

The applicability of a Buddhist environmental approach to drafting environmental legislation to address contemporary development issues

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This paper takes an unorthodox approach to examine conventional environmental legislation and explore how Buddhist ethics on environmental conservation could be incorporated to solve contemporary development issues. Fundamentally, this paper illustrates the strength of the Buddhist notion of the environment and demonstrates the inter-disciplinary nature of Buddhism and law as a possible method for environmental conservation. Two research hypotheses are considered: 1. Legal interventions made by the state are not adequate to solve issues in disaster risk management; 2. Buddhist philosophy is based on observed laws of nature which galvanize the relationship between human beings and the environment. The paper takes an inter-disciplinary approach to study the interconnectedness of Buddhism and law. However, it does not overlook the salient differences of the two disciplines in their approach to the environment. For example, the law attempts to deter people from violating environmental rules. However, Buddhism mainly focuses on the punishment that comes from nature itself if it is violated, while reiterating the need of spiritual development to conserve the environment. In order to achieve the research objective of determining a nexus between Buddhism and law to support environmental protection, primary data has been collected from original Buddhist discourses in the Tripitaka and from environmental legislation. Apart from the primary sources, this paper traces many secondary sources from both legal and Buddhist literature. The study concludes by demonstrating how the use of Buddhist environmental ethics can generate a new mechanism which could lead to a sustainable solution to address the burning environmental problems faced by today's society.

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