



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche:

How one lama got Patrul Rinpoche to teach the Bodhicharyavatara

Patrul Rinpoche gave lots of teachings, sometimes secretly. Some of the most important Dzogchen and Mahamudra lineage teachings come from Patrul Rinpoche; very special lineages that are still kept. But most of his life he was in retreat. He went to places nobody else could even stand. He went to the North-Eastern part of Tibet where only wild yaks and wolves lived; nobody there. Except, of course, sometimes bandits came. He stayed there and did retreat. He carved stones and made stone manis. He made a big, big mani wall in this place where nobody goes.

It was only those who were really determined and one-pointed who could go to Patrul Rinpoche and - sometimes - get teachings. He was always saying, 'Why do you come here, to this godforsaken place? There are such great teachers in the Derge and other places, like Jamyang Khyentse and Jamgön Kongtrul, and many other masters and so many institutions and monasteries. And, abandoning them all, you are coming here to see this old person who knows nothing! You are completely mad! You are totally deluded! I don't want you to waste your life. If you come near me, I will hit you with a stone!' And sometimes he would throw stones also. So it was not easy to get teachings from him, especially the special kind of teachings. Sometimes people had to use tricks to get teachings from him.

There is a story about how one lama got Patrul Rinpoche to teach the Bodhicharyavatara. He was a lama from Palpung, a very good lama. He had great devotion to Patrul Rinpoche and he said, 'I will go and receive some Bodhicharyavatara – the Bodhisattva's way of life – teachings from Patrul Rinpoche.' And people said, 'You will not receive them. He is not the kind of person who teaches.' But he said, 'I will.' They said, 'No, no.' He said, 'I know how to do it. I will go.' So he went with his retinue to the place where Patrul Rinpoche was staying, under a rock with nothing special there. They camped a little bit away and he pretended that he didn't know Patrul Rinpoche.

So - he camped. And then after a while he sent a little *tsampa* and tea to Patrul Rinpoche, with the instructions to 'just give it to that old retreatant'. For a while he was sending over some food and tea and other things. After some time Patrul Rinpoche came and said, 'Thank you very much for sending

all this.’ The lama replied, ‘I am very happy you are doing retreat. Who are you?’ And Patrul Rinpoche answered, ‘I’m just an ordinary person from around here. I try to do some ‘om mani peme hung’ recitation.’ ‘That’s good,’ said the lama, ‘if you need some teachings, I can give you some.’ ‘Oh, that is very nice. Thank you very much.’

So then the lama said, ‘I have very good instructions on Bodhicharyavatara. If you want, I can teach you that.’ ‘Oh, that’s fantastic,’ said Patrul Rinpoche, ‘because I like this text very much and I’ve also studied it a little. Yes, please give me these teachings.’ And the lama said, ‘Okay, come and I will give you the teachings.’ Patrul Rinpoche came and the lama gave teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara - kind of quickly. He went through the text and after he finished he said, ‘Well, I have given you the teachings. Now tell me what you understand from this book.’

And Patrul Rinpoche said, ‘That’s very good you say that because actually I have studied this so much. I studied it over and over and I think I now understand something about this book. I really want to tell you what I understand from this teaching so you can say if I’m correct or not.’ Then he gave a very detailed teaching on Bodhicharyavatara and the lama received the Bodhicharyavatara teachings. After he had received them he said, ‘Well, you are actually very good in this. I have given you the teachings, you have received the teaching and you understand it very well. Now I must say something to you: You must teach this text. As your teacher, I tell you: you must teach it! You must give these teachings to everybody who wants to receive them.’ And Patrul Rinpoche said, ‘That’s right, okay, I will do that.’

From then on he taught the Bodhicharyavatara. He was only teaching Bodhicharyavatara. And around that time more and more students came to him there and he started to teach them the Bodhicharyavatara. He would go from the beginning, every day a little bit, until he came to the end. Then the next day he would go back to the beginning and start teaching it again. There was one, very great, khenpo who said that he received the teachings something like forty times - because Patrul Rinpoche was only teaching that (besides other things to special students). But this khenpo said that each time he received the teachings he got something new. He was never bored on these teachings.

Taken from Ringu Tulku Rinpoche’s teaching of

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