

the identity of the name of the Chinese astronomers under different reigns (they appear, according to the Chou-King, to be called *Hi* and *Ho*,) that at this remote epoch their profession was hereditary, as in India, Egypt, and Babylon.

The only more ancient Chinese observation, which does not bear in itself the proof of its own falsity, is that of the observation calculated by Tcheou-Kong, about 1100 before Christ, and even that is incorrect.(1)

Our readers may thus judge that the inferences drawn from the high perfection of the astronomy of ancient people are not more conclusive in favour of the excessive antiquity of these people than the testimonies which they have adduced in their own favour.

But what would this astronomy prove if it were even more perfect? Have we calculated the progress which a science could make in the bosom of nations which, in some sort, had no other; when the serenity of the sky, the wants of a pastoral or agricultural life, and superstition made the stars an object of universal contemplation; when colleges of the most respected men were charged with keeping a register of interesting phenomena, and of transmitting their memory of them; where the inheritance of the profession caused children to be brought up from the cradle in the knowledge acquired by their fathers? If amongst the multitude of persons solely occupied with astronomy, there were one or

(1) See in 'La Connoissance des Temps,' of 1809, p. 382, and M. Delambre's 'History of Ancient Astronomy,' v. i. p. 391, extracted from a Memoir of P. Gaubil, on the observations of the Chinese.