

## **Shenpa-Craving**

By Pierre Zimmerman

In the Tibetan tradition attachment, and particularly craving, have meanings such as being hooked, addicted, having a constant itch (which brings more discomfort when we scratch it), overall rigidity, or general malaise. It causes us to have a deep underlying insecurity when we experience change or triggers, which make us contracted or tense and bursts the bubble of self-absorption and self-importance.

A consistent meditation practice allows us to open up the space within so we can let go of resistance or relying on the ego, which tends to create obscurations, complicating matters more. When we create spaciousness, we experience gaps in our mind-stream but don't have to follow the compulsion to fill up these spaces. We often immediately resort to some kind of compulsive relief with distractions or "fillers," like food, alcohol, sex, working too much, shopping, etc... In moderation, these things aren't a problem, but when we empower these fillers in solely removing discomfort, they often turn on us.

Refraining from tremendous and outlandish measures turns craving upside down. Relying on reflection, we use discernment to sort out what will serve us well, and we experience wisdom mind. We notice the reaction chain once we see the hook of the craving. We relegate the habitual patterns of wanting immediate comfort or doing something self-destructive, and instead acknowledge with clarity what is happening.

The wisdom we rely on is based on fundamental goodness and a desire for wholeness, connection and healing instead of looking for biases and craving. Healing happens when we go to the places where we were absent before or would rather avoid. We cultivate loving kindness, warmth and friendliness toward ourselves to replace the down spiraling into painful situations, which cause tremendous harm to ourselves and those around us.

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