

Takdröl Amulet

Takdröl (བཏགས་གྲོལ་) is one of five methods that lead to liberation without the need for serious meditation and practice. The five methods are: *thongdröl* (མཐོང་གྲོལ་), or liberation through seeing; *thödro* (ཐོས་གྲོལ་), liberation through hearing; *myongdröl* (མྱོང་གྲོལ་), or liberation through taste; *drendröl* (བློན་གྲོལ་), or liberation through recollection, and takdröl (བཏགས་གྲོལ་), or liberation through wearing or holding.

The takdröl is normally an object one can wear as an amulet or sacred ornament. Numerous kinds of takdröl exist but most are mantra diagrams or protective circles (གྲུང་ཁོར་). They are mostly related to tantric Buddhism though there are also some non-Tantric mantras for protection. Many of the treasure cycles known in Bhutan and Tibet contain the diagrams and charts of mantras that are used as takdröl.

Takdröl can form part of a more detailed tantric empowerment, or it can be given on its own as a simple empowerment. Sometimes a tantric text is used as a takdröl and worn, for example, in a locket on the top of the head. In Bhutan and the Himalayas, some people carry takdröl in very ornate receptacles. When someone goes on a long journey or when soldiers go to war, takdröl amulets are used for protection. Takdröl are also placed on a deceased person's body after death, and also buried or burned with the body in order to help alleviate their suffering during the bardo intermediate period.

Phub Dorji Wang is a freelance writer on Bhutanese religion and culture.
Edited and improved by Karma Phuntsho.