

BULL IN EARLY INDIAN ART (upto sixth century A.D.), 2004, Bhogendra Jha, published by D.K.Printworld (P) Ltd., New Delhi, text pages 148, bibliography (including index) - pages 15, Photo illustrations 154.

A survey of Indian art from the Prehistoric period down to later age reveals that the nature played a significant role in Indian art. The animals have an important place in it. The scholars have not paid adequate attention to the role of animals in Indian art. Dr. Jha has done a detailed and wholistic evaluation of the bull in the above publication. He has tried to discuss the significance of bull in Indian art, its origin and evolution, domestication, nature, its relation with cult of fertility etc. The study has been classified into different sections to discuss the importance of bull in Prehistoric and Protohistoric art, literature, numismatic art, terracottas and sculptures.

The book discussing the origin and evolution of the bull represents its migration to different parts of world and its recognition in ancient world culture. The representation of bull in terracotta, copper, bronze, paintings, seals and sealings of Prehistoric period and onwards is well represented in the book. The detailed information laid in literatures enhance the value of the work. The artistic and aesthetic analysis of bull in form of terracottas and stone sculptures is effectively projected. In Maurya and Śuṅga period the bull occupied a dignified position. Its religious affiliation, the symbolism and the delineation have also been well discussed in the book. The affiliation with Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina religions and its depiction in the contemporary art of Amarāvati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍā and other places in Kuṣāṇa period, bull as religious symbol is Gupta period is amply represented. In the Gupta period the bull was associated with divinities as mount, and this is adequately supported by the Ajanta murals. Crossing the geographical boundaries the bull carved its place in different countries like Egypt, Crete, Greece, Mesopotamia etc. and this aspect has summarily been dealt with.

The book is useful for the students, scholars, art lovers and general readers. The illustrations (coloured and black & white) and detailed bibliography add to the value of the book. The author deserves compliments for the work.

Prof. Kamal Giri