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PARINDA TEEDAUNG : A STUDY OF MORAL REASONS OF MOTHERS
WHO TEND TO ABANDON THEIR CHILDREN. THESIS ADVISOR : PAKORN
SINGSURIYA, Ph.D., WARIYA CHINWANNO, Ph.D., VAREEYA BHAVABHUTA
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The objective of this research is to inquire into and analyze, on the basis of Buddhist principles, the moral reasons given by mothers who tend to abandon their children. The population under study consists of 18 women with unwanted pregnancies who stayed in the Emergency Home at Tungsrigun, Donmuang. The research was conducted by means of in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that if they were to abandon their children mothers would have one of 5 reasons: 1. they wanted their children to have a better future. 2. they wanted to assure their children's safety. 3. they thought children were too much a burden. 4. they were not able to bear the shame of having an illegitimate child. 5. they lack feelings of attachment to the children.

Buddhist principles were used to analyze these reasons. The principles used were Brahmavihara, Gharavasa-dhamma, the first of the Six Directions and Buddhist teachings about the nature of mother (for instance, the mother as the birth giver, as the primary deity, and as the Brahma of the child). The first two reasons above are in accordance with Metta and Karuna but they fall under Mudita and Upekkha only in the case of there being the certainty that some couple would be willing to adopt their children. These reasons also agree with Sacca, Dama, and Khanti in Gharavasadhama and with the teachings about the mother's nature. Also, they are in accord with the First Directions. They motivate the mothers to seek others to take care of the prescribed duties for them. Regarding the last three reasons, none are in accord with either Brahmavihara nor Gharavasadhama. They can be explained by Buddhist teachings about the mother's nature only in terms of the birth giver. However, it can be said that the mothers who gave these reasons complied with the Six Directions for they thought of finding someone or some organization to adopt their children.

This study suggests that, unlike the stereotype, those mothers who are thinking of abandoning their children need not be immoral. In many cases, they are motivated by moral reasons. Finally, it should be emphasized that during the research these interviewed subjects had not yet abandoned their children. It was simply probable that they might do so.