

the year 1766 B.C., whilst almost all other pieces in the collection are composed from the earlier part of the reign of the Chou dynasty down almost to Confucius' time (from 1120 B.C. till about 600 B.C.)

If we consider that the difference of time between the purely sacrificial and non-sacrificial hymns of the Chinese thus amounts to about 1,000 years, we would not be very wrong in presuming similar intervals to exist between the different hymns of the Rigveda. Rishis like Kâvya Us'anâs, Kakshîvat, Hiranyastûpa, to whom several hymns are traced, were for the Kaṇvas, Vis'vâmitra, Vasishṭha, &c. as ancient personages, as the emperors Tang (1765 B.C.) and Wuwang (1120 B.C.) to Confucius (born 551 B.C.)

On account of the utter want of Indian chronology for the Vedic and post-Vedic times, it will be of course for ever impossible to fix exactly the age of the several hymns of the Rigveda, as can be done with most of the psalms and many of the odes of the Shi-king. But happily we possess at least one astronomical date which furnishes at any rate the external proof of the high antiquity of Vedic literature, which considerably tends to strengthen the internal evidence of the same fact. I here mean the well known passage in the Jyotisham, or Vedic calendar, about the position of the solstitial points. The position there given carries us back to the year 1181 according to Archdeacon Pratt's, and to 1186