

Can Arahant Commit Suicide?

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Committing suicide is a controversial issue in the current society. Though there were related incidences in Buddhist discourses, committing suicide is not introduced as an evil action by the Buddha. Since there had been the followers in Buddhism who attained both the Nibbana and the death (extinction of life) together as a result of committing suicide, the subject matter becomes more valued. However, according to the present constitution of Sri Lanka, we are not allowed to commit suicide.

The suicide is defined in the Oxford Advanced Lerner's Dictionary as:

1. The act of killing yourself deliberately
2. A course of action that is likely to ruin your career, position in society
3. A person who commits suicide.

The article number 296 of the penal code of Sri Lanka, committing suicide is mentioned as "Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death."

Here my objective is to discuss the Buddhist notion on committing suicide. In Pārājika Pāli, the suicide is not included under the four grave offences (*cattāro pārājika*) and it is included into the dukkatāpatti stating, "*na ca bhikkhave attānam pātetabbam yo pateyya āpatti dukkatassāti*". In Channovāda sutta of Majjhima Nikāya suicide is clearly introduced on both woldlings (*puthujjana*) and Arahant. The Channovāda sutta illustrates on woldings as "If someone commits suicide he would be re-born again." And it is explained as upavajja (wrong thing). However, in the case of Ven. Channa, committing suicide is highlighted by the Buddha saying "The monk Channa is blamelessness in using the knife".

In this study, my purpose is to show that committing suicide is only a problem to those who did not attain *arahanthood* yet. However, if he/she attains arahanthood then committing suicide is accepted as blamelessness (*anupavajjo*). Therefore, there is a possibility of committing suicide for the Arahants if they are physically in danger for surviving.

Keywords : Committing Suicide, Pārājika Pāli, Channovāda sutta, Arahant.