Internal coordination is conducted between the monks, the workers, and the temple members on the basis of equality without discrimination. External coordination is done by the Thai nun who communicates with the Thai authorities. New visitors are contacted and convinced to come to the temple by regular visitors. The temple does not adopt proactive marketing strategies or public relations campaigns—only word of mouth and social networks are used to make the temple known. This reflects a general tendency that religious tourism does not focus on advertisement. Even if advertising is used, if there are a small number of faithful people, the number of visitors will also not be high. The temple management does not rely on investment income and the income of the temple is dependent on the number of visitors. Tham Khao Roop Chang temple is located near the Thai-Malaysian border, so many foreign pilgrims visit the temple. Malaysian and Singaporean workers can visit the temple by taking a coach tour and can then appreciate the art at the temple as well as eating vegetarian food, practicing Buddhism, donating money, and praying at the temple. Many working class people can experience Buddhism, and the temple can earn more money to help maintain itself. Richards (2003) suggested that cultural tourism influences the economy. It is a mixture between higher and lower cultures, between art and life, and between objects and people.

It can be concluded that the management of this Buddhist temple emphasizes human development. Tasks are allocated to workers and people living in the temple. The abbot directs and teaches them the benefits of doing useful things and there is coordination with relevant parties to enable the temple to achieve its goals. The management system and environment are maintained in accordance with the founder's intentions. The present abbot is Singaporean, so he manages the temple by using his cultural capital from Singapore, which includes the values of cleanliness and tidiness. The mutual identity of

landscape and art can attract people from around the region to visit, conduct pilgrimages, and appreciate the beauty of the temple. This management is effective because of the ability of the present abbot who shares the same vision as the late abbot, which is to allow the temple to be a center of human development without discrimination.

## Recommendations

1. In terms of public policy, the Thai government should pay more attention to this temple with its foreign abbot by allocating a budget for it to develop to be a center of mental and ethical development, promoting the temple to be a center for international Buddhist study and supporting it with proactive public relations campaigns inviting more Malaysian and Singaporean Buddhists to visit.

2. Religious tourism policy should focus on art and landscape and environmental management in which local people participate as they know what the problems are, what the solutions should be, and what impacts may result in the future.

3. Future research should emphasize the interesting topic of the pattern of tourism following the merit paths of Thai-Chinese pilgrims along the Thai-Malaysian border or the creation of relationship networks between temples in Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore as a result of a shared cultural heritage on the Malay Peninsula.

## Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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