ABSTRACT

This research illustrates the issue of euthanasia to enhance understanding on the subject matter as well as analyze and apply the acquired knowledge to remind people of all religions of having the right attitude towards death and preparing the way to confront death which occurs in all the time properly. The scope of this research is focused on euthanasia in Buddhism through analyzing the case of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu’s death with an aim of comparing various notions and opinions issued by various scholars.

The aim of this research is to analyze euthanasia in Buddhism through the original teachings in the Buddhist texts, mainly in Theravāda and various scholars’ ideas; and also to critically analyze and comparatively evaluate the lesson of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu’s death to offer a practical method for adjusting attitudes of people of all religions towards death and a guideline for solving controversial issues of
euthanasia. I also want to assert that doctors should acknowledge and accept a patient’s right to refuse medical treatment and allow them to die naturally if the patient’s wishes does not violate the moral precept of their religious beliefs.

This research presents and illustrates the textual approach to qualitative research. The primary sources of my data were the ‘Pāli Canon’ (Tipiṭaka) and its ‘commentaries’ (aṭṭhakathā). Secondary sources were books by well-known scholars in the field of Buddhist bioethics. I categorized and analyzed all the collected data to present a clear picture of the issue of euthanasia from a Buddhist perspective. The case of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s death and his interpretations of the application of Buddhist teachings are one possible way to resolve the issue of euthanasia and help Thai medical practitioners to prepare a system of proper hospice care that will assist patients in attaining inner tranquility, allowing them to die in peace naturally.