

sacrificial formulas may be a few hundred years more ancient still, so that we would fix the very commencement of Vedic Literature between 2400-2000 B.C. If we consider the completely authenticated antiquity of several of the sacred books of the Chinese, such as the original documents, of which the Shu-king, or Book of History, is composed, and the antiquity of the sacrificial songs of the Shi-king, which all carry us back to 1700-2200 B.C., it will certainly not be surprising that we assign a similar antiquity to the most ancient parts of the Vedas. For there is nowhere any reason to show, that the Vedas must be less ancient than the earliest parts of the sacred books of the Chinese, but there is on the contrary much ground to believe, that they can fully lay claim to the same antiquity. Already at the time of the composition of the Brâhmaṇas, which as we have seen, cannot be later than about 1200 B.C., the three principal Vedas, *i. e.* their respective Saṃhitâs, were believed to have proceeded directly from the mouth of Prajâpati, the lord of the creatures, who occupies in the early Vedic mythology the same place which is, in the later writings, held by Brahma-deva. This could not have been the case, had they not been very ancient. In a similar way the Chinese ascribe the ground text of their most ancient and most sacred book, the *Y-king*, *i. e.* Book of Changes, to a kind of revelation too, which was made to *Fuhi*, the Adam of the Chinese, by a Dragon horse, called *Lung-ma*.

Speculations on the nature of the sacrificial rites,