

How Does An Empty Buddhist Bioethics Work

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Abstract

Buddhist bioethics aims to identify and evaluate different bioethical positions advanced in Buddhist texts and traditions. The Buddhist aim of eliminating suffering coincides with the objectives of medicine. More and more researchers have begun to appreciate the promise of Buddhist bioethical discourse on various topics and apply its tenets to contemporary issues and problems. However, Central to Buddhist philosophy is the concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), which means the absence of inherent existence in all phenomena. *śūnyatā* signifies that everything we encounter in life is lacking an absolute identity, is impermanent, and does not support a personal self. From this perspective, the idea that anything can be wholly self-sufficient or independent is the primary delusion facing all of us as we pass through our lives. However, Can Buddhist philosophy maintain a bioethical system? If everyone and everything is empty, then how can there be any bioethical discourse or bioethical system? Aren't the things we ought to do and the things we ought not to do equally empty? If the person is empty, who is there that ought to act this way or that way? To address these questions, this paper will demonstrate that a Buddhist bioethics based on the doctrine of emptiness is not only possible but also actually works.