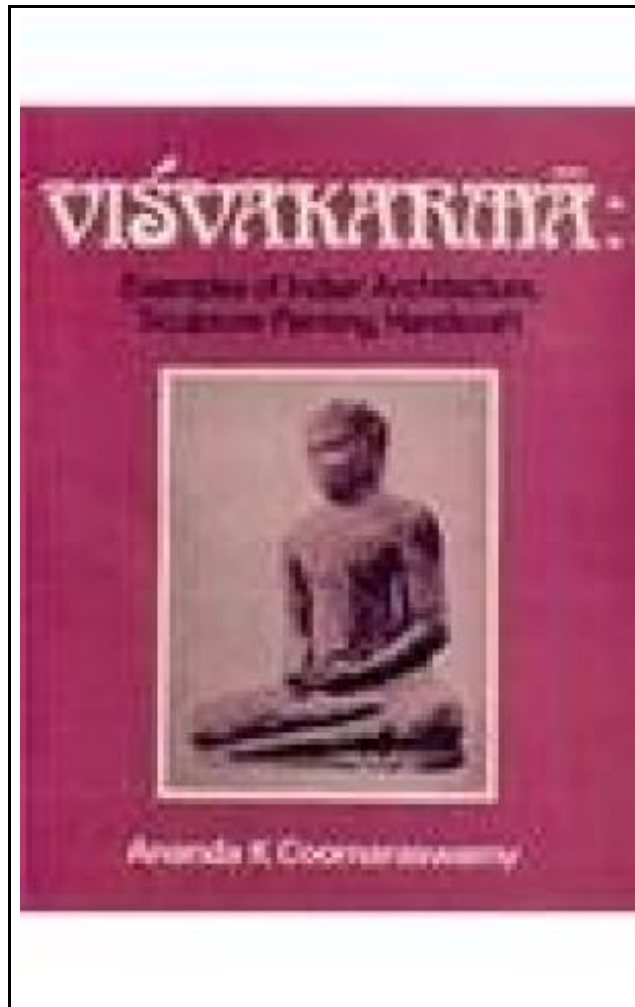


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Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1978. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. First Indian Edition. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has offered in this volume of Visvakarma one hundred illustrations of Indian sculpture, chosen without any predilection for creed, locus or time. They are placed in four sections entitled Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Brahmanical Divinities, Men, Women and Nagas and Animals including Avatars. Each section has twenty-five plates. In the domain of Art, India was to the orient, what Greece was to the occident; it was the fountain-head of inspiration. The art of India was not confined to the skilled creation of objects that had form and beauty; that were of deep religious significance; that were to serve as instruments of propaganda for the pomp, pelf and power of some ruler; that were the products of unique minds obsessed by creative imagination; that mirrored the mode of dress, decoration, images and events of a particular moment in the broad span of time. It was something more. It was a conscious and deliberate attempt to portray the belief cherished by a broad spectrum of humanity that the material word is Maya, illusion; that the human soul is identical with Brahman-Tattvam Asi (Thou art that). It is the reason why the Indian artists ignored realistic representation of anatomy and proportion. They were bound by injunctions of code, custom and tradition. But this did not stifle their efforts in any way; for they were at full liberty with regards to the spiritual quality of their work. It is this bondage with restricted freedom that allowed them to give "a sublimity, a monumental calm in which eternity itself echoed." For instance, the dancing figure of Siva (plates XXX and XXXI) shows his great dance of destruction and re-creation of the universe. He is seen performing different actions...



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