

itself was even regarded as the fruit of a sacrifice performed by the Supreme Being. The Yajna exists as an invisible thing at all times, it is like the latent power of electricity in an electrifying machine, requiring only the operation of a suitable apparatus in order to be elicited. It is supposed to extend, when unrolled, from the Ahavanîya or sacrificial fire into which all oblations are thrown, to heaven, forming thus a bridge or ladder, by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of gods and spirits, and even ascend when alive to their abodes. The term for beginning the sacrificial operations is "to spread the sacrifice;" this means that the invisible thing, representing the ideal sacrifice which was lying dormant, as it were, is set into motion, in consequence of which its several parts or limbs are unfolding themselves, and thus the whole becomes extended. This ideal sacrifice stands in the closest relationship with all the sacrificial implements, the sacrificial place, and all the sacred verses and words spoken during its actual performance. The sacrifice being often represented as a kind of being with a body like that of men, certain ceremonies form his head, others his neck, others his eyes, &c. The most important thing at a sacrifice is, that all its several parts should tally together, and that consequently there should neither anything be in excess, nor deficient in it. This agreeing of the several parts of the sacrifice constitutes its *rûpa*, i. e. form. The proper form is obtained, when the mantras which are repeated are in