Elements of Hindu iconography

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ELEMENTS OF HINDU ICONOGRAPHY.
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HINDU ICONOGRAPHY

BY

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DEDICATED
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To
HIS HIGHNESS SIR RAMAVARMA,
Sri Padmanabhadasa, Vanchipala, Kulasekhara Kiritapati,
Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur,
Shamsher Jang, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
MAHARAJA OF TRAVANCORE,
Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, London,
Fellow of the Geographical Society, London,
Fellow of the Madras University, Officer de L’Instruction Publique.

By
HIS HIGHNESS’S HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.
PREFACE.

In bringing out the Second Volume of the Elements of Hindu Iconography, the author earnestly trusts that it will meet with the same favourable reception that was uniformly accorded to the first volume both by savants and the Press, for which he begs to take this opportunity of tendering his heart-felt thanks. No pains have of course been spared to make the present publication as informing and interesting as is possible in the case of the abstruse subject of Iconography. Though the illustrations appearing in the present volume are by no means inadequate for the main purpose of the work, yet they are not so full and exhaustive as in the first, and a word of explanation in that connection may not be out of place. To the great regret of the author, the liberal pecuniary help offered for the preparation and publication of the first volume has been, owing to the somewhat straitened finances of the Travancore State at present, withheld from him on the present
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occasion and he has, in consequence, not been able to embody as many illustrations as he had intended personally to gather for the purpose from various parts of India with a view to present to the public a series representative of the varied sculpture of the different parts of this country. But the Travancore Durbar have, in gracious consideration of the trouble and labour involved in the preparation of the present volume, been pleased to permit its publication by the author himself, for which he begs to offer his respectful and grateful thanks to the Dewan, Mr. Dewan Bahadur M. Krishña Nāir, B.A., B.L.

Mention may here be made of a few points worthy of notice in the book. In the Introduction is given a collective description of all the peculiarities of the tenets and observances of some of the Śaiva sects of which the general public has hitherto been practically ignorant, and of certain other cults that have died out without a trace. The nature of Liṅga worship has been examined critically in the light of original texts gathered from such important sources as the Śaivāgamas, Śaiva philosophical treatises, Purāṇas and Itihāsas, and with reference to the extant sculpture of all ages of this symbol of worship, and the matter has been thoroughly discussed and, what

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the author ventures to claim to be, an impartial conclusion arrived at. In the body of the book, several matters, which will be seen to be quite new even to the informed Hindu, have been dealt with; to cite an instance, everybody knows that Śiva begged for food with the broken skull of Brahmā as an expiation for the sin of having cut off one of Brahmā's heads, but it is doubtful if it is known why this curious sort of penance should have been resorted to by Śiva to get rid of His sin. Again, it has been found possible with the help of the knowledge derived from a close study of the bulk of the science of Nātya-Śāstra together with commentaries thereon to elaborate and treat fully the manifold dances of Śiva, though only eight or nine modes are described in the āgamic and other works. The reader will, it is hoped, come across many other instances of fresh information being furnished on matters that have remained more or less obscure hitherto.

The author cannot be too thankful to the Proprietors of the Law Printing House for the extraordinary care and trouble they have bestowed upon the printing and general get up of the books and for their readiness in coming forward and generously offering their timely help but for which the volume could not have been brought out. The
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author cannot also omit to express his sense of gratitude to Dr. A. K. Ānandakumāraswāmi, M.A., D. Sc., for the ready and willing permission granted to him for reproducing the valuable article on the dance of Śiva, contributed some time ago to the Siddhānta-Dīpikā by the learned Doctor. He has also very great pleasure in recording here his high appreciation of the help cheerfully rendered by his Paṇḍit Mr. V. Śrīnivāsa Śāstri, Śrīvitivisārada, but for whose untiring industry and intelligent collaboration this work could not have been brought to a successful completion so soon. Messrs. Longhurst, Stoney, Kay and Beardsell, have been so very kind as to assist the author with photographs of images in their respective collections and to accord their gracious permission to reproduce them: to these gentlemen, the author offers his grateful thanks.

For reasons which need not be explained here, it was not possible for the author personally to supervise the printing of the work throughout so as to ensure the presentation of an absolutely correct text; he had therefore to entrust the task to the printers themselves. In spite of the care and trouble ungrudgingly bestowed by them in the midst of their multifarious duties, a number of errors have unavoidably crept in. Though such of