**How harmonious is Chinese society: issues in wildlife consumption in China**

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Abstract

One of the most important concepts and fundamental ideas in traditional Chinese philosophy is *tian ren he yi* (heaven or nature and humans are one, or humans are the integral part of nature, or the harmony between humans and nature). It is also one of the most popular slogans that the government in China has been promoting in recent years. In this paper, I will focus on the wildlife consumption in China, including, for instance, ivory, rhino horns, shark fins, bear farming and tiger farming, and its devastating impact on the wildlife in different parts of the world where the animals concerned reside. The paper will present an overview of the wildlife consumption situation in China in recent years, and explore the gaps between philosophical ideas and rhetoric and reality and actuality in the case of Chinese culture. It will also call for international attention and actions to stop such legal and illegal animal abuse and destruction that goes much beyond the borders of one country. For thousands of years, humans, individually and collectively, have caused and continue to cause harms and destruction to animals. These include acts of abuse and violence or crimes against the animal kingdom, against individual animals, against animal species and against animal spirit. Today, a great deal of such violence and abuse may originate in one country, but their impact is not limited to one country or locality, as in the case of wildlife trafficking and consumption in China, and also for instance as in the cases of Japanese whaling, seal slaughter in Canada, live animal export in Australia to the Middle East and other parts of Asia. To reduce and end killing and abuse to animals and to enable humans and nonhuman animals live in harmony requires legal measures as well as change in attitude, way of thinking and way of living and also international efforts and responses.

Author Biography

Dr Deborah Cao is a professor at Griffith University. She has published in many areas including legal theory, legal language, Chinese law and legal culture, and animal law. She is the Editor of the International Journal for the Semiotics of Law. Her books include Chinese Law (2004), Translating Law (2007), Animals are not Things (2007), and Animal Law in Australia and New Zealand (2010), and While the Dog Gently Weeps (2012, in Chinese).