

A RIG RGAD PO THREATENS THE BUDDHA WITH HIS WALKING STICK

Sangs rgyas bkra shis སངས་རྒྱལ་བཀྲ་ཤིས།

I heard that A rig rgad po was from a place that has the name he is known by - A rig rgad po – which is near Mtsho sngon po (Qinghai Lake). The people there are very traditional, very direct in their manner, and devoted Buddhists. They often go on pilgrimage to Lha sa. Stories about A rig rgar po describe their travels and encounters with Buddhas in Lha sa. I heard stories about A rig rgad po from my father's brother, Mkhyen rab rgya mtsho (b. ~1973), during the time I was a student at a school in Rwa rgya (2005-2011).

A rig rgad po was a very pious Buddhist. Every year he went on pilgrimage from A mdo to Lha sa by walking to visit various Buddhas. One time when he reached Lha sa, he prostrated as usual to a Buddha image, offered a small skin bag of *rtsam pa* and butter to the Buddha image, prayed, and then told the Buddha image that he was leaving.

He had his walking stick on his back and when he tried to pass through the temple door, the walking stick prevented him from leaving.

A rig rgad po thought the Buddha must be holding him back and said, "Don't hold me! I have to leave."

He tried again to pass through the door, but could not. He said, "Please let me go! Don't make me angry. My wife and children are waiting for me. They can't herd livestock without me."

He tried again to go through the door but he could not. He was then enraged, turned, took his walking stick, and moved to strike the Buddha. The Buddha then raised his right hand to protect his head.

Sangs rgyas bkra shis. 2017. A rig rgad po Threatens the Buddha With His Walking Stick. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 47:154-155.

"I told you not to make me angry, but you didn't listen. Now, how was that?" A rig rgad po said, gripped his walking stick, and then passed through the door.

We can still see this Buddha image in Lha sa with his hand raised.

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

a mdo ཨ་མདོ།

a rig rgad po ཨ་རིག་རྒྱུ་པོ།

lha sa ལྷ་ས།

mkhyen rab rgya mtsho མཁྱེན་རབ་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

mtsho sngon po མཚོ་སྔོན་པོ།

rtsam pa རྩམ་པ།

rwa rgya རྩ་རྒྱ།

sangs rgyas bkra shis སངས་རྒྱས་བཀྲ་ཤིས།