



To Make or Not make Maṇḍalas: Buddhist Controversies on the Value of Rituals

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By the eighth century, the making of maṇḍalas had become firmly established in the repertoire of Buddhist ritual. However, its effectiveness was called into question during this period from two sides: by theorists who denied that it could completely replace the self-cultivation practices of the Mahāyāna, on the one hand; and on the other, by adherents of a new radical current in the Vajrayāna, formed under the influence of Śaivism, who sought to transcend ritual obligations altogether. This paper will briefly discuss these debates and their eventual resolution, of sorts, in the eleventh-century work of Advayavajra.