

BUDDHIST APPROACH TO EUTHANASIA

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Euthanasia is “mercy killing”. More formally, it is killing those, who are incurably ill and in great pain or distress. Euthanasia can take three forms: voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary. All three kinds of euthanasia can be either active or passive. Buddhism rejects euthanasia in voluntary and non-voluntary forms. Thus, Buddhism is supposed to be opposed to euthanasia, neither is thereby committed to life being an absolute value to be preserved at all cost. In the matter of active euthanasia, the Buddhist says that to kill another person is simply not a skillful deed. Regarding passive euthanasia, Buddhist allow a patient to die by failing to institute life preserving procedures, by stopping them once begun or by taking steps to alleviate pain which might hasten the dying process? Contrary to the case of active euthanasia, there is no Buddhist consensus on passive euthanasia, whether voluntary or in voluntary. Various cases of killing and even inciting to suicide are condemned in *vinayapitaka* as unsuitable activities for monks.

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