

Be Clear About the Concept of Cultivation Practice and Continuously Break Through to Higher Levels (Part I)

-- My Personal Understanding of Cultivation amidst Fa-Rectification

(Clearwisdom.Net)

(Part I)

What follows is my understanding based on some recent reflections and experiences in cultivation during the past few months. Please kindly correct anything that is improper.

1. Be Clear About the Concept of Cultivation Practice

Teacher said, "The whole course of one's cultivation is to let go of his attachments unceasingly." (From *Zhuan Falun*) This is easy enough to understand, but is actually very hard to do. Every bit of improvement and the abandonment of every attachment is difficult and painful, deep down to our bones. I realized during a tribulation that some things drag on forever and we do not easily pass the tests because we are not clear about the concept of cultivation practice itself; therefore, we do not regard ourselves as cultivators at a deep level. As a matter of fact, it becomes a question of whether we want to practice cultivation and whether we are able to do so.

My current understanding of cultivation practice is as follows: The formation of human life is extremely complicated. A human body is itself a small universe--an idea that will never be expressed or clearly explained by modern science. It has a very complex interaction with and close relationship to the entire cosmos. It is a product of the cosmos and a part of the cosmos. Through a certain method, this complicated living being can elevate and ascend and ultimately achieve immortality--that is, it will live forever, never grow old, and attain great wisdom. It will enter a new high-level state. The method through which this can be achieved is called cultivation practice.

Cultivators and methods of cultivation practice have existed since ancient times. Having determined that I believe in the actual existence of cultivation practice, I then asked myself, "Do I want to practice cultivation? Am I able to practice cultivation?" To these questions I answered, "I am willing and able to practice cultivation." Since I wanted to practice cultivation, I then also asked, "Is Falun Dafa, which I am learning now, able to offer salvation to people?" Through careful study of the Fa and calm reflection, I confirmed my faith that Falun Dafa is able to offer salvation to people, that Falun Dafa is the universal law, that what Master has taught us is the righteous Fa and Tao, and that I definitely can improve myself, ascend in cultivation and eventually achieve eternal life and attain great wisdom. Thus, my confidence and determination in cultivation practice were strengthened, and I made up my mind to persist in my cultivation all the way to completion.

I realized that cultivation practice is the most important and most serious event in our lives, as it solves the essential problems of life. I also had further understanding of Teacher's statement, "Cultivation practice is a great and magnificent thing." (From Teacher's article "The Fa Rectifies the Human Heart") Therefore, I knew I should be strict with myself, maintain a serious attitude towards cultivation practice, follow Teacher's Fa closely, and cultivate my own xinxing solidly. After I became clear about the concept of cultivation practice, when I reflected on the tests and

tribulations in my path of cultivation, I found they were all about how to give up ordinary human attachments. Without letting go the pursuits of fame and self-interest, and the emotions of everyday people, we can never ascend. With this understanding in mind, I was able to let go of all ordinary human attachments. Meanwhile, I further understood what Teacher meant by, "With attachments left behind, the lightened boats sail swiftly. With a preoccupied human heart, crossing the ocean proves arduous." (From Teacher's poem "The Knowing Heart")

2. Different Meanings of Belief

The key to cultivation practice is belief. It is a simple truth that if we had no belief, we would not have come to practice cultivation. But I realized that belief has different meanings. In individual cultivation practice, it means to be a good person by following the requirements of the Fa--being strict with ourselves in every word we say and everything we do during our daily lives and in our work, as well as regarding ourselves as genuine practitioners of Falun Dafa, both while eliminating sickness karma and when caught up in conflicts. This does not seem very difficult. But we all will have tests to pass along our cultivation way. All tribulations are a test of our faith in Dafa and they will appear in various forms. For instance, when practitioners are captured and beaten, and they face the tribulation of life and death, they can pass this test only if they have rock-solid faith in Dafa and can let go of life and death. Many fellow practitioners have had such an experience. In a severe environment, we should always keep our powerful righteous thoughts; otherwise, it is hard to pass the tribulation. However, in a relaxed environment, our righteous thoughts are not as powerful. We might unconsciously act like everyday people, we might be deceived by the illusions of human society, or we might be tempted by the everyday people's pursuit of an easy and comfortable lifestyle. At this time, under the influence of thought karma and external interference, it is easy to have fleeting doubts about Dafa. Actually, this is simply another way to test our faith in Dafa. There is yet another situation: if we are stuck with some attachments for a long time and cannot let go of them, we will be immersed in the suffering caused by those attachments. This can also make us waver in our faith. It is extremely dangerous even if the wavering is slight, because the evil will always devise a false scene that makes us doubt whether the Fa exists, and whether we can cultivate and ascend in cultivation. At this time, only our righteous faith can help us pass the test.

According to my personal experience, our righteous faith in Dafa comes from our Fa study. The more we study the Fa, the more we will assimilate to the Fa. Eventually, we will be able to obtain "...the determination that Dafa disciples have developed from their true understanding of the Fa through cultivation and from their Buddha-nature after the elevation of their benti in actual cultivation." (From Teacher's article "Coercion Cannot Change People's Hearts") This determination is indestructible. In contrast, if we believe in Dafa out of ordinary human attachments, our belief is only something like an ordinary person's wishes, which cannot withstand tests. Because there are various tests, even if we can pass one, it may be hard for us to pass others. If we believe in Dafa with ordinary people's attachments, we will immediately look for the basis and reasons for our belief to see whether cultivation is worthwhile. Such a mentality stems from weakness, and it is dangerous. Cultivation practice involves enlightening through hardship in the maze. Only when we keep studying the Fa and striving forward diligently in cultivation can we really enlighten to the principles of the Fa--and only then can the Fa's broad and immense, profound, inner meaning manifest itself.

Moreover, different understandings of the Fa reveal our varying degrees of belief in the Fa. For example, Teacher said, "A Buddha is mighty capable, and he could wipe out all of humankind's illnesses with a wave of his hand. (From *Zhuan Falun*) For a certain period of time, I thought this

unbelievable and couldn't understand it. But now I firmly believe in it from the viewpoint of the Fa's principles. I know it is true. Another case in point: Teacher said, "At present, humankind's every day is arranged according to Dafa's needs; Dafa disciples' performance in the human world is to be left for history." (From Teacher's article "What Are Supernormal Abilities") Teacher also said, "Cherish the present time and make the best use of it--this time is meant for the disciples." (From Teacher's article "Lecture on the Fa at the Washington, D.C. International Conference") How do we understand these statements? I think the level of each practitioner's faith will determine how diligent he/she is in cultivation and how much effort he/she will put forth in Fa-rectification.

benti (bun-tee)--"own-body," "original-body," or "true being."

(To Be Continued)

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Be Clear About the Concept of Cultivation Practice and Continuously Break Through to Higher Levels (Part II)

-- My Personal Understanding of Cultivation amidst Fa-Rectification

(Clearwisdom.Net)

Continued from Part I: <http://www.clearwisdom.net/emh/articles/2002/1/4/17411.html>

(PART II)

3. Make Continuous Breakthroughs

Many fellow practitioners hold the common opinion that demonic interference is very severe now that the Fa is placing higher and stricter requirements on us, but I realize that almost all interference is caused by our own slackness, and by our not following the requirements of the Fa. Teacher said, "And the most outstanding evidence of that is that they always compare themselves with humans and with their own past, but fail to examine themselves with the requirements of the Fa at different levels" (From Teacher's article "*A Dialogue with Time*"). I had some experiences in this regard and have listed them briefly below.

Breaking through the sentimentality of nostalgia, and "fatigue"

It was in early autumn. Feeling the autumn wind and seeing the falling leaves, I said to a fellow practitioner, "The autumn scenery is my favorite. It always evokes a sentimental train of thought." It is true that I would always feel sentimental about the autumn scenery before I started cultivation practice, but when I said these words at the time to the fellow practitioner, I was actually indulging my emotions without realizing it. In those days, I would unconsciously begin

to call up my past memories and experience nostalgia. I would also dream about things that had happened in the past and about my old friends. Upon waking, I would enjoy thinking about the dreams again and again, and consider them beautiful. Later, I would always wake up in the middle of the night while dreaming and find it hard to fall asleep again. I began to worry that my shortage of sleep would make me feel less energetic during the day. (Actually such worry is also an attachment caused by an ordinary human mentality.) As a result, during that period of time, I did become very tired and sleepy during the day. This affected my normal study of the Fa, my exercise routine, and my Fa-rectification work until one day, when I awoke at midnight, the music from a fake qigong school--one noted for animal possession--was resounding in my ears. I began to realize that evil had been interfering with me. Since I was indulging in recalling past memories, the evil then devised some past scenes to interfere with me using various means.

It is also an attachment to be concerned about fatigue. Teacher said, "Because your worries themselves are attachments. So when you have attachments, we need to get rid of your attachments. You may then feel you are being interfered with; in fact, it occurred possibly because of your own heart" (From *Falun Buddha Fa Lecture at the Conference in New Zealand* -- unofficial translation). After realizing this I managed to eliminate the sentimentality of nostalgia and become strict with my every thought. Meanwhile, no matter how sleepy and tired I was, even though it felt like there was a thousand pound weight on my arms, I would keep doing my work with clenched teeth until I finished everything. Thus, I finally eliminated demonic interference, gave up the sentimentality of recalling the past, and broke through fatigue.

Breaking through the attachment of fear and "imagination"

For a period of time, I always wanted to go back home. (I had left my home to avoid persecution.) But whenever I had this thought, the attachment of fear would always follow. I felt very uncomfortable---I wanted to go home but was afraid to do so. I even dreamed that I had been captured. My homesickness became stronger and stronger, while my attachment of fear became bigger and bigger. I realized this was another form of interference from evil, which was increasingly strengthening my homesickness while constantly creating illusions to frighten me. It tortured me by making me imagine how I would be caught and arrested. Therefore, I tried hard to let go of my emotions. After I had given up the attachment of fear, I felt it necessary to go back home for righteous reasons, not because of any strong emotions. So, having overcome this attachment, I eliminated the interference and resolutely went back home.

There is another form of interference: before we do something, it makes us imagine some scary scenes and plots. Sometimes it even makes us see clearly in our minds that we are being arrested. It makes us confused and unsure whether it is our own premonition or a hint from Teacher. We feel unsure about doing anything, and our normal lives and Fa-rectification work are severely affected. When this happened, I tried to understand it clearly from the standpoint of the Fa. I realized that it is the most sacred thing in the world for us Dafa disciples to help Teacher in the human world, and that we should not be captured and beaten for this. Presently, all the persecution of Dafa disciples is in fact the persecution of Dafa. Our Teacher arranged our cultivation practice path, so we should radically oppose any arrangements by the old forces. Teacher said, "A Dafa disciple completely opposes everything arranged by the evil old forces." (From Teacher's article "*Dafa is Indestructible*") All the dangerous "imagination" are actually created and sent to our minds by the evil ones, who take advantage of our degenerate concepts that we will be arrested when going out to do Fa-rectification. They first make us acknowledge it and then persecute us whenever they find some loopholes. With this in mind, I would eliminate any "imagination" of this sort and strengthen my own righteous thoughts.

Teacher once said, "You should not always feel afraid that you are ill as such a fear is an attachment as well, which could bring you trouble, too." (From *Zhuan Falun*) Then, isn't it an attachment to be afraid of being arrested and beaten? Isn't it the same reason? Teacher also said, "If a cultivator can let go of the thought of life and death under any circumstances, evil is bound to be afraid of him. If every practitioner is able to do this, evil will of itself no longer exist" (From Teacher's article "*Eliminate Your Last Attachment(s)*"). Since I understood these principles from within the Fa, I broke through the attachments of fear and "imagination" with my powerful righteous thoughts. After I broke through, I found that the imagined elements of fear didn't exist at all. I can't even remember what fear is. I truly experienced what Teacher said, "If you are not afraid, the factor that would make you afraid will become non-existent. This is not to be self-imposed, but is achieved by calmly and truly letting go of it" (From Teacher's article "*Eliminate Your Last Attachment(s)*").

Breaking through degenerate concepts and laziness

Around the first week in October, I felt tired and sleepy all day and I was in a bad mood. I thought it was because of a sharp pain during meditation, elimination of karma, and the great consumption of energy while sending forth righteous thoughts. I thought I would recover soon; however, the situation didn't change, but instead became more serious. Some fellow practitioners pointed out to me that I had some attachments in my heart, but I couldn't find any problems. One day, when I was doing the standing stance and embracing the wheel, I suddenly realized that I was cultivating in the most righteous Fa in the universe, and I too was most righteous. Why should I worry about my ability to eliminate the vicious old forces? I definitely have the ability to eliminate them. I should do things amidst the Fa-rectification nobly and aboveboard. I felt relaxed right away, as if a wall in front of me had just fallen. I dug further into the origin of the attachment and found it was actually a degenerate human mentality: I was afraid of being envied by others, so pretending to be very modest, I eventually lost confidence in myself. I realized that modesty belongs to principles at the human level, while divine beings don't need it. What divine beings need is truth and to do what should be done. Lack of confidence in myself reflected a lack of righteous faith in Dafa. It is like a tall man who, afraid of others' envy and gossip about his height, always lowers his head and bends his back until eventually he becomes a hunchback.

During that period of time, deep in my mind, I really worried whether I had the ability to eradicate the vicious old forces at higher levels. I had already realized that we should send forth righteous thoughts towards Jiang Zemin and Luo Gan, etc., eradicating directly the evil beings controlling them. But I thought that the evil beings controlling them might be old forces from higher levels and began to doubt my ability. In fact, it was this degenerate concept that prevented me from maintaining righteous faith in Dafa, and from realizing that I am cultivating in the fundamental Fa of the universe and doing the most sacred thing in the world by participating in Fa-rectification. It was this degenerate concept that made me doubt the supernormal ability I had obtained in the cultivation of Dafa. In addition, I realized that I was very slack during that time. Selfishness was hiding behind my slackness--I would always regard my Fa study as the first priority, thinking that I was ascending as long as I could grasp more Fa principles. I put Fa-rectification work in second place, regarding it as only a task. As long as I could finish my own tasks, I would feel satisfied. To some extent, I was doing Fa-rectification work out of an ordinary human mentality.

To sum up, why were demons interfering in my affairs? Teacher said, "Demonic interference occurs because we have inadequacies. When you conduct yourself well, you're already winning the battle, and Master will take care of you." (From *Falun Buddha Fa Lecture at the Conference*)

in Singapore) I had more understanding of the importance of what Teacher said. "Without knowing the Fa at high levels, one cannot practice cultivation. Without cultivating one's inner self and one's xinxing, one cannot increase cultivation energy. These are the two reasons." (From *Zhuan Falun*) It is true that we cannot neglect cultivation of our hearts while studying the Fa, and we cannot neglect studying the Fa while cultivating in Fa-rectification. Neither can be missing.

(To Be Continued)

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Be Clear About the Concept of Cultivation Practice and Continuously Break Through to Higher Levels (Part III)

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(PART III)

(Part II: <http://www.clearwisdom.net/emh/articles/2002/1/5/17456.html>)

4. Prevent Demonic Interference from One's Own Mind

Having previously enlightened to some Fa principles and having my own understanding of the process of Fa-rectification, I wrote a few articles for Minghui Net--two of which were published. I was delighted, and the attachments of showing off and complacency arose. Although I warned myself while writing the articles that no matter what I enlightened to, the wisdom was from Dafa and I shouldn't feel complacent and conceited, these attachments still manifested in very hidden and diverse ways. If we have any thoughts that are not righteous enough, these two attachments will take root deeply in our hearts and grow rapidly as if they had found fertile soil. Worst of all, once we develop such attachments, it is hard to be aware of their existence. Occasionally we may sense their presence; however, as soon as we start to restrain them, they slip away if we fail to eradicate them completely. Yet we don't realize this and still feel that we are cultivating pretty well. When these attachments are employed and enhanced by demons, and mixed with our thought karma, they can shake our belief in Dafa, or even make us have some evil thoughts towards Teacher and Dafa (Of course they are just fleeting thoughts.)

When this occurred to me, I suddenly realized how dangerous these attachments are. Without Teacher, without Dafa, what am I cultivating and practicing? What Fa principles can I understand without a foundation? Therefore, in front of Teacher's picture, I said, "If I betray Teacher and do not respect Dafa, I ask for destruction of my body and soul." With great effort, I began to eliminate these dirty attachments of showing off and complacency, while recognizing the demonic interference that was supporting and strengthening them. Determined to get rid of demonic interference, I studied the Fa with a calm mind, did Fa-rectification work carefully,

maintained powerful righteous thoughts to restrain and eventually eliminate the attachments, and sent forth righteous thoughts to eradicate the demonic interference. After a painful period of time, I finally got rid of it.

Later on, when I reflected on this, I found that if I could not have dealt with this calmly and in time, I would have run the risk of developing demonic interference from my own mind. I also understood that the reason some who enlightened along an evil path betrayed Teacher and Dafa was that they suffered from demonic interference from their own minds. Even though their Celestial Eyes were not open and they could not see anything, they had the attachment of conceit, of being swollen with pride. Once they regarded themselves "higher than" Dafa, or enlightened to "higher principles of truth," they were done for and dropped down. This state, coupled with their everyday people's attachments, completely finished them. At this time, if they studied the Fa as though studying ordinary people's theories, that would be more dangerous because they would judge the principles of Dafa and analyze the connotation of Dafa using ordinary human mentalities. The results would be terrible. It would be extremely easy for them to be taken advantage of by demons, and they would drop down all the way to the bottom.

Then why does demonic interference arise? The key reason is that there are omissions in our cultivation practice, especially in small matters that we have not paid much attention to, and in some bad thoughts that we indulge in when we are not strict with ourselves. I better understand now that cultivation practice is very serious. We must keep our righteous faith in Dafa, not only in critical moments, but also when we are in relatively relaxed environments. We should judge every thought from the viewpoint of the Fa. If it is not in agreement with Dafa, we should get rid of it immediately, so that evil has no opportunity to take advantage of us. Let's study the following part of Teacher's Fa together:

"Someone has asked me: 'Teacher, why don't you eliminate this problem?' Think about it everyone: If we clear all obstacles in your path of cultivation practice, how will you practice cultivation? It is under the circumstance of demonic interference that you can demonstrate whether you can continue your cultivation, be really enlightened to the Tao, be unaffected by interference, and be sure-footed in this school of practice. The great waves shift the sand, and that is what cultivation practice is all about. What is left in the end will be genuine gold... It is very difficult to save a person, yet so very easy to ruin a person. Once your mind is not right, your will be ruined at once"(From Zhuan Falun).

Finally, my understanding is that at the present crucial moment, in the last stage of Fa-rectification, "the mind must be upright" and "the main consciousness must play a governing role." We should follow Teacher's words, "Take every step well, and don't tarnish what you have already attained. Let the part of you that has been fully cultivated glow with an even purer brilliance" (From Teacher's article "Eliminate Your Last Attachment(s)").

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