

**THE ECONOMY OF HUMAN
LIFE: TRANSLATED FROM AN
INDIAN MANUSCRIPT WRITTEN
BY AN ANCIENT BRAMIN**

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The Economy of Human Life: Translated from an Indian Manuscript Written by an Ancient Bramin by A. Anderson

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A. ANDERSON

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TO THE PUBLIC.

THE spirit of virtue and morality which breaths in this ancient piece of Eastern instruction, *its force and conciseness, and the hopes that it may do good, have prevailed with the person to whom it was sent, to communicate to the public what was translated only for his particular amusement. There are some reasons, which at present make it proper to conceal not only his own name, but the name of his correspondent, who has now resided in China several years, and been engaged in a business very different from that of collecting literary curiosities.... These reasons will not subsist long; and, as he seems to intimate a design on his return to England, to publish an entire translation of Cao-Tsou's whole journey, the public then, in all probability, will have an opportunity of being satisfied concerning any particulars which they may be curious to know.

* Meaning the first part which was published some time before the other appeared.



INTRODUCTION.

BOW down your heads unto the dust,
O ye inhabitants of the earth! be silent,
and receive with reverence, instruction
from on high.

Wheresoever the sun doth shine, where-
soever the wind doth blow, wheresoever
there is an ear to hear, and a mind to con-
ceive: there let the precepts of life be
made known, let the maxims of truth be
honoured and obeyed.

All things proceed from God. His power is unbounded, his wisdom is from eternity, and his goodness endureth for ever.

He sitteth on his throne in the centre, and the breath of his mouth giveth life to the world.

He toucheth the stars with his finger, and they run their course rejoicing.

On the wings of the wind he walketh abroad, and performeth his will through all the regions of unlimited space.

Order, and grace, and beauty, spring from his head.

The voice of wisdom speaketh in all his works; but the human understanding comprehendeth it not.

The shadow of knowledge passeth over the mind of man as a dream: he seeth as in the dark, he reasoneth, and is deceived.

But the wisdom of God is as the light of heaven; he reasoneth not; his mind is the fountain of truth.

Justice and mercy wait before his throne; benevolence and love enlighten his countenance for ever.

Who is like unto the lord in glory?
Who in power shall contend with the almighty? Hath he any equal in wisdom?

INTRODUCTION. 11

Can any in goodness be compared unto him ?

He it is, O man! who hath created thee! thy station on earth is fixed by his appointment: the powers of thy mind are the gifts of his goodness, the wonders of thy frame are the work of his hand.

Hear then his voice ; for it is gracious? and he that obeyeth, shall establish his soul in peace.



BOOK I.

DUTIES THAT RELATE TO MAN, CONSIDERED AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

CHAP. I.

CONSIDERATION.

COMMUNE with thyself, O man! and consider wherefore thou wert made.

Contemplate thy powers; contemplate thy wants, and thy connexions; so shalt thou discover the duties of life, and be directed in all thy ways.

Proceed not to speak, or to act, before thou hast weighed thy words, and ex-

CONSIDERATION. 13

mined the tendency of every step thou shalt take ; so shall disgrace fly far from thee, and in thy house shall shame be a stranger ; repentance shall not visit thee, nor sorrow dwell upon thy cheek.

The thoughtless man bridlcth not his tongue ; he speaketh at random, and is entangled in the foolishness of his own words.

As one that runneth in haste, and leapeth over a fence, may fall into a pit on the other side which he does not see ; so is the man that plungeth suddenly into an action, before he hath considered the consequences thereof.

Hearken therefore unto the voice of consideration : Her words are the words of wisdom, and her paths shall lead thee to safety and truth.



CHAP. II.

MODESTY.

WHO art thou, O man! that presumest on thine own wisdom? or why dost thou vaunt thyself on thine own acquisitions?

The first step towards being wise, is to know that thou art ignorant; and, if thou wouldst not be esteemed foolish in the judgment of others, cast off the folly of being wise in thine own conceit.