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MASMOLEE JITWIRITATHAM: RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF SUCIDE IN THAI SOCIETY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENT IN NAKHON SRI THAMMARAT PROVINCE. THESIS ADVISORS: KUNYARAT PUNTHONG, M.A., OON MANTAWI, M.A., AND REVEREND THASANAI KOMKRIS, M.A. 204 PAGE ISBN 974-665-242-7

This research had the objective of studying the attitudes regarding life and value of life, death and life after death and suicide, of students who believe in Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. This includes principles of religious teaching. The sample group consisted of 450 students in grade 12 in Nakhon Sri Thammarat Province and the method of collecting the data was by use of questionnaires.

The research data revealed that student acceptance of the religious teaching regarding life and value of life, death and life after death and suicide was the highest. However, after deeper study into the answers regarding death and life after death, result were less definite. The frequency of participation in religious activities had influence on the students who believe in Buddhism and Christianity. Students who are always involved in religious activities have a stronger attitude towards religious teaching than students who hardly ever participate in such activities. For example, in Muslim families the mother has a strong influence in the teaching of religious principles. This is proven by the fact that students with living mothers had a stronger attitude towards their religion than students whose mother has died.

Committing suicide does not mean, according to this research, that people do not realize the value of their lives, nor does it mean that they do not love themselves. It shows that they believe it is harder to live without success than to commit suicide as they can not live with that suffering. They believe that committing suicide will release them from their suffering. Understanding about life after death is, therefore, very important as misunderstanding it may lead them to make the wrong decisions on how to solve their problems. Thus they should be made to understand that the result of committing suicide is that they will suffer more in life after death than they suffer in their present life; and, they will better able to control their suicidal tendencies and realize that suicide is wrong.