

"Sacred Pure Land" or "Utopia?"

By a practitioner from China

(Clearwisdom.net)

Today I met a veteran Dafa practitioner. She said to me, "Some practitioners gather together in such large groups with so many people coming and going, it becomes very chaotic." [*Editor's note: for practitioners in China, gatherings can sometimes pose a security risk given the dangerous situation right now*]. I asked her, "Why don't you say something to them?" She replied, "If I say something to them, they'll say that I have the attachment of fear." I did not know what to say.

All the way home I pondered what the matter was. I wanted to write something from the perspective of "unendurable loneliness" but gave up halfway. I realized that "unendurable loneliness" wasn't appropriate. It's true that some practitioners cannot endure this "unendurable loneliness," so they establish connections with other people and pay each other visits, or chat on the Internet.

I am not saying that we cannot form relationships or meet with each other, but some people do it to fill their unbearable feelings of emptiness resulting from isolation. They can never settle down to firmly cultivate or utilize the divine character and a solemn mind to perform their truth-clarification duties. In the ordinary human society, people deceive each other, lying and conniving -- this is truly difficult to adapt to for us cultivators. When we are together, the cultivators' higher realm of thinking affects and tempers everyone within it, but what situation has emerged? Some practitioners get together, not for their collective improvement in their cultivation, nor to perform the sacred task of saving sentient beings well. Even though ostensibly they have this desire, fundamentally they have developed an attachment to sentimentality. In essence, they treat this most sacred pure land in the world as a "utopia" to escape from the complex cultivation environment of human society.

Some practitioners, in order to maintain their "utopia," have intentionally or unintentionally excluded other people and formed a small, exclusive group with people of similar mentalities, becoming unable to accept different opinions. When they come across different opinions, they do not try to understand the Fa from within the Fa, but discuss [the Fa] amongst themselves. Since they have similar notions and interests, the conclusion drawn is also often mostly the same except for minor differences. Together, they reinforce each other's personal attachments and strengthen the substance field of rejecting those who think differently.

Thus, some practitioners began to protect this cozy environment and small groups. We know that in China before the persecution, practitioners frequently studied the Fa together, shared experiences, and had discussions with diverse opinions and ideas. They shared experiences and discussed matters together. One would say, "Teacher has talked about such and such in the Fa, and this is how I view this issue." Meanwhile someone else had a different understanding on the subject, but everyone had an open mind and understood the Fa from within the Fa. That was truly the sacred pure land. At that time nobody ever thought of forming his or her own independent group because of differences of opinion, because everyone knew that it would be damaging to Dafa. Instead, everyone searched within for his or her own shortcomings, trying to figure out what was not in accordance with the Fa. But how did this phenomenon occur without people realizing its seriousness?

The cultivation environment in China today is very harsh. At the beginning of the persecution, some people who appeared to be steadfast in cultivation one day faltered the next day. Others may have appeared to have given up cultivation today, but through Fa study, experience sharing, or Teacher's benevolent hints, he might become diligent and firmly cultivate tomorrow. On the other hand, amidst the persecution, practitioners in China no longer have any "assistant." As to how one should cultivate or behave, whether or not to continue cultivation, and when staring death in the eye and wondering what is right and what is wrong, no one is able to tell another person what to do. Everyone cultivates according to his or her own understanding of the Fa. For those who are able to do it, whether they have never hesitated or are wavering, they "have established the right path you should take," (*Guiding the Voyage*, "Teaching the Fa at the Great Lakes Fa Conference") and all have come through.

In this chaotic and complex environment, there is nobody to "lead," nor do we need anyone to "lead." To do the Dafa work of saving sentient beings better, practitioners have spontaneously and freely combined to create groups. These groups have constantly undergone changes and regrouping. During this process, similar minds with the same preferences, and under the influence of their remaining human attachments, mutually feel very "close-knit" and able to "relate to each other," so they prefer to be together. Once this kind of small group is formed, the practitioners within the group are unlikely to detect their common attachments, which will be unwittingly reinforced, further isolating themselves and excluding others.

Of course, this isn't to say that these groups are always not good, because when practitioners form groups while doing truth clarification and the great task of saving sentient beings, there can be positive effects. Many cases could also be because of predestined relationships. However, we have to examine the situation closely: Does the closeness between members of the group come at the expense of distancing themselves from other practitioners? Do they avoid and shun others because of differences of opinion? When encountering a problem, can they first seriously search deep within to evaluate their every notion and thought to look for attachments and deviations from the Fa, and then clear-headedly and objectively assess the problem? Because when we're attached to something, the old forces will strengthen this attachment, making it very strong and obstructing Fa-rectification. So we cannot lower our guard, as cultivation is a very serious matter. If we discover that we or other members of the group have such a problem, then we must seriously and clear-headedly evaluate if the group is really a part of Dafa's "sacred pure land" or has changed in nature and has become a "utopia" for doing Dafa work. A "utopia" in everyday people's realm is a remote fantasy, but for Dafa practitioners it is undermining the magnificent Buddha Fa and everything that we have attained.

Of course, this isn't to say that whenever a problem arises we should drag the practitioners who have different views into the group, as this may cause unnecessary tension among practitioners and even additional problems. What we must do is solve the problems according to our *xinxing* (mind and heart nature) rather than utilizing external means.

We must treat cultivation and Fa-rectification seriously and earnestly rectify the cultivation environment around us.

"Study the Fa and obtain the Fa, Compare in learning and compare in cultivating;
Checking with (the Fa) in everything, Compliance is cultivation."

- **Solid Cultivation** (*Hongyin*)

This is my personal understanding, please kindly point out anything improper.

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