Abstract

After Chinese Buddhist temples were set up in the Philippines in the 20th century, temple communities proceeded to establish schools, charity clinics, and fund other socio-cultural projects. This paper traces the basis of such works to the concept of Engaged Buddhism in its Chinese manifestation, as well as to Chinese Buddhist history, teachings and contemporary trends in Chinese voluntary organizations. The author also presents fieldwork data that explores the motivations behind socio-cultural projects, using the concepts of planting good roots and creating affinities; these Buddhist concepts are then linked to the Chinese idea of guanxi. Rather than religious conversion or social integration, Chinese Buddhist social projects were aimed at cultural preservation and the practice of Buddhist compassion.