An Analysis of Necrophilia and Its Ethical Implications in the Light of Buddhism

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Received 25/05/2025; Revised 24/07/2026; Accepted 24/07/2026

Abstract

Necrophilia is a rare and controversial paraphilic phenomenon that raises significant psychological, legal, and ethical concerns. This qualitative documentary study aimed to (1) examine the characteristics, classifications, and impacts of necrophilia; (2) analyze its psychological factors and relevant psychotherapeutic approaches; and (3) interpret its ethical implications through Buddhist teachings. Data were drawn from Buddhist canonical texts, scholarly literature in psychology and forensic psychiatry, and documented case materials, and were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The findings indicate that necrophilia encompasses diverse patterns of fantasy and behavior, with motivations associated in the literature with psychopathology, trauma, disrupted attachment, personality disturbance, and other mental-health factors. From a Buddhist ethical perspective, necrophilic conduct conflicts particularly with principles of non-harming, refraining from taking what is not given, and sexual responsibility. Buddhist concepts such as craving (taṇhā), clinging (upādāna), delusion (moha), mindfulness (sati), and contemplation of bodily impurity (asubha-bhāvanā) provide an additional interpretive framework. The study concludes that necrophilia requires an interdisciplinary response combining clinical assessment, ethical analysis, legal safeguards, and compassionate rehabilitation.

Keywords: Necrophilia; Paraphilic disorder; Buddhist ethics; Buddhist psychology; Attachment; Trauma

Introduction

Necrophilia is one of the paraphilias, which are characterized by atypical sexual interests or activities that deviate from societal norms and expectations. Individuals with paraphilias may experience intense sexual arousal and satisfaction through unconventional or socially unacceptable stimuli, fantasies, or

behaviors. The term encompasses a wide range of specific paraphilic disorders, each associated with distinct preferences and expressions.

Paraphilias pose ethical challenges within society, particularly in relation to the precepts against harming (pānāṭipātā) and sexual misconduct (kāmesumicchācāra). These behaviors can sometimes involve actions that cause harm or disregard consent and personal boundaries (Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018). As such, they raise important questions about how individual sexual preferences may affect others. Addressing these complexities requires both ethical reflection and a compassionate, understanding approach.

Necrophilia, a rare and disturbing paraphilia involving sexual attraction to corpses (Mackinnon & Ellis, 2016), raises deep ethical, psychological, and philosophical questions. Exploring it can shed light on human desire, consent, and societal norms. This thesis examines the potential synergy between the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and Buddhist teachings, highlighting how combining clinical insight with compassion and mindfulness can offer a more holistic approach to understanding and addressing such complex behaviors. Buddhist teachings offer ancient wisdom for mental well-being, emphasizing mindfulness, compassion, and self-awareness to alleviate suffering and foster inner peace (Mahatthanadull et al., 2026). While seemingly different from the DSM-5's approach to mental health, there is a potential synergy between the two. This research explores these connections, highlighting how incorporating Buddhist practices like mindfulness and self-compassion can complement modern psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. The study aims to provide a deeper understanding of human sexual desire and behavior, specifically necrophilia, through the lens of Buddhism, which emphasizes these principles. It also examines the psychological and ethical dimensions of paraphilia, contributing to a broader discussion on the interplay of religion, ethics, and human sexuality (Woods, Lentz, & Merriam, 2007).

Buddhism provides a uniquely relevant analytical framework for understanding necrophilia because its core doctrinal concepts directly address the psychological mechanisms underlying paraphilic disorders. Craving (taṇhā) and attachment (upādāna) are central to the Buddhist explanation of suffering and compulsive behavior, paralleling the obsessive desires observed in necrophilic conditions. Greed (lobha) and delusion (moha) offer an ethical-psychological lens through which to examine the distorted cognition and moral disengagement that characterize such behaviors. Moreover, corpse contemplation (asubha-bhāvanā), a canonical meditation practice, engages directly with the object of necrophilic

desire, the corpse, reframing it as a subject for spiritual insight rather than sensual gratification. Mindfulness (sati) and ethical rehabilitation through the Five Precepts provide both preventive and therapeutic pathways that complement modern psychiatric interventions (Mahatthanadull et al., 2026). These concepts therefore serve not merely as descriptive categories but as the theoretical foundations for the present study's interdisciplinary analysis.

This ancient practice encourages individuals to confront the stark reality of the physical body's impermanence and decay, including the stages of decomposition detailed in the ten impurities. By engaging in this meditation, practitioners are guided to perceive the human body as transient, fragile, and inherently unattractive, thereby challenging any desires or obsessions related to it. Buddhism also emphasizes the importance of cultivating mental purity and equanimity in the face of disturbing and unpleasant realities. As individuals meditate on the bloated, discolored, and decaying corpses, they are encouraged to develop a sense of detachment and aversion to physical form. This practice promotes introspection and self-awareness, potentially serving as a deterrent against any inclination towards necrophilic behaviors. By exploring the implications of Buddhist teachings in the context of necrophilia, this study can shed light on how Buddhist teachings contribute to the ethical and moral considerations surrounding this paraphilic interest. Furthermore, studying Buddhist teachings in relation to necrophilia can offer insights into the role of compassion and respect for the deceased within Buddhist ethics (Harvey, 2000).

Research Objectives

1. To examine the characteristics, classifications, and impacts of necrophilia.
2. To analyze the psychological factors associated with necrophilia and relevant psychotherapeutic approaches.
3. To analyze the ethical implications of necrophilia from a Buddhist perspective.

Literature Review

1. The Characteristics and Classification of Necrophilia

Necrophilia is generally understood as a strong or recurrent sexual interest in dead bodies. The literature describes substantial variation in fantasy, motivation, behavioral expression, and severity. Proposed classifications include role players, romantic necrophiles, fantasizers, tactile necrophiles, fetishistic

necrophiles, necromutilomaniacs, opportunistic necrophiles, regular necrophiles, homicidal necrophiles, and exclusive necrophiles (Aggrawal, 2009; Knafo, 2015). These categories are descriptive and should not be treated as uniformly validated diagnostic subtypes.

The literature describes a continuum ranging from fantasy and fixation to contact offenses and, in rare cases, homicide (Kumar et al., 2019). Some individuals may report fantasies without acting on them, whereas others may seek access to corpses or engage in criminal conduct. Proposed motivations include a desire for control, fear of rejection, fascination with death, unresolved grief, trauma, and severe psychopathology. Because the empirical evidence base is limited, causal claims should be made cautiously.

The classification of necrophilia provides a framework for understanding the diverse ways this paraphilia manifests. By categorizing necrophilic behaviors, we can better assess the varying degrees of severity and complexity within this spectrum. These classifications help distinguish between individuals who engage in necrophilic fantasies or role-play and those who act on their desires, sometimes with harmful consequences (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The following details the different classifications of necrophilia (Aggrawal, 2009).

Table 1. Characteristics and Classification of Necrophilia

	Necrophilia	
No.	**Classification**	**Characteristics**
1	**Role Players**	Individuals who do not desire sexual activity with actual deceased persons but derive sexual enjoyment from engaging in role-play scenarios with living partners pretending to be dead.
2	**Romantic**	People who, in their grief, mummify a body part of a deceased loved one and keep it for psychosexual stimulation. Their interest is exclusive to their romantically involved partners in life.
3	**Fantasizers**	Individuals who engage in sexual fantasies involving deceased individuals, may visit cemeteries or funeral parlors, and sometimes masturbate in the presence of the deceased.
4	**Tactile**	Those who go beyond fantasies and actually touch the bodies of deceased individuals, including stroking erotic

	Necrophilia	
No.	**Classification**	**Characteristics**
		parts such as breasts, and may manipulate the sexual organs of the deceased for sexual gratification.
5	**Fetishistic**	People who mummify and keep parts of deceased bodies, typically from strangers with no prior romantic relationship. Their motivation differs from Class II necrophiles, as they do it without any connection to the deceased.
6	**Necromutilomaniacs**	Individuals whose necrophilic pleasure derives from mutilating deceased bodies.
7	**Opportunistic**	This category includes those who engage in sexual activity with the dead, often after coming into contact with deceased bodies in their work. They may also have sex with the living but do not refrain from engaging with the deceased.
8	**Regular necrophiles**	These individuals do not enjoy sexual intercourse with the living and prefer deceased bodies. However, they are capable of engaging in sexual activity with both the living and the dead.
9	**Homicidal necrophiles**	The most dangerous category, as they are willing to kill in order to engage in intercourse with the deceased. While they can have sex with the living, their compulsion to engage with the dead drives them to commit homicide.
10	**Exclusive necrophiles**	Individuals who can only engage in sexual intercourse with deceased persons, completely excluding the living as sexual partners.

One group of classifications centers around those who engage in necrophilia (Aggrawal, 2009) without a desire to harm the deceased. This includes "Role Players," who derive sexual enjoyment from simulating death-related scenarios with consenting partners, and "Romantic Necrophiles," who focus their interest on deceased partners with whom they had a prior romantic connection. "Fantasizers" derive sexual pleasure from fantasies involving deceased individuals, sometimes visiting places like cemeteries, while "Tactile Necrophiles" go beyond fantasies to touch and manipulate deceased bodies for sexual gratification. "Fetishistic Necrophiles" are aroused by possessing deceased body parts, and "Opportunistic Necrophiles" engage in sexual acts with the deceased when the opportunity arises, such as in their line of work.

The other classifications involve more dangerous or extreme behaviors. "Necromutilomaniacs" derive pleasure from mutilating deceased bodies.

"Regular Necrophiles" prefer deceased bodies but are capable of engaging in sexual activity with both the living and the dead. "Homicidal Necrophiles" are the most dangerous, as they are willing to kill to engage in sexual activity with a corpse (Loy, 2004). Finally, "Exclusive Necrophiles" are only sexually aroused by deceased persons, completely excluding living partners.

2. Psychotherapeutic Approaches to Necrophilia

Psychotherapeutic intervention for necrophilia should be individualized and based on comprehensive clinical and forensic assessment. Cognitive behavioral approaches may be used to address cognitive distortions, problematic behavioral patterns, risk factors, and relapse prevention, while psychodynamic therapy may explore unresolved trauma, loss, attachment disturbance, and unconscious conflict associated with necrophilic interests. Group-based interventions may also reduce isolation, promote accountability, and support the development of healthier coping strategies when clinically appropriate. Relapse prevention remains an important component of treatment, particularly through identifying triggers, strengthening self-regulation, and developing alternative responses to harmful urges. However, because empirical research specifically evaluating psychotherapy for necrophilia is extremely limited, claims regarding treatment effectiveness should be made cautiously and should not be inferred directly from interventions developed for other paraphilic disorders (Chatterjee, 2023; Knafo, 2015; Knoll, 2015; Kumar et al., 2019).

3. Factors Associated with and Impacts of Necrophilia

Necrophilia stems from multifaceted factors, including psychological and developmental influences. Psychopathological motivations, such as a desire for power and control, or a fascination with death, play a significant role. Childhood trauma (Knoll, 2015), disrupted attachment patterns, and the presence of personality disorders, particularly those with antisocial or narcissistic traits, are also contributing factors.

Mental health disorders, such as psychotic disorders, mood disorders, and anxiety disorders, can interact with these personality factors and traumatic experiences (Belik, 2012) to shape necrophilic tendencies. Additionally, biological factors, including hormonal imbalances and neurological dysfunctions, as well as substance abuse and dependency, are considered contributing factors. These elements highlight the complexity of necrophilic behavior, underscoring

the necessity for comprehensive interventions (Knoll, 2015) that address psychological, developmental, and environmental influences.

Necrophilia has significant psychological and emotional consequences, particularly for the families of the deceased, who often experience feelings of violation and distress. The act also raises ethical concerns regarding the dignity and rights of the deceased, leading to debates on legal protections and enforcement gaps (Knoll, 2015). Many legal systems lack clear statutes addressing necrophilia, complicating prosecution efforts. Additionally, public health risks arise due to the potential for disease transmission, especially when bodies are in advanced stages of decomposition. The lack of medical research on these risks further hampers effective prevention measures.

Beyond the legal and health implications, individuals exhibiting necrophilic tendencies face extreme social ostracization, making it difficult for them to seek psychological help. The stigma surrounding necrophilia perpetuates cycles of secrecy and shame, preventing open discussions and interventions. Historically, societal attitudes toward necrophilia have evolved, influenced by religious beliefs, mythology, and shifting moral values (Belik, 2012). Some historical accounts even depict necrophilia as a ritualistic practice, adding complexity to modern legal and ethical interpretations. Addressing necrophilia requires a multidisciplinary approach, including legal reforms, psychological support, and public awareness campaigns to mitigate its societal impact.

4. Buddhist Perspectives on the Dead Body and Sexual Conduct

Buddhist perspectives on the dead body emphasize impermanence, non-attachment, and contemplation of bodily decomposition. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta describes cemetery contemplations in which a practitioner observes or imagines a corpse at successive stages of decay, while the Girimānanda Sutta includes perception of unattractiveness among contemplations intended to weaken attachment. The Kāyagatāsati Sutta likewise develops mindfulness of the body and its constituent elements. In the Vinaya Piṭaka, sexual intercourse with a corpse is treated within the rules concerning the gravest monastic sexual offense (Vin III 28–39). These sources establish a doctrinal basis for examining necrophilia through Buddhist ethics. The third precept concerning sexual misconduct, together with the broader principles of non-harming and refraining from taking what is not given, supports an analysis centered on consent, dignity,

restraint, and the consequences of unwholesome desire (Dhammajoti, 2021; Harvey, 2000; Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

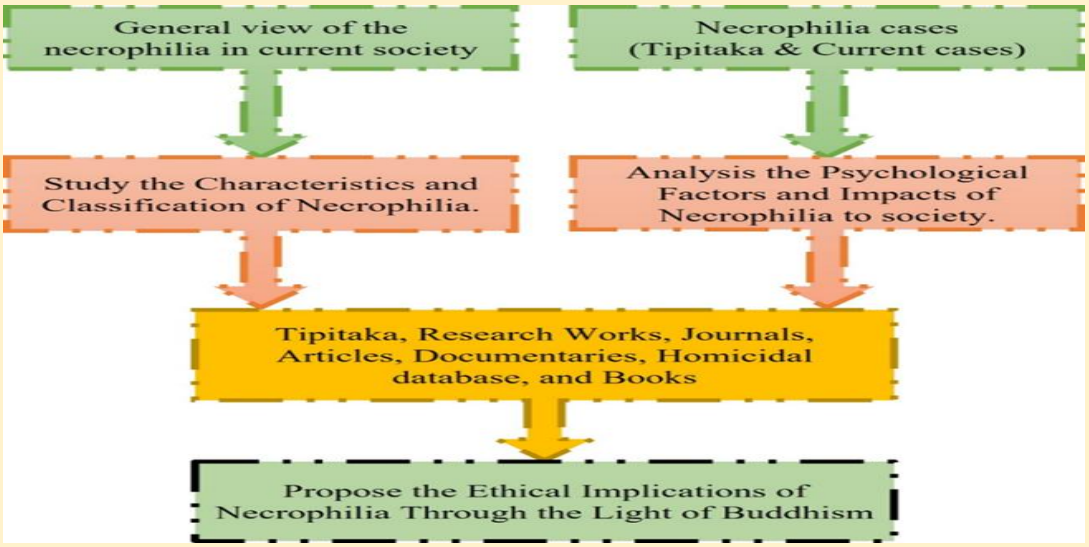


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the research process beginning with a general review of necrophilia in contemporary society and an examination of relevant cases from the Tipiṭaka and current contexts. These sources inform the analysis of the characteristics, classifications, psychological factors, and social impacts of necrophilia. Evidence from Buddhist texts, research articles, documentaries, homicide databases, and books is then synthesized to propose the ethical implications of necrophilia from a Buddhist perspective**.**

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative documentary research methodology, utilizing content analysis of primary Buddhist canonical texts (Tipiṭaka), secondary scholarly literature, forensic psychology journals, and contemporary case studies to examine the ethical implications of necrophilia from the perspective of Buddhism. The research follows a systematic process[A3.1]:

1. General View of Necrophilia in Current Society: The first step is to gather a general understanding of necrophilia's prevalence and treatment in contemporary society.

2. Necrophilia Cases (Tipitaka & Current Cases): The next step involves examining historical perspectives on necrophilia through religious texts (Tipitaka) and analyzing current cases that might shed light on the issue.

3. Study of the Characteristics and Classification of Necrophilia: One branch of the analysis focuses on understanding the nature and types of necrophilia, including its psychological dimensions.

4. Analysis of Psychological Factors and Impacts on Society: Another component is to explore the psychological underpinnings of necrophilia, how individuals with this condition may be affected, and its societal consequences.

5. Tipitaka, Research Works, Journals, and Other Sources: Research will be based on a combination of traditional Buddhist texts (Tipitaka) and modern academic sources like journals, documentaries, and homicide databases.

6. Propose Ethical Implications: The final goal is to propose ethical insights on necrophilia, viewed through the lens of Buddhist teachings, offering perspectives on morality and societal well-being.

Research Results

Analysis of Necrophilia and Its Ethical Implications from a Buddhist Perspective

Pāṇātipāta (Abstaining from Taking Life): Necrophilia does not itself constitute taking life; however, homicidal necrophilia directly violates the principle of pāṇātipāta (Aṅguttara Nikāya, A II 253) by desecrating the corpse and disregarding the sanctity of the human form. This act, especially homicidal necrophilia, incurs severe ethical and spiritual repercussions, leading to negative karmic consequences and suffering.

Adinnādāna (Abstaining from Taking What is Not Given): Necrophilic conduct may also be interpreted as conflicting with the principle of adinnādāna (Vinaya Piṭaka, Vin III 45), as it involves using a deceased person's body without consent, since the deceased cannot consent to its use. This act disregards the dignity and autonomy of the deceased, akin to robbing a corpse or taking possessions without permission, which is a serious ethical violation in Buddhism.

Kāmesumicchācāra (Abstaining from Sexual Misconduct): Necrophilia is a severe deviation from normative sexual behavior and violates the precept of Kāmesumicchācāra (Majjhima Nikāya, M I 287). It involves a complete disregard

for the agency and autonomy of the deceased, reducing them to an object and perpetuating unwholesome mental states.

Kāmarāga (Sensual Desire or Sensual Lust): In Buddhist teachings, kāmarāga, or sensual lust, is a primary root of unwholesome actions, leading to attachment, suffering, and rebirth (Saṃyutta Nikāya, S I 188). Necrophilia is seen as an extreme manifestation of this craving, reflecting a distorted perception and attachment to the physical form, even in death, causing continued suffering and perpetuating the cycle of birth and death.

Kusala-Kammapada (The Ten Wholesome Causes of Action): The Ten Wholesome Causes of Action provide a framework for ethical conduct in Buddhism, encompassing bodily, verbal, and mental actions. Necrophilia violates several of these actions, including abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle chatter, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views. It disregards the sanctity of life, violates the autonomy of the deceased, and is rooted in unwholesome mental states, hindering spiritual growth. The Buddhist solution lies in cultivating wholesome mental states through mindfulness, ethical conduct, compassion, and wisdom.

Asubha-kammaṭṭhāna (The Ten Impurities): The Ten Impurities are contemplative practices in Theravāda Buddhism designed to overcome attachment and desire by focusing on the body's impermanence and unattractiveness (Buddhaghosa, 2010). These practices reduce sensual cravings by reflecting on the body's natural processes of decay, fostering detachment and insight into the nature of suffering and impermanence.

Anussati (Ten Recollections): The ten recollections are meditation subjects intended to cultivate confidence, mindfulness, clarity, and sustained attention. They include recollection of the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, morality, generosity, deities, death, the body, breathing, and peace (Buddhaghosa, 2010). In the present analysis, recollection of death and mindfulness of the body are especially relevant to weakening denial, fixation, and distorted attachment.

Brahmavihāra (Four Sublime States): Loving-kindness (mettā), compassion (karuṇā), appreciative joy (muditā), and equanimity (upekkhā) cultivate prosocial and non-harming dispositions (Buddhaghosa, 2010). Within an ethical rehabilitation framework, these qualities may support empathy,

responsibility, emotional regulation, and respect for the dignity of others. Their clinical use, however, requires empirical evaluation.

Table 2. Classification of Necrophilia Cases and Ethical Implications

No.	Necrophilia	Necrophilia Cases	Tipiṭaka Cases	Ethical Implications
1	Role Players	The Corpse of Anna Fritz (2015)	Not available	Objectification of women and the primal nature of sexual exploration in young men.
2	Romantic	Carl Tanzler	Bone	Obsessive and delusional love, blurring the boundaries between life and death.
3	Fantasizers	Edmund Kemper	Not available	Pathological response to unmet needs for love, belonging, and self-esteem.
4	Tactile	Joachim Kroll	Not available	Non-sexual motives and the challenges of detecting and apprehending such criminals.
5	Fetishistic	Edward Gein	Sculpture and Wood Doll	Maternal fixation, sexual deviance, and severe mental illness.
6	Necromutilomaniacs	Karen Greenlee	Not available	Mental illness, sexual deviancy, and criminal behavior.
7	Opportunistic	Carroll Edward Cole	Cemetery	Sexual deviance with deep psychological issues stemming from his early life experiences.
8	Regular	Dennis Nilsen & Carl Tanzler	Corpse's wound	Loneliness, sexual deviance, and homicidal tendencies.
9	Homicidal	Jeffrey Dahmer	Not available	Mental health issues and the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities.
10	Exclusive	Victor Ardisson	Not available	Psychopathic behavior characterized by manipulation and violence.

Discussion

This study contributes to the growing interdisciplinary discourse on paraphilic disorders by integrating Buddhist ethical and doctrinal analysis with clinical psychiatric frameworks. The findings reveal that necrophilia, while

clinically rare, represents a convergence of psychological dysfunction, ethical transgression, and spiritual affliction that neither Western psychiatry nor Buddhist ethics alone can fully address. By applying both the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and Buddhist doctrinal concepts, including craving (taṇhā), attachment (upādāna), and mindfulness (sati), this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of the condition and its possible remediation.

The study's results, corresponding to the first research objective, indicate that necrophilia is a multifaceted paraphilic condition. The classification into ten types, from role-play to exclusive necrophilia, demonstrates diverse motivations and psychological traits, ranging from relatively benign fantasizers to dangerous homicidal necrophiles. Prior psychodynamic literature identifies possible motivations including a need for power or control, fear of rejection, unresolved abandonment or loss, and traumatic childhood experiences (Knafo, 2015; Knoll, 2015). These explanations remain interpretive because the empirical literature is dominated by case reports and conceptual analyses.

From a psychodynamic perspective, necrophilic behavior can be understood through the lens of attachment theory and early developmental disruption. Object relations theory suggests that individuals with necrophilic tendencies may have experienced severe disturbances in their primary attachment relationships, leading to an inability to form emotional bonds with living persons (Knafo, 2015). The deceased body, incapable of rejection or abandonment, becomes a surrogate object of attachment that the individual can control entirely. This parallels the Buddhist understanding of upādāna (clinging) as a fundamental cause of suffering; the necrophilic individual clings to the physical form precisely because it cannot leave, reflecting a deeply distorted manifestation of taṇhā (craving) rooted in unresolved grief and emotional deprivation (Harvey, 2000).

Table 3 summarizes the study's original analytical synthesis of necrophilia through selected Buddhist ethical and doctrinal principles. It maps the Five Precepts, the Four Sublime States (brahmavihāra), and contemplation of bodily impurity (asubha-kammaṭṭhāna) onto the ethical violations and psychological dynamics identified in the documentary data. The table should therefore be understood as a conceptual product of this study rather than as a previously validated clinical model.

Table 3. Summary of Necrophilia in the Light of Buddhism

No.	Object Meditation	Object Meditation (Pali)	Meaning	Necrophilia	Tipitaka	Kamaraga	Panca Sila
1	Earth device	Bhūmi-kāya	The earth element, symbolizing stability and materiality.		✓		✓
2	Water device	Āpo-kāya	Represents the water element, associated with fluidity and change.		✓		✓
3	Fire device	Tejo-kāya	The fire element, symbolizing heat, energy, and transformation.		✓		✓
4	Air or wind device	Vāyo-kāya	The wind element, associated with movement and breath.		✓		✓
5	Blue device	Nīla-kāya	Blue, a color of the body in decay, symbolizing calmness, distance, and transience.		✓		✓
6	Yellow device	Pīta-kāya	Yellow, symbolizing the process of decay and death.		✓		✓
7	Red device	Loṭṭha-kāya	Red, symbolizing the vitality of the body before death, and blood.		✓		✓
8	White device	Sudhā-kāya	White, a symbol of purity and clarity, but also the body's decaying state.		✓		✓
9	Space device	Ākāśa-kāya	The space element, representing emptiness and the void.		✓		✓
10	Consciousness device	Viññāṇa-kāya	Represents awareness, mental clarity, and the distinction between mind and body.		✓		✓
11	A corpse that is bloated	Uddhumāta	A decaying body, swollen with gases after death, representing impermanence.	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	A corpse that is livid	Vinīla	A corpse with patchy discoloration, symbolizing the fading life and physical decay.	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	A corpse that is festering	Vipubba	A corpse with oozing pus, signifying decay and decomposition.	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	A corpse that is cut up	Vicchidda	A body that has been severed, symbolizing violence and the breakdown of physical form.	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	A corpse that is gnawed	Vikkhāyita	A corpse that has been chewed or eaten by scavengers, symbolizing nature's inevitable destruction.	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	A corpse that is scattered	Vikkhitta	A body scattered in pieces, representing disintegration and separation of body parts.	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	A corpse that is hacked and scattered	Hata-vikkhittaka	A body hacked into pieces, representing violence, fragmentation, and destruction.	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	A corpse that is bleeding	Lohitaka	A corpse that is bleeding, signifying vitality and the loss of life force.	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	A corpse that is worm-infested	Puṭuvaka	A corpse infested with worms, symbolizing decomposition and the cycles of nature.	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	A corpse that is a skeleton	Aṭṭhika	A skeleton, the ultimate stage of decomposition, symbolizing the final breakdown of life and form.	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Contemplation of the Buddha	Buddha-kalāpa	Reflecting on the Buddha, contemplating his qualities and wisdom.		✓		✓
22	Contemplation of the Dhamma	Dhamma-kalāpa	Contemplating the Dhamma (teaching), leading to understanding and realization of truth.		✓		✓
23	Contemplation of the Sangha	Sangha-kalāpa	Reflecting on the community of monks, recognizing their collective wisdom.		✓		✓
24	Contemplation of Virtue	Sīla-kalāpa	Contemplating the virtues of morality, helping to purify the mind and lead to inner peace.		✓		✓
25	Contemplation of Charity	Dāna-kalāpa	Reflecting on the practice of giving, cultivating generosity and selflessness.		✓		✓
26	Contemplation of the Devas	Deva-kalāpa	Reflecting on the divine beings, fostering goodwill and inspiration.		✓		✓
27	Mindfulness of Death	Maraṇa-sati	Mindfully contemplating the inevitability of death, which brings awareness to life's fleeting nature.		✓	✓	✓
28	Mindfulness of the Physical Body	Kāya-sati	Reflecting on the body's impermanence, fostering detachment from physical form.		✓	✓	✓
29	Mindfulness of Breathing	Ānāpāna-sati	Focusing on the breath, cultivating concentration and presence of mind.		✓		✓
30	Contemplation of Calmness	Ārammaṇa-sati	Reflecting on calmness and stillness, cultivating tranquility in the mind.		✓		✓
31	Loving-kindness	Mettā	Developing an attitude of unconditional love and kindness towards all beings.		✓		✓
32	Compassion	Karuṇā	Cultivating compassion, focusing on the suffering of others and developing empathy.		✓		✓
33	Sympathy	Muditā	Cultivating sympathetic joy, rejoicing in the happiness and success of others.		✓		✓
34	Equanimity	Upekkhā	Developing equanimity, cultivating a balanced mind that is free from attachment and aversion.		✓		✓
35	Sphere of Infinity of Space	Ākāśa-ñāṇa	Contemplating the infinite space, fostering an experience of boundless, limitless awareness.		✓		✓
36	Sphere of Infinite Consciousness	Viññāṇa-ñāṇa	Contemplating infinite consciousness, leading to awareness of all that exists.		✓		✓
37	Sphere of No-thingness	Ākāsa-ñāṇa	Contemplating no-thingness, experiencing a state of non-attachment and emptiness.		✓		✓
38	Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception	Neva-saññā-nā-saññā-ñāṇa	Contemplating the state beyond perception and non-perception, transcending mental distinctions.		✓		✓
39	Contemplation of the loathsomeness of food	Āhāra-sati	Contemplating food as a source of sustenance and recognizing its temporary and unsatisfactory nature.		✓	✓	✓
40	Analysis of the four physical elements	Catu-dhātu-vibhāga	Analyzing the four elements (earth, water, fire, air) as the components of the body and the world.		✓	✓	✓

Based on the findings aligned with the second research objective, necrophilia can be understood through a biopsychosocial framework that recognizes the interaction of psychological, developmental, and social factors. Potentially relevant factors include unresolved trauma, attachment disruption, personality pathology, comorbid mental disorders, social isolation, and

maladaptive responses to loss or rejection. Chatterjee (2023) likewise situates necrophilia at the intersection of criminal behavior and psychological disorder, emphasizing that it requires both forensic-legal analysis and psychological understanding. However, because the available evidence is dominated by case reports and conceptual reviews, biological or neurological explanations should be treated as tentative rather than established causal findings.

The integration of Buddhist psychology with Western clinical models represents the novel contribution of this study. While the DSM-5 provides diagnostic criteria and clinical pathways for paraphilic disorders, Buddhist teachings offer a complementary framework that addresses the root causes of suffering at the level of consciousness itself. The concept of the Three Poisons, greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha), provides an analytical lens paralleling the Western clinical identification of cognitive distortions, emotional dysregulation, and impaired reality testing in necrophilic individuals. Buddhist mindfulness practices (sati) share therapeutic mechanisms with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in that both seek to interrupt automatic behavioral patterns through enhanced self-awareness and cognitive restructuring (Mahatthanadull et al., 2026). The Buddhist emphasis on karuṇā (compassion) further provides a rehabilitative framework that Western punitive approaches to sexual offending often lack, suggesting that treatment protocols could benefit from incorporating contemplative practices alongside conventional psychotherapy.

The results about the last research objective reveal a profound Buddhist framework for addressing necrophilia, grounded in ethical principles of respect for life, mindfulness, and detachment from desires. Necrophilia conflicts with the Five Precepts, particularly those against sexual misconduct and harm, while Buddhist teachings on impermanence and non-self (anatta) stress the futility of attachment to physical forms. The Ten Wholesome Courses of Action further emphasize moral cultivation and compassion. This aligns with Saensuk and Chirasantimano's findings that desecration of a deceased body constitutes harm, disrespects the deceased and their relatives, and may spread disease. As the Buddha taught, life is impermanent and characterized by non-self; contemplation of a corpse helps relinquish bodily attachment, for when the body disintegrates, nothing is truly ours.

The findings of this study carry practical implications for multiple domains. In clinical practice, integrating mindfulness-based interventions grounded in Buddhist asubha-bhāvanā (contemplation of impurity) into existing treatment protocols for paraphilic disorders could offer a supplementary therapeutic pathway that addresses the cognitive and affective distortions underlying necrophilic behavior. In forensic and legal contexts, a nuanced understanding of the psychological and spiritual dimensions of necrophilia can inform more humane sentencing and rehabilitation programs. In religious counseling, Buddhist communities may draw on these findings to develop ethical education programs that address extreme forms of attachment and desire through doctrinal teachings (Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018).

This study contributes to the field by demonstrating that a single-disciplinary approach, whether psychiatric, legal, or religious, is insufficient for comprehensively understanding and addressing necrophilia. Future research should explore empirical studies on the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapeutic interventions for individuals with paraphilic tendencies, longitudinal analyses of treatment outcomes combining Buddhist contemplative practices with psychotherapy, and cross-cultural comparative studies examining how other religious and philosophical traditions address similar paraphilic disorders. Additionally, incorporating more recent literature from forensic psychology and Buddhist studies would further strengthen the evidence base for this interdisciplinary approach (Kumar et al., 2019).

Knowledge from the Research

This study generates an interdisciplinary conceptual account of necrophilia by bringing forensic and psychological literature into dialogue with Buddhist ethics and psychology. The analysis distinguishes among descriptive classifications, proposed psychological factors, ethical consequences, and possible responses. It also shows that Buddhist concepts should not merely be appended to a psychiatric description; they can function as analytical categories for examining craving, clinging, delusion, loss of restraint, objectification, and the cultivation of ethical awareness.

The principal conceptual contribution is a Buddhist ethical-psychological framework organized around three dimensions: diagnosis of unwholesome mental processes, evaluation of conduct, and rehabilitation. Craving (taṇhā),

clinging (upādāna), greed (lobha), and delusion (moha) explain how fixation may be sustained; the precepts concerning non-harming, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct provide criteria for evaluating conduct; and mindfulness, compassion, ethical restraint, and contemplation of bodily impermanence provide resources for prevention and rehabilitation. This framework is interpretive rather than clinically validated.

The study therefore proposes that responses to necrophilic behavior should combine clinical risk assessment, evidence-based psychotherapy, legal safeguards, respect for victims and bereaved families, and ethically informed rehabilitation. Buddhist practices may be explored as adjunctive resources, but they should not replace psychiatric care, forensic assessment, or empirically supported treatment.

Conclusion

The study concludes that necrophilia is a heterogeneous and poorly researched phenomenon involving psychological, ethical, legal, and social dimensions. Existing classifications describe a spectrum from fantasy and consensual role-play to contact offenses and homicidal behavior, but the evidence base remains limited. Reported associated factors include trauma, attachment disturbance, personality pathology, severe mental illness, and social isolation; these associations do not establish a single causal pathway.

From a Buddhist perspective, necrophilic conduct is incompatible with ethical restraint, respect for bodily dignity, and non-harming. Teachings particularly inform the analysis on craving, clinging, delusion, sexual misconduct, taking what is not given, mindfulness of the body, and corpse contemplation. These teachings offer a distinctive account of how distorted desire may arise and how ethical awareness, compassion, and wisdom may be cultivated.

An adequate response should not rely exclusively on punishment, religious instruction, or psychotherapy. It requires coordinated clinical, forensic, legal, and ethical measures. Further empirical research is needed before Buddhist contemplative practices can be recommended as treatment components for individuals with paraphilic disorders.

Recommendations

The study of necrophilia and its ethical implications through the lens of Buddhism reveals a complex issue that fundamentally opposes Buddhist principles. Necrophilia violates the Five Precepts by disregarding respect for life, engaging in sexual misconduct, and taking what is not given, highlighting unhealthy attachment and desire rooted in ignorance. Buddhist teachings emphasize the impermanence of the body and advocate for compassion, mindfulness, and right action to address and understand necrophilia's underlying causes, promoting a path of wisdom and interdependence.

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