

The chief contents of the long inscription in Chinese, which contains 1789 characters, may be thus summarised:—1st. An abstract of Christian doctrine, of a very vague and figurative kind. This vagueness is perhaps partly due to the character of the Chinese language, but that will scarcely account for the absence of all intelligible enunciation of the Crucifixion, or even of the death, of our Lord Jesus Christ, though his Ascension is declared. 2nd. An account of the arrival of the missionary, OLOPAN,¹ from the empire of Tathsin in the year 635, bringing sacred books and images; of the translation of the said books (a notable circumstance); of the approval of his doctrine by the imperial authority, and the permission given to teach it publicly. There follows a decree of the emperor (Taitzung) issued in 638 in favour of the new doctrine, and commanding the construction of a church in one of the public places of the capital. The emperor's portrait was to be placed in the church. After this comes a short description of Tathsin (here, says Pauthier, specially meaning Syria) from Chinese geographical works; and then there are

reigning in 781 is a perfectly natural result of the long distance from the Patriarchal see. The anachronism is in fact, *quantum valeat*, evidence of the genuineness of the monument. *Saragh*, according to Pauthier, is Loyang in Honan, one of the capitals of the Thang, and occupied as such by the Imperial Government for a time, between the introduction of Christianity and the date of the monument.

¹ This name according to Pauthier is Syriac; *Alo-pano* signifying the *Return of God*. If this, however, be an admissible Syriac name, it is singular that the original should have been missed by one so competent as Assemani, who can only suggest that the name was the common Syriac name *Jaballaha*, from which the Chinese had dropt the first syllable, adding a Chinese termination.

Might not *Olopan* be merely a Chinese form of the Syriac *Rabban*, by which the Apostle had come to be generally known?

It is fair, however, to observe that the name in the older versions used by Assemani is written *Olopuen*, which might have disguised from him the etymology proposed by Pauthier. The name of this personage does not appear in the Syriac part of the inscription.

Saragh, it may be added, is referred by Pauthier to the *Saraga* of Ptolemy, a city placed by the geographer among the *Sinæ*, and according to his theory of course far to the south of the real position of Loyang. But we have seen reason to believe that Ptolemy's view of the *Sinæ* and *Seres* is that of a person using his right and left eye separately. Binocular vision reduces the two objects to one, and corrects their displacement.