



Manuscript reference: Ds 042

The first three folios of this manuscript are richly illuminated with paintings.

On the first folio, the title is written at the centre of a rectangular frame traced with double red lines and painted green, which extends to the sides into two compartments partly painted in a dark shade of red.

On the next two folios, where the text begins, miniatures are displayed on both sides, enclosed in an elaborate green framework recalling that of the title folio. These miniatures represent two pairs of Bon masters turned toward each other, forming together a four-figure lineage of transmission related to the text.

The two masters portrayed on the second folio have their right hands raised in the discussion gesture and their left hands resting in their laps. Seated cross-legged on blue disks and

lotuses, they have their bodies and heads surrounded by halos of light on a blue-sky background. Their skin colour is unexpectedly dark, which may result from an alteration of pigments. They wear Bon lotus hats, each featuring a golden tip, a blue cap, red flaps folded on the front and sides as if lotus petals, and red ribbons falling down on the shoulders; waistcoats with red edges; and shawls, according to the monastic sartorial style.

In contrast with these two masters, the one represented on the third folio in senior position (on the viewer's left) has both his hands resting in the lap, and that in junior position (on the viewer's right) joined in the gesture of homage, turned to the latter. They do not wear hats but short hair. On the evidence provided by the colophon, the first two of these four figures may be identified as Dran pa nam mkha', who hid the text, and sPrul sku kyu ra, who rediscovered it.

Beside these miniatures, one may also note the special scribal features that open the text: a *yig mgo* consisting of four curls painted in the negative on a black rectangular background, and a rubricated section made of a wide ornate *rgya gram shad*, the seed-syllable *āḥ* written in *smar chung* script, and the title of the text according to the 'everlasting divine language', written in regular *dbu med*.