

**UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF HANOI**



**MEDICAL ETHICS**

**BIOMEDICAL ETHICS FROM A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE  
FOCUSING ON ABORTION**

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Abortion is a serious problem among young people today. As a person of this age and studying a field related to medicine, I often wonder decisions related to it, especially in Buddhism point of view. From a Buddhist perspective, life begins at conception. The first precept in Buddhism, "not to take life," reflects profound respect for all forms of life, including that of an unborn child. According to Buddhist beliefs, conception marks the start of a new cycle of rebirth ("samsara"), and the fetus is considered a sentient being that needs protection. Because of this, abortion is often seen as an act of ending life, which conflicts with the principle of "non-harming" ("ahimsa"). Furthermore, the law of karma emphasizes that the deliberate act of terminating life, even that of a fetus, can bring significant consequences for the parents and anyone involved. While the principle of "non-harming" suggests that abortion is undesirable, Buddhism also prioritizes compassion ("karuna") and wisdom ("prajna") when considering ethical decisions. This approach allows for the consideration of individual circumstances, recognizing that no ethical principle can be applied absolutely. For instance, in cases where the pregnancy poses a severe threat to the mother's life, abortion might be seen as the less tragic choice to prevent greater suffering. Similarly, situations involving rape, incest, or severe fetal abnormalities present profound moral dilemmas, requiring careful consideration of the rights of the fetus and the well-being of the mother. In such cases, Buddhist teachings encourage thoughtful deliberation grounded in compassion for all parties involved. About other aspects such as society and health care. The Buddhist ethical perspective goes beyond individual actions to consider social and systemic factors. When addressing the issue of abortion, Buddhism advocates creating conditions to minimize the need for abortion. For example, improving education about contraceptive methods, providing psychological and financial support to pregnant women, and removing social stigma against unwanted pregnancies are considered as approaches kindness. Health care professionals are also encouraged to perform their duties conscientiously and with respect for life. While trying to alleviate suffering, they must also question the ethical implications of their actions. In navigating the complex ethical dilemmas surrounding abortion, Buddhist teachings provide a framework that balances the principles of respect for life, compassion, and wisdom. While life is regarded as sacred from the moment of conception, the context behind each decision plays a crucial role in moral evaluation. By encouraging deep reflection, empathy, and mindfulness, Buddhism seeks to minimize suffering for all involved. Moreover, addressing systemic factors and fostering a compassionate societal approach can help create conditions that support both life and well-being, offering a holistic path forward in such challenging moral situations.