Ye-Shes-sDe; Tibetan Scholar and Saint

Dr. Sherab Raldz

It was being held for a long time that a large number of Buddhist texts have been translated by the Tibetan scholars. While the presupposition turned out gradually to be true, what, in fact was not equally certain was the number of texts translated, the areas where emphasis was laid and the scholars who were involved in the act of translation. The researches so far undertaken both by the Tibetan, Asian and western scholars appear to be inadequate in terms of the quality of information which they have obtained and the way they have sorted out their information. One of the Indian scholars who claims to have done some ground work in his book on Tibetan Literature is Rahul Saksabha. Rahul intended to formulate a list of scholars starting with the 7th century A.D. and closed it in the 17th century. The list might be useful as pioneering work; nevertheless Rahul's over enthusiasm about the Indian scholars had blighted the facts of history on a number of occasions. This is revealed by a subsequent work, which was more detailed and somewhat exhaustively evidenced by the Tibetan sources. Guide to the Nyingma Edition of the sDe-dge-bKa'-gyur/bsTan-'gyur edited and produced by Tarchang Tulku evidently is more informative and therefore more reliable have contradicted some information provided by Rahul on logical grounds.


No reliable biographical information could be obtained about Ye-Shes-sDe except that he belonged to the Nyingma [Ancient] sect and that he lived in the later part of the 8th century and in the early decades of the 9th century A.D. One reference to the Bengal ruler Dharmara Pala in the context of Ye-Shes-sDe has suggested the probable date which is mentioned in the Tibetan sources almost in unimmitry declared that Ye-Shes-sDe was a contemporary of Upadhyaya Santarakshita and Aclarya Padmasambhava. In the course of our investigation an important point has emerged which suggests some textual scrutiny. It has been
mentioned in the Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, compiled by Khesun Sangpo. Vol. III and having drawn largely from Thang-yig, of Padmasambhava in which the biographical data about Vairocana had elaborately figured out that the names of the translators of the tantras, sutras, grammar etc. had been different. It had been suggested that the principal translator was Vairocana and he had used his name while translating the tantras and had assumed non-de-plume as Ye-Shes-sDe while translating the sutras. It had been further suggested that other names had been used whose part had been translated by Vairocana. Therefore, it appears that the translator Ye-Shes-sDe whose reference appeared along with the translations of texts listed in the subsequent part of the mudry was the same person as Vairocana. But the decision on this issue cannot be taken with certainty at this stage due to the fact that this position held by Thang-yig is not adequately evidenced by other Tibetan texts. In the majority of the tantra texts translated and listed out by as the name of Ye-Shes-sDe has been mentioned in place of Vairocana; so, the question if Ye-Shes-sDe was the original name and Vairocana being the non-de-plume or the other way round virtually remained an unanswered question. On closer scrutiny it has been found that Ye-Shes-sDe had been inclined more towards Sutra and Tantra and in addition to that he took interest in many other subjects. It has been further observed that Ye-Shes-sDe had composed three books, which presumably dealt with his philosophy.

The books which have been translated by Ye-Shes-sDe are the following:

Kasgur

S.No Title of the books Assistant Translator/Translators

1 Sattasrisika-prajnaparamita Kham-pa Go-che, Bās Manjāśr Nyang-De Brag, Vairocana; Nyang-De I.Ce Khyi-brug

2 Arya-asyadassassirasika-prajnaparamita-nama-Mahayana-sutra Others

3 Arya-dassasrasikaprajnaparamitana-mahayana-sutra Jinaratna and Prajñavasum

4 Arya-svairavikramapariprachi-prajnaparamita Silendrabodhi and Jinaratna Nirdesa

5 Arya-pancaSatika-prajnaparamita Silendrabodhi and Jinaratna

6 Arya-vajracchedi-sataprajnaparamita-mahayana-sutra Silendrabodhi

7 Buddha-avatamsaka-satamahavapalaya-sutra Jinaratna and Surendrabodhi

8 Arya-maharajakosa-dhanaparyaya-satapaha-Sri-bhratrisamvara-nirdeśa-sri riv iva-nama

21
Mahayana-sutra
28 Arya-sakya-muni-pariprecha-nama-
Prajnaparamita
29 Arya-samadhisarita-pariprecha-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
30 Arya-vagottara-pariprecha-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
31 Arya-adhikadatta-rakshaka-lama-mahayana-
sutra
32 Arya-vimaladatta-pariprecha-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
33 Arya-gunaratna-sahasra-pariprecha-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
34 Arya-vijntya-buddha-visayanirdesa-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
35 Arya-sushashnamati-devaputra-pariprecha-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
36 Arya-svabhavapariprecha-nama-mahayana-sutra
37 Arya-sarvabuddha-tadvahasaropa-yakausalya-
Jnanottarabodhisattva-pariprecha-parivarta-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
38 Arya-bhadrapurarethi-pariprecha-smara-
Mahayana-sutra
39 Arya-mahsrya-pariprecha-nama-mahayana-sutra
40 Arya-maitreyya-pariprecha-nama-mahayana-sutra
41 Arya-kasyapa-parivarta-nama-mahayana-sutra
42 Arya-ratnasrasi-nama-mahayana-sutra
43 Arya-aksayamati-pariprecha-nama-mahayana-
sutra
44 Arya-saptasataka-nama-prajna-paramita-mahayana-
sutra
45 Arya-suvaladevi-simhanadisa-nama-mahayana-
sutra
46 Arya-vastu-putra-pariprecha-nama-mahayana-sutra

Jnanamitra and
Surendrabodhi
Jnanamitra and
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Jnanamitra and
Prajnavaram
Jnanamitra and
Dana sila
Dana sila and
Manivarman
Surendrabodhi
Prajnavaram
Dana sila
Manivarman
Dana sila
Karnavaram
Jnanamitra and
Surendrabodhi
Jnanamitra and
Surendrabodhi
Jnanamitra and
Dana sila
Jnanamitra and
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Jnanamitra and
Surendrabodhi
Jnanamitra and
Dana sila
47. Arya-lāravālṣṭara-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānārtha, 
   Danasila and Munivaman
48. Arya-manjarī-vikṣaṇa-sāma-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Surendrabodhi
49. Arya-manjarīvīkṣaṇa-parivarta-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   and Jñānmitra
50. Arya-sarvātathāgatagṛhi-thang-sattvavālokana-buddha-vyoha-vyāha-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra, 
   Surendrabodhi and Cu'li
51. Arya-samāśāda-sūtra-dharmapārṇyāya  
   Jñānmitra and Danasila
52. Arya-saṁyājaprabhāsa-nīdāna-nāma-dharmapārṇyāya  
   Surendrabodhi
53. Arya-sāravabuddha-vi-ayavatara-jñānolaka-alakāra-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Surendrabodhi
54. Arya-tathāgatanam-buddha-vyoha-vyāha-guṇa-tāta  
   Jñānmitra and Danasila
55. Arya-mandala-sūkṣma-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra
56. Arya-gaṇavijaya-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Surendrabodhi
57. Arya-gaṇavijaya-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra and Silendrabodhi
58. Arya-nāhakar-vaṃśavatikā-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra 
   and Silendrabodhi
59. Arya-karanapandarika-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra and 
   Surendrabodhi
60. Sadādharmapandarika-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Surendrabodhi
61. Arya-svāradharmagunavauḍara-nama-mahāyāna-sūtra  
   Jñānmitra
62. Arya-sukhavativyaha-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Surendrabodhi
63. Arya-svāradharmagunavauḍara-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra and Danasila
64. Arya-svāradharmagunavauḍara-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra
65. Arya-svāradharmagunavauḍara-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra and Surendrabodhi
66. Arya-svāradharmagunavauḍara-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra 
   and Pranavaranman
67. Arya-dharmasavābhava-sunnatacāla-pati-svālakṣaṇa-sūtra  
   Jñānmitra 
   and Danasila
68. Arya-prasiddha-nimisayapratiharya-samādhi-sūtra  
   Jñānmitra and Danasila
69. Arya-prasiddha-nimisayapratiharya-samādhi-sūtra  
   Jñānmitra and Danasila
70. Arya-svārahata-jānapadā-samādhi-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Jñānmitra, Munivanman 
   and Danasila
71. Arya-svārahata-jānapadā-samādhi-nama-mahāyāna-sutra  
   Pranavaranman 
   and Silendrabodhi

24
72. Arya-caturdanika-samadhi-nama-mahayana-sutra
   Jinamitra and Prajnavarman

73. Arya-mahasamnipata-ratnaketu-dharani-nama-
   Mahayana-sutra
   Silendrabodhi

74. Arya-vajrayananda-nama-dharani-mahayana-sutra
   Silendrabodhi

75. Arya-mahayamaprasadapratibhavanirvana-nama-
   Jinamitra and Danasila
   Mahayana-sutra

76. Arya-ratnakika-nama-dharani-mahayana-sutra
   Silendrabodhi

77. Arya-bodhisattvagocaryay-visvavaranir-
   Nirdesa-raima-mahayana-sutra
   Prajnavarman

78. Arya-tathagatamahakaruna-nirdela-nama-
   Mahayana-sutra
   Silendrabodhi

79. Arya-gopanaganaja-pariprcka-nama-nirayana-sutra
   Vijayasila and
   Silendrabodhi

80. Arya-pratibhanarati-pariprcka-nama-
   Mahayana-sutra
   Prajnavarman

81. Arya-sagaramati-pariprcka-nama-mahayana-sutra
   Jinamitra.
   Danasila and Buddhaprabha

82. Arya-sagaraparagaja-pariprcka-nama-mahayana-
   Jinamitra and
   Sutra
   Prajnavarman

83. Arya-sagaraparagaja-pariprcka-nama-
   Jinamitra, Danasila and
   mahayana-sutra
   Manivarm

84. Arya-sagaraparagaja-pariprcka-nama-
   Silendrabodhi
   mahayana-sutra

85. Arya-anavatapatanaja-pariprcka-nama-
   dCong-lings Raya
   Jinamitra

86. Arya-bhuma-pariprcka-nama-nabhairava-sutra
   Silendrabodhi

87. Arya-orahmahatva-pariprcka-nama-eubhairava-sutra
   and
   Prajnavarman

88. Arya-svankrama-cintadvapatra-pariprcka-nama-
   Prajnavarman
   Mahayana-sutra

89. Arya-adivasa-pariprcka-nama-mahayana-sutra
   Silendrabodhi

90. Arya-ksemarakara-pariprcka-nama-mahayana-sutra
   and
   Prajnavarman

91. Arya-rastrapala-pariprcka-nama-mahayana-sutra
   Jinamitra

92. Arya-vakra-rayaraja-pariprcka-nama-
   Prajnavarman
   mahayana-sutra

93. Arya-realhayanapadesa-nama-mahayana-sutra
   Jinamitra and
   Danasila

25
94. Arya-simhatmahakari-paśipṛcchā-nama-mahāyāna-
Surta
and Prajñavaran
95. Arya-mahalakṣi-paśipṛcchā-rāma-
Jñanītīra and Danasi
mahāyāna-sūtra
96. Arya-maṃjusṛi-nīrdeśa-maṇḍayāna-sūtra
Sūtradānita
97. Arya-bodhipakṣa-nīrdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Jñanītīra and Danasi
98. Arya-paśuparamita-nīrdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Jñanītīra
99. Ārya-danaparamita-aṇu-maṇḍayāna-sūtra
Prajñavaran
100. Ārya-danaparamita-aṇu-maṇḍayānasūtra
Sūtradānita
101. Ārya-bodhisattvayoga-nīrdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-
Jñanītīra and
-sūtra
Prajñavaran
102. Ārya-tathāgata-guna-jñanacintya-viśayavatara-
Jñanītīra
Nīrdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
103. Ārya-sutravarta-vyakarana-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
-Sūtradānita
and Silendrabodhi
104. Ārya-candrottaradarśi-vyakarana-nāma-mahāyāna-Jñanītīra
Surta
105. Ārya-aralokana-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Jñanītīra and Danasi
106. Ārya-maṃjusṛi-viśvāra-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Sūtradānita
107. Ārya-amṛtyubhāṣa-viśvāra-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Prajñavaran
108. Ārya-maṇḍaprapaṇa-pratipadana-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Prajñavaran,
Jñanītīra & Sūtradānita
109. Ārya-lokaśuddha-viśvāra-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Jñanītīra and Danasi
110. Ārya-tridhābahaladhanavatramudra-nāma-
Sūtradānita
Mahāyāna-sūtra
111. Ārya-niyatāyataśātmakamudravyāvahāra-nāma-mahāyāna-
Prajñavaran
Surta
and Sūtradānita
112. Ārya-pratipadāmya-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Prajñavaran
113. Ārya-pratijñānāntarpaṇa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Sūtradānita
114. Rajadesa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Danasi
115. Ārya-ādīgupta-nāma-sūtra
Jñanītīra and Danasi
116. Ārya-karmavāraṇa-vuddhīnāma-mahāyāna-sūtra-Jñanītīra and
Prajñavaran
117. Ārya-karmavāraṇa-pratijñānāntarpaṇa-nāma-
Jñanītīra and
Mahāyāna-sūtra
Danasi
118. Ārya-rajavādakā-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra
Jñanītīra and
Silendrabodhi
119. Ārya-trayāstimsvat-parivarta-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra-
Prajñavaran
120 Arya-suhidhyasaya-parivarta-nama-mahayana-sutra
121 Arya-bhavasamkranti-nama-mahayana-sutra

122 Arya-sarvavaidalya-sangaha-nama-mahayana-sutra

123 Arya-mahamegha-nama-mahayana-sutra
124 Arya-mahameghanendantadasagichchaitvam-sansara
Drusannipati-mahotsava-vikrimita-nama-parivarla
125 Arya-mahamegha-vayu-madala-parivarta-sarva
Naga-hridaya-nama-mahayana-sutra
126 Arya-mahamegha
127 Arya-dharmasamigiti-nama-mahayana-sutra
128 Arya-avavartacakra-nama-mahayana-sutra
129 Arya-dharmamaya-nama-mahayana-sutra
130 Arya-dharmakandha-nama-mahayana-sutra
131 Arya-paranarthadharmavijaya-nama-
Mahayana-sutra

132 Arya-dharmamurtajyabhanga-nama-mahayana-
Sutra
133 Arya-caturdharmatirdesa-nama-mahayana-sutra
134 Arya-tathagatagarbha-nama-mahayana-sutra
135 Arya-anasaraakarandaka-vairocanagarbha-nama-
Mahayana-sutra
136 Arya-asabuddhaka-nama-mahayana-sutra
137 Dasaabuddhaka-nama-mahayana-sutra
138 Arya-dvadasabuddhaka-nama-mahayana-sutra
139 Arya-buddhabhumi-nama-mahayana-sutra
140 Arya-buddhasphere-nama-mahayana-sutra
141 Arya-marigalasthaka-nama-mahayana-sutra
142 Arya-astamandala-nama-mahayana-sutra
143 Arya-trisandhika-nama-mahayana-sutra
144 Mayajalaka-nama-mahayana-sutra

Surendribodhi and
Prjnavaaman
Jinamitra and
Danasila
Surendribodhi
Jinamitra and
Danasila
Surendribodhi
Manjikartha,
Vijayasila and Silendrabodhi
Jinamitra and Dausilas
Jinamitra and
Danasila
Surendribodhi
Sakya-yartha
Jinamitra,
Danasila and Munivarman
Jinamitra and
Danasila
Surendrabodhi
Prjnavaaman
Jinamitra and
Danasila
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Danasila
Surendrabodhi
Durasila
Dunasila
Danasila
Jinamitra and
Prjnavaaman
Jinamitra and
Prjnavaaman
Surendrabodhi
Surendrabodhi
Self
Jinamitra and
Prjnavaaman
145 Bimbhasrpratyudgavarna-nama-mahasutra

146 Sanyata-nama-mahasutra

147 Mahasanyata-nama-mahasutra

148 Dhvajagro-nama-mah-asutra

149 Pancainraya-nama-mahasutra

150 Anayata-sutra

151 Arya-bhadrairiti-nama-sutra

152 Arthaviriscaya-nama-dharmaparyaya

153 Arya-adibhuta-dharmaparyaya-nama

154 Alpadavata-sutra

155 Karmavibhanga

156 Sakyikavacan-nama-sutra

157 Brahmarajali-sutra-Tantra

158 Arya-vajrapani-abhiska-Mahatantta

159 Arya-astadevi-dharnani

160 Arya-saptatathagata-purvakarodham-

161 Arya-bhagavato-bhaisajyage-ravurdya-

162 Arya-tathuganta-vardhuprabha-mana-baladham-

163 Arya-sravabhukthanta-nama-mahayana-sutra

164 Arya-saravabuddhangavati-arma-dharnani

165 Arya-buddhadayana-nama-dharnani-dharmaparyaya

166 Arya-buddhahardha-arma-nama-dharnani

167 Arya-vimala-arma-dharnani

168 Arya-candamang-nama-dharnani

169 Arya-mahashaktivara-nama-dharnani

170 Arya-avadharmagata-vayuhara-rajaa-

171 Arya-mahadhanani

172 Arya-vigesavat-jama-dharnani

173 Arya-suvamaprabhasottama-sutredhanta-

174 Mahasahasrapramardana-nama-sutra

Janamitra and
Pravaranman

Janamitra and Pravaranman

Janamitra and Pravaranman

Janamitra and Pravaranman

Sutredhodhi

Janamitra and
Janamitra and
Pravaranman

Self

Janamitra, Danasila and
Vunivarman

Janamitra

Self

Sutredhodhi

Sutredhodhi

Janamitra, Danasila and
Sutredhodhi

Sutredhodhi

Janamitra, Danasila and
Sutredhodhi

Janamitra and Danasila

Danasila

Janamitra and Danasila

Danasila

Janamitra and Danasila

Janamitra and Danasila

Janamitra and Danasila

Pravaranman and
Sutredhodhi

Janamitra and Danasila

Janamitra and Danasila

Janamitra and Danasila

Danasila

Sutredhodhi

Janasiddhi and Sokaprobha
207. আর্যাসমুন্তাহৃদ্রুমা-দর্শন
208. আর্যা-তুচ্ছাবৃত্তি-নামা-ধারণ
209. আর্যা-বাহুযাত্রাদ-নামা-স্বপ্নাতীত
210. আর্যা-সর্বায়ুতহস্ত-আদিত্যন-সাগরকলণাবৃত্তি-ক্ষরী-নির্দেশান্ন-যুস্ম-নামা-মহাযাত-সুত্র
211. আর্যা-বালকিতেসবরাণি-নাম-ধারণ
212. আর্যা-মহালক্ষ্মী-সুত্র
213. সি-দ্বিন্দুযাত্রা-কাীত
214. ভূজ্মোদিতোনা-নামা-ধারণ
215. আর্যা-মহাবজ্ঞাতমুর্তি-সুক্ষ্মালক্ষ্মী-সুত্র-ধারণ
216. আর্যা-মহারাজগ্রামালক্ষ্মী-নাম-ধারণ-জিনমিত্র-দানাসিলা
217. আর্যা-দাসাবিন্যাস-নাম-ধারণ-জিনমিত্র
218. আর্যা-মহাব্রহ্ম-নাম-মহাযাত-সুত্র-সিলধারাক-নাম-ধারণ
219. আর্যা-মেকার্থন-নাম-ধারণ-সুত্র-সুদেব-দানাসিলা
220. আর্যা-মেকালাম-মহাসাত্ত্ব
222. মংসলাগাতথা
222. রাত্রিযায়বাসী-গাথা
223. রত্নপ্রকাশ-নাম-ধারণ-মহাযাত-সুত্র।
224. আর্যা-ধ্঵াপসাম্বুদ্র-নাম-মহাযাত-সুত্র
225. আর্যা-বুদ্ধায়-দ্যা-নাম-ধারণ-ধনায়প্রেয়ায়া-জিনমিত্র
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Jinamitra and Sarasvarman
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345 Buddhatatmatika by Ye-Shes-sDe Mangala
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In the final analysis it appears that Ye-Shes-sDe was not an ordinary
scholar taking interest in the Buddhist literature from India. The fact that he had
translated roughly three hundred forty seven texts, as far as our findings to date
go, he seemed to have not only mastered a large number of texts but also developed
considerable interest in varieties of texts. His versatility may reasonably surprise any scholar of any persuasion. His biographical information not being available in detail, have understandably left the scholar of Buddhist studies both in Tibet and India in a state of academic dissatisfaction.

In the present context of political turmoil in Tibet and the Tibetans having to hard to leave their homeland in a state of utter sorrow it turns out to be difficult to understand the level of civilizational excellence which Tibet had once reached. Nor is it easy to grasp the level of cordiality which had grown in the relationship between Tibet and India over the centuries. The instance of Ye-Shes-De amply suggest the closeness which was inscribed by the intellectuals of both countries. But the fact that he is not remembered by the scholars either in Tibet or in India is an act of civilizational disaster. However, by the researches we could have explored at least a part of the greatness of his man and could have given a glimpse of his activities.

Rajesh in Tibetan
Department of Sanskrit and Prakrit Languages,
Lucknow University, Lucknow.

Notes and References:

2. Rahul Sankrityayan, Tibetan Buddhism, New Delhi, 1948, Appendix.
4 Ibid
H.D. Shinkalia, Nalanda University.

1. Anur Taranatha, Dam-pai-chos Rin-po-cha 'phongs-yul-du Ji-l-Tar Dar-bai-tshul gsal-bar b'son-pa dGnas-'dod kun-byung,

6. 'Jig-sras bSnes rDo-rje, Pha-drang gYal-Las rGyal-Bai rNga-Bo Chei sGra-dbyangs.


8. Ibid., pp. 61-102.

9. Ye-Shes-sDe (1) Bhadacarya-astika-piadartha-bhismarana

(2) Darsivisesa

(3) Buddha-matika

10. Tarthang Tulku, op. cit.

11. Ibid

12. Ibid

13. Ibid


15. Ibid

Acknowledgement: I am extremely grateful to Prof. Tapas K. Roy Choudhury for writing this article. But for his assistance this research could not have been completed.