

# Is Euthanasia Accepted or Not? A Buddhist Perspective

A.A.R. Priyanka

Senior Lecturer, Department of Pali and Buddhist studies, University of Ruhuna.

[rpabeywardhana@gmail.com](mailto:rpabeywardhana@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Euthanasia is the act of killing someone who is very ill or very old that they do not suffer any more. It is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma". This Euthanasia has been divided into four categories as involuntarily, voluntarily, pre-voluntarily and non-voluntarily. When today Voluntary Euthanasia is legal in some countries. Non-voluntary Euthanasia is illegal in all countries. Involuntary Euthanasia is usually considered as murder. Euthanasia is only legal in the Netherlands, Belgium, Colombia, India, Ireland, Mexico and Luxembourg by today. Euthanasia is also legal in some states in the U.S.A. including Oregon, Washington, Montana and Vermont. According to the Buddhism we do not have permission to kill anyone even they make request. In one hand the taking of life is an unwholesome action that results in suffering for the perpetrator. On the other hand death does not bring to an end the suffering of an individual. Therefore Euthanasia is not compassionate to the person but harmful.

In this research paper intends to examine the Buddhist notion on the Euthanasia. The main objective of this paper is to understand whether the concept of Euthanasia is accepted in Buddhism or not. I will pay the special attention to the Buddhist discipline (*vinaya*) In the discussion and will examine with reference to the third great offence (*manussa viggaha*) of the *Pārājīkapāḷi*. It will be further discussed with the meaning of the first precept called abstinence of killing any living being (*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*). The method of this research is the primary and secondary data analysis method based on Buddhist canons and commentaries. The conclusion of this research work is quite debatable. It will be against the concept of Euthanasia which is accepted by several countries as it is legal.

**Key Words:** Euthanasia, Buddhism, Manussaviggaha, Pāṇātipātā.