

The Flight of the Garuda,

second revised edition, compiled and translated by Keith Dowman, Wisdom Publications, 2003, ISBN 0-86171-367-2, pp. 218, price US\$ 16,95.

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The Flight of the Garuda is a collection of some important Dzogchen texts translated by Keith Dowman from Tibetan into English. In the second revised edition, Dowman added the translation of *Extraordinary Reality of Sovereign Wisdom* by Patrul Rinpoche. Dowman has also revised the translations of the Dzogchen texts published in the first, 1994, edition.

The book consists of an introduction and five chapters. Each chapter starts with a short introduction, too, where Dowman gives brief accounts of the authors' lives and general contents of the translated texts together with explanations of some difficult points. These explanations by Dowman are extremely helpful especially for readers with no or little knowledge of Dzogchen practices.

In the introduction, Dowman explains the fundamentals of the Dzogchen practice and describes his personal experience within this tradition. The first chapter (pp. 39–48) contains a translation of the litany *Emptying the Depths of Hell*, a treasure text of Guru Rinpoche Chokyi Wangchug (1212–1280), re-discovered in the nineteenth century and published by Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche.

The second chapter (pp. 49–110) offers a translation of *The Flight of the Garuda* written by Shabkar Lama Tsogdrug Rangdrol (1781–1851). The text contains a collection of twenty-three mystical songs. In order to make the translation, as exact as possible, Dowman has rendered the poems in prose. Still, even in prose form, these songs remain quite difficult to understand.

Chapter three (pp. 111–124) contains *The Wish-Granting Prayer of Kuntu Zangpo* revealed by Rigdzin Godemchen (1337–1409). Chapter four (pp. 125–158) is a translation of *Secret Instruction in a Garland of Vision* attributed to Padmasambhava, a tantric yogin who lived in Tibet in the second half of the 8th century. The *Garland of Vision* conveys secret instructions in Dzogchen vision, meditation and action. The introductory part of this chapter gives detailed explanations and comments on the text, which seem to go back to two Tibetan commentaries on this text, written by Rongdzom Pandita (11th century) and Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche Lodro Taye (1813–99). Dowman mentions both commentaries but does not clearly say which of the two he has used.

