

On Practicing On The Upcoming Eclipse Day

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August 13th, 2017

There will be a total solar eclipse on August 21st, visible at least in part throughout much of North America. As eclipse days are said to be particularly powerful days for practice according to the Tibetan tradition (the positive or negative effects of our actions are said to be multiplied 10,000 times), we asked Rinpoche for advice on practicing on this occasion.

On the eclipse day, you can say OM MANI PEME HUNG or OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG or something else, whatever you like. I think Chenrezig is good. In Tibet, when there was an eclipse, everyone would go outside and chant OM MANI PEME HUNG very loudly as the eclipse was going on. The ladies, men, children, everyone. And everyone would also just recite MANI mantra or BENZAR SATTO mantra continuously. When you practice on an eclipse day, it is said, the effects or qualities of the practice will be cultivated very swiftly. They say!

Maybe at O.D.D. they can do something, some Chenrezig or Vajrasattva practice. Maybe they can make some butterlamp offerings, too, since they have a big space in which to offer them safely. That would be auspicious. However, we don't want to tell everyone everywhere to make butterlamp offerings because people will not be careful to watch the flames nicely, and then that can be very dangerous. Anyway, the point isn't really to make lots of offerings or to offer butterlamps particularly, but to do practice with faith and focus.

You can tell people that it is a good day to practice, and people can practice in their own places, or they can come to the dharma centers to practice together. Especially Chenrezig or Vajrasattva, but that doesn't mean that I am not saying you shouldn't do other practices, OK?

At Tashi Choling, it looks like they will be starting the ngondro retreat on that day. That is very wonderful, thank you for always doing that! Then that is already an auspicious practice going on. If people want to gather and chant, whatever they want, that is fine, wonderful. If they don't want to gather at the centers, that is also fine. You can also practice in your own home or your own place, no problem.

What about Portland, Ojai, and other places? Maybe they don't want to do practices? It is up to you. In Portland, if they are already meeting to study on that day, that is wonderful, and you can recite some MANI mantra, too. You don't have to make a big deal, you don't have to make anything complicated. And I don't think in that tiny place you need to offer many butterlamps and burn down the house! Recitation with faith, that is fine. That is the most important. They don't need some special fancy offering, just chanting at that time is good.

Anyway, I don't know, just that is what I have heard. In general, of course, to recite OM MANI PEME HUNG on any day is very good, if you are reciting it with faith and compassion. That is for sure.

Anyway, Tashi Delek! At least don't be naughty!

-Gyatrul

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