



**Manuscript reference: Ds 243**

This ensemble of *tsakalis* comprises five rectangular cards of different colors (blue, yellow, and green being visible) painted on their front sides with figures of male *klu*. It must have been displayed as a *maṇḍala* to propitiate these deities, possibly following the instructions of manuscript Ds 189.

Each card possesses a slightly tapered lower half and a trilobed top fitting the figure of the *klu*. Immediately recognizable to his coiled snake lower body and his hood of seven to nine snake heads, the *klu* joins his hands in homage in front of the chest.

Interestingly, the iconography of the five deities is almost exactly identical to that of the *klu* represented on the last folio of manuscript Ds 189, from the number of coils of the snake tail and the dots marking the latter, to the three double curves indicating the abdominal muscles at the junction between the naked torso and what, strangely, may be a lower garment, and the high, lateral position of the nipples, and to the greater number of snake heads turning to the proper right of the figure than to its proper left. This suggests that the figures of the *tsakalis* were drawn after the model provided for this very purpose by manuscript Ds 189.

In comparison with the latter model, however, the style of the present drawings is very naïve, with the proportions of the figures largely varying from one to the other. Among the five *klu*, the one endowed with a nine-snake hood appears to be slightly more detailed and better

dimensioned than the others. The style of these five figures remains nonetheless quite homogeneous, hinting to the work of a single person.

While one may wonder then why the present ensemble comprises only five *klu* and not nine as conveyed by the exemplary drawing of a *maṇḍala* in manuscript Ds 189, it may be worth recalling that the associated text does not appear to mention more *klu* than those of the five main directions.