
Ornament for Clear Realisations

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Benefits of achieving five sublime eyes and the six clairvoyances

We will begin with a quote from a praise to Tara called *Leg Drima* by His Holiness, the First Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gendun Drup:

May I never engage in fulfilling the selfish purpose but engage only in fulfilling the purpose of other sentient beings. May I meet all of the favourable conditions for fulfilling the welfare of other beings, such as divine eyes, clairvoyances, excellent communication, patience and so forth.

In this prayer, we note that Gyalwa Gendun Drup, who was a bodhisattva, recognises that achieving the extraordinary qualities of sublime eyes and clairvoyance are favourable conditions for fulfilling the welfare of other sentient beings. So he prays to accomplish them. Gyalwa Gendun Drup was a contemporary and disciple of Je Tsongkhapa. At one time when he was quite old, and in the presence of the circle of his students, he was asked about which pure land he would go to after leaving this world. He replied that he had no intention of going to any pure land, but only wished to go to the place where he would be of most benefit to other sentient beings. This indicates he truly was a bodhisattva.

Bodhisattvas recognise and wish to possess the six clairvoyances and five sublime eyes as a suitable means to quickly accomplish the welfare of other beings. So we need to create the causes and pray for these qualities even more than bodhisattvas. Although these qualities may be far beyond our reach, we should understand them as being essential factors for engaging in bodhisattva deeds.

Through understanding these qualities, we should at least try to cultivate a sense of admiration, joy and aspiration, thinking how wonderful it would be if we too had such qualities. Then we could be better equipped to achieve complete enlightenment and benefit all sentient beings. If we don't understand the benefit of these qualities, we may wonder why we should bother to study them because they are an unrealistic goal to pursue at the moment and not relevant to our spiritual practice. We might feel like studying them is like doing a stocktake of a king's treasure, simply counting the treasure items but not possessing any of them. Rather, as we learn about these qualities, we understand their relevance in our spiritual development and generate an aspiration to possess them and feel very positive about studying them.

Dharma study is not like studying history, for example. As soon as we finish reading a book about historical events and figures, we can just put the book away. After studying a Dharma subject, however, we need to follow up by contemplating and meditating on its meaning over and over again until we gain the fine knowledge actualised and experienced within ourselves, in the form of progressive inner spiritual realisations.

As Buddhists, we have a special interest in Buddhism and we are fond of reading Buddhist literature. However, we are sometimes puzzled by various technical Dharma terms such as 'clairvoyance' and 'sublime eye'. So, whatever Dharma texts we read and study will really broaden and develop our Dharma knowledge.

In this modern age of technology and communication, the world has become much smaller and information is easily accessible. Therefore, studying texts such as this from authentic scriptures will help us to become more discerning when we listen to other teachings or read different books, and we won't be easily misled or misinformed.

Even if we don't fully understand what we are studying here now, it doesn't matter. We will still benefit from what we are learning. It is said that even just hearing Dharma words will be beneficial because it will leave a positive imprint on our minds, which will help us to quickly develop an understanding in the future.

We can observe how even if they all are given the same opportunity some people learn things quickly while others are very slow learners. For example, we can have two children from the same parents, who are given the same educational opportunity, yet they may end up with different outcomes. The reason why people are different in terms of their personalities, skills and educational development does not just depend on their life circumstances and opportunities. There are also some unknown causes that we call past karma and its imprints, or propensity. From this point of view, even if we don't fully understand all the subject matter we are studying right now, our efforts are not wasted, because whatever we study, even just listening to teachings, will leave a positive imprint or propensity on our mind, that will yield the result of acquiring the knowledge quicker in future.

We should realise that we are very fortunate to have this opportunity to study Maitreya's text, *Ornament of Clear Realisations*. We should always maintain a positive mental attitude when we study the Dharma whether we think we are making some progress in our learning or not.

1.2.3.8. Precepts which instruct on the six clairvoyances

1.2.3.8.4. *The clairvoyance of remembering previous states (cont.)*

We will now continue our study of the six clairvoyances. We have finished the first three: the clairvoyances of magical emanations, divine ears and knowing others' minds. The fourth is the clairvoyance of recollecting past states. Its definition in the text is:

It is one of the six clairvoyances and belongs to a class of recollecting many past life states of others and yourself.

The words *a class of recollecting many past life states* includes the power of recollecting even a single past life. While the clairvoyance of recollecting a single past life is not the clairvoyance of recollecting many past life states, it is considered as belonging to the class of recollecting many past life states of others and yourself.

It is classified or categorised into three types just in terms of recollecting past states:

- Arising from birth
- Arising from karma
- From meditative concentration

There are many stories of people who claim to remember their past lives. I note that one common feature of such stories

is that in most cases their death in their past lives occurred suddenly such as being in a car crash or falling off a cliff and so on. This suggests that these people can remember past lives might have something to do with the fact that their mental faculties were intact before death. On the other hand, if the death occurs after a prolonged period of sickness or as a result of ageing, it might be harder for people to remember their past life. The examples of the three types of recollecting past states are respectively that which is possessed by most of the godly beings and evil spirits, by hell beings and by those who possess the clairvoyance as described here.

1.2.3.8.5. The clairvoyance of the divine eye

This is defined as:

One of the six clairvoyances that arises from its own empowering conditions of the causal divine eye and can directly perceive coarse and subtle forms of the universe.

Regarding the nature of the clairvoyance of the divine eye and the clairvoyance of the divine ear, the question is: Are they a sense consciousness or a mental consciousness? It is said here that each must be a mental consciousness because they both arise from an actual level of concentration as their empowering conditions. For that reason, the clairvoyances of the divine ear and divine eye are regarded as mental consciousnesses rather than sense consciousnesses. We can further ask: If a clairvoyance depends on mental concentration, why does it have to be a mental consciousness? Here, we need to take into account how each is dependent on mental consciousness. We mentioned in last week's teaching that the way the divine eye or ear arises in dependence on the actual concentration is not like a cup on a table depending on the table, where the table supports the cup. Rather, the clairvoyance depending on the concentration means it is reflecting the higher state of the concentration itself. In other words, the actual concentration becomes the clairvoyances such as that of the divine ear and the divine eye.

1.2.3.8.6. The clairvoyance of the extinction of contaminations

The sixth clairvoyance is called the clairvoyance of the extinction of contaminations, or defilements. This is defined as:

One of the six clairvoyances which is free of all the obstructions to liberation.

So the sixth clairvoyance is not classified in terms of arising from birth, karma and so forth. Rather, It is attained upon the abandonment or complete extinction of all defilements or mental afflictions. Of course, the abandonment of afflictions is not caused by karma.

1.2.3.8.1.5. Purpose

The next heading is about the purpose of achieving the six clairvoyances.

Gyatsab Je says in his commentary to the *Ornament of Clear Realisation* called the *Ornament of Essential Explanations*:

Possessing the six clairvoyances will enable you:

- to directly hear the course and subtle sound of dharma teaching from the infinite world
- to directly know where the sentient beings are now, those who you taught and with whom you have made a connection from the past lives and so forth
- to directly know the inner orientation of the

sentient beings such as whether it is with attachment or without attachment and so forth and based on this you will show them the path which you directly see it a means of liberation.

In this way you enable other beings to quickly complete their inner development and hence quickly actualising within them the state omniscience.

The earlier quotation from His Holiness, the First Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gendun Drup says:

May I meet all of the favourable conditions for fulfilling the welfare of other beings, such as divine eyes, clairvoyances, excellent communication, patience and so forth.

Having the six clairvoyances gives one the ability to benefit limitless sentient beings easily and effectively. Because of benefiting an infinite number of sentient beings, one will be accumulating infinite merit. Therefore, these qualities also serve as a quick cause for one to achieve the state of buddhahood.

Non-Buddhists, hearers and solitary realisers and bodhisattvas possess the first five clairvoyances, and foe destroyers who have attained the level of actual concentration, and buddhas possess the sixth one.

As to the power of a clairvoyance, with the clairvoyance of knowing the minds of other beings, for example, you can only know the minds of others who are equal to or below yourself in spiritual development, but not those above yourself. For example, non-Buddhists who possess such clairvoyant powers can only read the minds and understand the spiritual realisations of other beings equal to or below themselves in spiritual development, and not those above them. Similarly, if you are on a hearer's or bodhisattva's path, depending on the level of the path you have attained, your clairvoyant powers are limited to knowing the minds of those equal to or below yourself, but not above.

Q&A

What is the difference between the clairvoyance of the divine eye and the divine eye that is one of the five sublime eyes?

The difference between the two relates to the way each one arises from its cause. The divine eye, which is one of the five sublime eyes, or *lhey chen* in Tibetan, arises from or is ripened by the contaminated virtuous karma in a past life. So, how far and what type of forms it can perceive is dependent on the past life karma too. Whereas, the clairvoyance of the divine eye is obtained by the force of the meditative concentration one gains in this current life. Depending on the level of that concentration, the clairvoyance of the divine eye has the capacity to directly see the gross and subtle forms of the universe. Regarding this Acharya Haribhadra says in his commentary on *Twenty-Thousand-Line Sutra* says:

The differences between the two eyes are this: the divine eye of the five sublime eyes arises from the ripening karma. While that of the six clairvoyances arise from the cultivation of the concentration.

Here we are talking about the divine ear and divine eye, but not the divine nose or tongue. Why? One text says that it is to do with the way you experience visual objects – you can see from a long distance, without requiring any direct contact between the object and the visual sight. Another reason could be related to the usage of the senses for developing Dharma

realisation. Of all the sense faculties the two most important senses are the ear and eye sense faculties. We must depend on ear sense faculties to first hear the Dharma and after that, we can further our knowledge by contemplating and meditating. And hearing the Dharma from the teacher face-to-face makes it very effective. Therefore, the divine eye and divine ear are mentioned. This is what I think but you can have other reasons. It is important to apply your own reasoning and logic. It doesn't matter what it says in texts, – you must always apply your own reasoning. If something doesn't seem logical to you, you should not accept it, even if you hear it from your own teacher. Asking questions is the best way to develop your knowledge.

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Edited Version*

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