Chapter IV  The Philosophy of Value as the Guiding Principle of Life

Paragraph II  Criterion for Value Judgement

6 Extreme Good and Extreme Evil

Small evil turns by degrees into great evil along with the rise of social status, to say nothing of great evil which turns into extreme evil entailing great punishment. The reverse is the case with good.

The higher the social status rises, the greater the reward of good and the retributions for evil. A person who indifferently sees a fire on the other side of a river is unaware of this law, but if he/she assumes the case of finding fire next door to his/her home, he/she can clearly understands the law.

Suppose that someone robs a poor family which lives from hand to mouth or that he/she persecutes directly or indirectly a law-abiding citizen. Even if the crime is the same, whether it be committed by an
ordinary citizen, a policeperson, a police-station chief, a prefectural
governor/governess or a state minister/ministress, but its influence
on society and accordingly the retribution for the crime is respectively
different according to the social status of the criminal. For the same
reason, a teacher who should teach pupils to do good deeds must suffer
heavy retribution for committing a crime, even though his/her social
status is not so high. Since he/she is a teacher who advises youths, his/
her evil deeds will, so to speak, result in exerting a bad influence on a
rice nursery.

Therefore, much more serious are the sin committed by Buddhist
and Shinto priests who belong to a higher class than these people and
exert a bad influence. Even if it is minor evil, it turns into the greatest
evil and entails a retribution for extreme evil. Needless to say, if a person
opposes great good and supports great evil, or hates and envies great
good and cater to great evil, he/she will naturally suffer extremely heavy
punishment for his/her extreme evil deeds. This law is more applicable to
a good person than to an evil person, and much more to a learned person
of high virtue who holds high status and commands much respect as a
great good person than to a good person. The more respectable a person
is, the more he/she should caution his/herself against violating this law.
If Yen-hoi had opposed Confucius, this second-order sage would turn into
a great evil person, and if Confucius had opposed Shakyamuni, he would
immediately suffer an extremely heavy retribution for extreme evil.
Therefore, Nichiren Daishonin stated in *The Opening of Eyes*,

“Confucius declared that there were no worthies or sages in his
country, but that in the land to the west there was one named Buddha
who was a sage. This indicates that non-Buddhist texts should be
regarded a first step toward Buddhist doctrine.”
Therefore, those who flatter themselves that they are ordinary good persons or great good persons can’t be trusted, because there is a possibility that persons of higher character, great good persons than them may appear or that better laws than the existing ones may be established. In this case, we can understand only from the viewpoint of the philosophy of value that the higher the social status is, the greater the retribution is.

Heartily admiring and following great good, I think, is much more difficult than jumping bravely into the jaws of death for opposing great evil. Actually the present world is a horrible and evil world---the evil worlds of five impurities in the latter day prophesied by Shakyamuni three thousand years ago. This evil world must be ascribed to high-ranking priests, virtuous priests, wise persons, learned persons who hold high social status and appear to be wise and virtuous. They hate, envy and scorn great good, and cater to and support great evil, striving only to defend their positions and maintaining their status quo. The evil committed by these persons of higher social status is far worse than great evil committed by robbers and murderers or than great social evil brought about by both rightists and leftists. We can understand for the first time the precept given by the Buddha as follows.

“Those who fall into the evil paths because of their mistaken practice of Buddhism outnumber the dust particles of the land, while those who attain the Buddha way by practicing the correct teaching are fewer than the specks of dirt that can be placed on a fingernail.” (On the Buddha’s Prophecy p. 400)

These considerations on the basis of the philosophy of value may be difficult to be understood for university professors or professional persons of religion who make it their business to teach secondhand
knowledge of sacred scriptures or academic theories like merchandise in order to maintain their positions and livelihoods. They think of social evil as unrelated to themselves and are content with the prejudice that they need not share gains or losses of the society as a whole.

No other parents are more lonesome than parents who have been disobeyed by their children, because the children were their closest of kin but become much estranged from them. If the children are not kin, the parents can forget all about them when they are out of sight and will not feel mental pain during that period. However, things are different if they are kin. Spiritual relationship cannot be easily broken, however far away the bodies may be. The farther the children are from them, the more the parents are worried about the children. The children can forget their parents, but the parents cannot forget their children. This is the reason why disobedience to one's parents turns into the great evil, because one opposes great good.