MATERIAL 4

THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH "THERE IS A CAUSE OF SUFFERING".

Here Buddha named as the central cause the fundamental ignorance of every unenlightened mind. It is the idea that one has a permanent, unchanging "I."
Although one finds only a stream of ever-changing thoughts, feelings, and impressions, this idea of an "I" becomes the basis of all experience.

Attachment to pleasant things arises because we want to get and keep what is pleasant to us (e.g., a cool cell phone, a pretty girlfriend). We also experience aversion to unpleasant things because we don't want to experience anything unpleasant (e.g., heartbreak, trouble with parents). When we struggle with not being able to decide what we want and don't want, this is called "confusion."

These are disturbing emotional states. They can enter into countless combinations with other feelings and shape our experience of the world. We often take them very seriously, even though our thoughts and feelings are constantly changing. Difficult or harmful actions can result. This creates further disturbance and suffering for others and ourselves. For example, we yell at someone because we are angry. A short time later, however, our anger has faded and we are sorry, but the other person is angry with us and deeply offended. He doesn't talk to us anymore.

In this way, one sows negative seeds in the external world and in one's own mind. By the time the seeds ripen and one experiences the effects of the harmful actions, one has usually already forgotten that one has set the causes oneself. For example, someone would like to have many good friends, but has often talked badly about others or even treated others badly. Or someone thinks badly about him-self/ herself and the world and wonders why he/she is not happy.
So Buddha advises to recognize the causes of suffering in time and thus prevent its occurrence.



