



**Visions of Sukhavati: Shan-Tao's Commentary on  
the Kuan Wu-Liang Shou-Fo Ching (SUNY Series  
in Buddhist Studies) (Sunny Series, Buddhist  
Studies)**

*Julian F. Pas*

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The Pure Land movement focuses on the worship of one particular Buddha, Amitabha or Amitayus who created a paradise named Sukhavati, Land of Extreme Bliss. The scriptures of this school promise rebirth in that Land to the devotees of that Buddha. It was considered to be an "easy way" to gain salvation in contrast with the "arduous path" of self-sacrifice recommended in original Buddhism.

T'ang monk Shan-tao was instrumental in the propagation and popularity of this devotional school. He was an ascetic and serious meditator who followed the techniques of visualization explained in the Sutra on Visualizing Buddha Amita, and his commentary on this text was later considered to be his most outstanding work. Western authors, however, misrepresent Shan-tao because they follow the lead of Japanese Jodo Shinshu masters who deemphasized meditative practices. With the hope that old stereotypes will be dropped, this book lets the Chinese texts speak for themselves.

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