PREFACE

Human beings, young or old, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, wise or foolish, each has his or her own sufferings. Yearning for happiness and making an escape from all the troubles of life is the motive for almost everyone is this life. However, to know the real source of sufferings and to find a correct way to obtain happiness is not an easy job. The history of philosophy and religions is that of generations of people looking for the way to get rid of ignorance, delusion, and miseries. Buddhism came into being as an answer for those who are looking for a solution for human life.

The Buddha was interested in the fundamental tragedy of man: the suffering individual. Buddhism as a therapeutic system is based on a study of human psychology. Though it is a psychological theory, it has a practical aim. The Buddha made a psychological analysis of mind and its states with a moral purpose, the purging of the mind of mental defilements (kilesa). Of these unwholesome factors which obsess one’s mind, anusayas or latent tendencies are the defilements that lie dormant deep in being’s subconscious life-stream (bhavaṅga-sota). They have eaten into one’s nature, settled, and found a habitat there. It remains there ever since a being has just been born. Anusayas are accumulated at every moment and condition the arising of wholesome and unwholesome karma at the present. The more anusaya is accumulated, the more it flows out. Therefore, when the feeling of greed, anger, or delusion passes by, it immediately jumps out because of many accumulations in the trait.
Studying anusaya we come to know the deep underlying motives of our actions, speech and thoughts. We often deceive ourselves as to the motives of our actions, speech, and thoughts that seem to be wholesome. In reality they are mostly directed towards our own gain, they are motivated by selfish desire. With a growing understanding of the latent tendencies that are powerful conditions for all unwholesome karma in our life, we are urged to be mindful of all realities. By reflecting and being aware of whatever reality appears we can learn to become more sincere and truthful with regard to our minds.

Realizing the importance of anusaya in human mental life, this thesis is an attempt to study this concept analytically and intensively, its nature, its position, its conditions, its impact and the methods to eradicate anusaya.

Though the scope of the topic is Early Buddhism, based on the Pāli Tipiṭka and Commentaries, the researcher only focuses on the Sutta and the Abhidhamma texts, because the Vinaya texts, aiming at regulating rules and discipline to control the monastic behaviours, only deal with the two coarser levels of kilesas, namely vītikkama kilesas (those which are manifested in verbal and bodily actions) and pariyutṭhāna kilesas (those which just arise in the mind), while do not touch the anusaya kilesas, which lie dormant and only arise when there are proper conditions.

Moreover, to give the investigation a modern nuance and relevant to the secular interest, a special reference is made to Freudian psychology, a branch of Western psychology, which has a unique resemblance with Buddhist psychology in both theory and practice, though there are of course some differences between the two systems.
I would like to take the occasion to express the gratefulness I feel for my departed parents who has taught me the first lessons of loving and giving with the example of their devoted and moral lives. I would like to dedicate all my merits to them.

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May all be well, happy and peaceful.

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Duong Thi Thanh Huong
(Bhikkhuṇī Liễu Pháp)