

**The 'Unity of Heaven and Man': Inspiration from Confucianism for
Reforming Chinese Environmental Law**

Linlan Huang
SOAS, University of London

Abstract

The 'unity between man and heaven' is a significant philosophical contribution made by ancient Chinese sages, which highlights the harmony between human and nature. This ideological perspective has been a key concern in China's environmental governance when policymakers and lawmakers attempt to draw from the wisdom of Chinese traditional values. Recently, an increasing body of literature discusses the legacy of this philosophical construct in terms of reforming the environment law and practice in China.

This public lecture combines the recent study of Confucianism and Chinese environment law to provide a picture showing how the 'unity of heaven and man' concept contributes to reforming Chinese environment law. It will start with the discussion on how this concept was developed in ancient China and evolved over time, with a basic introduction to Confucianism. The lecture will continue with discussions on the impact and implications of 'Unity of Heaven and Man' to Chinese environmental law. Taking this issue as an example, the lecture will showcase how other countries or regions could draw a lesson from China to improve their environmental governance based on their own culture and traditions. At the end of the lecture, students and staff are welcome to ask any questions relating to the lecture.