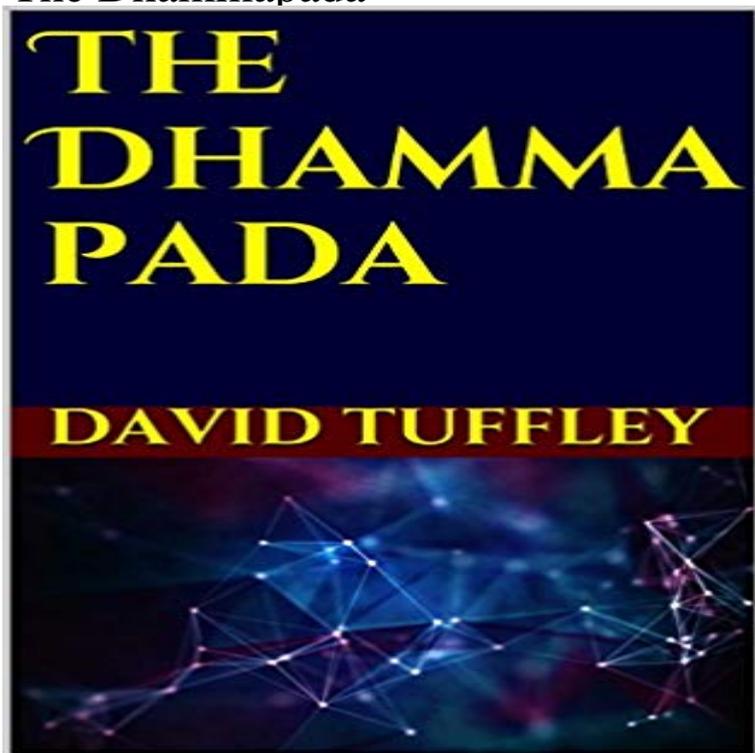


The Dhammapada



The Dhammapada is a foundational text of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. It is a collection of 423 verses, grouped into 26 themes that the Buddha was fond of telling to those who would gather around and listen. They are the oral teachings of the Enlightened One. How delightful it is to imagine him under a shady tree with a group of people around him, telling these gems of spiritual instruction. The collection of verses was compiled soon after the Buddha's death. Interested parties and disciples met and agreed that the oral teachings of the Buddha should be recorded so they would not be lost or corrupted in the absence of the author himself. The Dhammapada is the result of that worthy effort. The original text was expressed in the language and idiom of an ancient time and place (2,500 years ago in Northern India). After all, the authors wanted to reach the audience that was alive then and there, not at some far distant future world whose language and customs would be very difficult to understand. This edition with a commentary expressed in 21st Century language to make it accessible to a wide range of modern readers, is based on the work of Friedrich Max Muller (1823: 1900) at Oxford University. Muller, who was born in Dessau, Germany, was a notable scholar of comparative religions. While the Dhammapada has been translated many times in the centuries since it was written, Muller's version is considered one of the best. Every effort has been made in the writing of this commentary to preserve the underlying message that the Buddha wanted to convey. This has been done through careful study of not just the Buddhist writings, but those of other major religions and philosophies. This study has been performed by the author over four decades, the objective of which has been to identify and understand the sub-text, the common underlying message that all

religions express regardless of the language in which it is expressed. If an idea, such as the Golden Rule of doing unto others what you would have them do to you exists independently in every religion, regardless of time or place, then we have what is arguably an absolute truth, at least in relation human beings. There are many such truths to be found across various religions. Each verse has a heading and commentary that expresses in 21st century language the essence of the verse. Mullers translation of the verse then appears in italic script, complete with verse number. Readers are therefore able to easily compare and contrast the verses in this edition with those in other renderings of this classic work.

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