

Contents

Foreword — VII

List of Figures — XIII

Note on Tibetan Language Terms — XV

Glossary of Key Terms — XVII

1 Introduction — 1

- 1.1 Advancing Our Understanding of Global Bon — 3
- 1.2 Scope of the Study — 5
- 1.3 Note on My Involvement in Bon — 7
- 1.4 Note on Methodology and Grounded Theory — 8

Part I: Contextualizing a Study of Bon in the West

2 Religion and Globalization: Impacts on Religion and Individual Practice — 13

- 2.1 The Intersection Between Religion and Globalization — 13
- 2.2 Between Universalizing and Particularizing Tendencies — 17
- 2.3 The Transformation of Religions? — 19
- 2.4 Lived Religion — 21

3 The Bon Religion: Contested Assertions — 25

- 3.1 So What Is “Bon”? — 27
- 3.2 The Teachings and Structures of “Institutionalized” Bon — 29
- 3.3 Dzogchen — 30
- 3.4 From Olmo Lungring to Tibet — 31
- 3.5 Buddha Tonpa Shenrab — 34

4 Tibetan Buddhism in the West — 37

- 4.1 Is It Really “Tibetan,” Is It Really “Buddhism”? — 37
- 4.2 Local Adaptations — 39
- 4.3 Orientalism and the “Idealized Tibet” — 40
- 4.4 Buddhist Modernism — 43
- 4.5 Shattering Idealism: Criticisms and Scandals — 45

Part II: The Emergence of a Global Bon

5 Bon Comes to the West — 51

- 5.1 The Transmission of Bon in the West: Key Figures — **53**
- 5.2 Bon Studies in the West — **64**
- 5.3 Scholarship and Spiritual Entanglements: Bon as the “Other” — **68**

6 Shenten Dargye Ling — 73

- 6.1 The Place for Spreading the Teaching of Lord Tonpa Shenrab — **74**
- 6.2 The Precedents — **76**
- 6.3 Looking for a Place — **78**
- 6.4 This is the Place — **84**
- 6.5 Structure and Objectives of Shenten Center — **85**
- 6.6 The Congregation and the Association — **88**
- 6.7 Retreats — **91**
- 6.8 A Western Bon Stupa — **98**
- 6.9 Newsletters and Other Means of Disseminating Information — **102**
- 6.10 Other Centers Associated with Shenten Dargye Ling — **103**

7 Ligmincha International — 107

- 7.1 Modernist Bon — **110**

Part III: Western Bonpos

8 Where Did We Come From? — 121

- 8.1 Narrating the Past — **123**

9 Becoming a Bonpo — 133

- 9.1 Hearing About Bon for the First Time — **140**
- 9.2 What is Bon for Participants? — **151**

10 Bon in Practice — 163

- 10.1 Teachings and Practices — **165**
- 10.2 Modern versus Traditional Approaches — **182**

11 Where Are We Going? — 205

- 11.1 Preserving Traditional Teaching Versus Adapting to Modern Cultures — 207
- 11.2 Influence of Technology — 212
- 11.3 COVID-19 and Bon in the Virtual Sphere — 213
- 11.4 Networked Bon — 214

12 Implications of a Globalized Bon — 217

- 12.1 “Embedded” Bon in Westerners’ Lives — 217
- 12.2 Globalized and Localized, Changed and Preserved — 218
- 12.3 Bonpos’ Unique Journey in Finding Their Place and Asserting Their Identity — 221
- 12.4 Virtual Bon — 223
- 12.5 East–West and Back — 223

13 Conclusion — 231

Appendices

Appendix A — 235

- Ethics and Methodology — 235
- Additional Information on Participants — 235
- More on Conducting Grounded Theory for this Study — 236

Appendix B — 239

- Example of Participants’ Schedule during a Gomdra Retreat at Shenten — 239

References — 241

Index — 261