

Six Key Theses of the Dissertation:

The Ecology of Practice: Performing Buddhism and Social Environmental Engagement in Germany

1. Eco-Buddhist communities in Germany have adapted traditional Buddhist teachings, such as mindfulness and the Bodhisattva path, to contemporary ecological challenges, making their practices and engagement relevant for promoting sustainability and environmental justice. The eco-Buddhism in Germany may vary across different schools, traditions and principles, but it generally builds on the ideas of interconnectedness and non-duality as core approaches to tackling climate change and environmental protection.
2. Performativity theory, as applied to eco-Buddhists in Germany, explains how repetitive practices—such as meditation, rituals, and symbolic actions—shape both individual and collective behaviors, fostering eco-engagement.
3. The concept of epistemic entanglement within eco-Buddhist groups in Germany demonstrates how these practitioners within their communities reinterpret environmental knowledge through Buddhist principles, thereby contributing to new epistemes of addressing social ecological issues.
4. Eco-Buddhist groups combine inner and outer practices, where the inner practices not only serve as collective activities but also help individuals maintain mental stability. This allows them to address climate crisis anxiety and prepare for future eco-engagements. Together, these aspects function like a perpetual motion machine, enabling eco-Buddhists to stay resilient and committed over time.
5. Eco-Buddhist social engagement in Germany, ranging from meditative environmental protests to tree-planting and marathon, reflect a combination of spiritual and political engagement in public, showcasing the movement's unique approach to climate action.
6. Most eco-Buddhist groups in Germany consist of western Europeans as well as practitioners with immigrant backgrounds, such as Fo Guang Shan, which brings a distinct approach to eco-engagement. Together, these organizations aim to collaborate in specific areas, though their methods and focus vary. Some are more socially active and take a rebellious approach, while others prioritize methods like seminars and talks to promote collective ecological awareness.