

**DEPICTION OF NATURE IN THE SCULPTURAL ART OF
EARLY DECCAN (UP TO 10TH CENTURY AD)**

**A Thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad
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IN
HISTORY**

BY

U PHYU




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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled **DEPICTION OF NATURE IN THE SCULPTURAL ART OF EARLY DECCAN (UP TO 10TH CENTURY AD)**, carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Aloka Parasher-Sen, Department of History, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, is original and this has not been submitted for any other degree either in part or in full to any other University or this University.

Hyderabad,

Date: 13.1.2004


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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ENGLISH	DEVANAGARI	ENGLISH	DEVANAGARI
a	-- अ	ṭh	-- ठ
ā	-- आ	ḍ	-- ढ
i	-- इ	ḍh	-- ढ्ह
ī	-- ई	ṇ	-- ण
u	-- उ	t	-- त
ū	-- ऊ	th	-- थ
e	-- ए	d	-- द
ai	-- ऐ	dh	-- ध
o	-- ओ	n	-- न
ou	-- औ	p	-- प
ṛ	-- ऋ	ph	-- फ
k	-- क	b	-- ब
kh	-- ख	bh	-- भ
g	-- ग	m	-- म
gh	-- घ	y	-- य
ṅ	-- ङ	r	-- र
c	-- च	l	-- ल
ch	-- छ	v	-- व
j	-- ज	h	-- ह
jh	-- झ	ś	-- श
ṇ	-- ण	s	-- स
ṭ	-- ट	sh	-- क्ष

anusvara . - ṁ Visarga : - ḥ

No diacritical marks have been used while describing the names of districts, towns and villages which have already become acceptable in modern English. However, these have been used to indicate ancient names of places, persons and in case of technical words in Sanskrit and other Indian languages.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	<i>Art and Architecture of Aihole</i> , Bombay 1967
ABIS	<i>Animals and Birds in Indian Sculptures</i> , New Delhi 1974
AE	<i>Ajanta to Ellora</i> , 1964
AI	<i>The Art of India</i> , New York 1974
Alnd	<i>The Art of India</i> , London, 1955
AIA	<i>Art of Indian Asia</i> , New York 1968
AIIS	American Institute of Indian Study
AMAIA	<i>Animal Motifs in Ancient Indian Art</i> , Calcutta 1972
AnS	<i>Andhra Sculpture</i> , Hyderabad 1994
AS	<i>Andhra Sculpture</i> , Hyderabad, 1984
ASt	<i>Amaravati Stupa</i> , Delhi 1994
AuS	<i>Aurangabad Sculpture</i> , Calcutta 1966
ASiAR	Annual Reports of Archaeological Survey of India
ASBM	<i>Amaravati Sculptures in British Museum</i> , London 1954
ASMGM	<i>Amaravati Sculpture in Madras Government Museum</i> , Madras 1942
BAG	<i>The Buddhist Art of Gandhara</i> , New Delhi 1980
BAN	<i>The Buddhist Antiquities in Nagarjunakonda</i> , Delhi 1994
BDCRI	Bulletin of the Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute
BP	<i>Brahma in Purāna</i>
BSAJ	<i>The Buddhist Stupa in Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta</i> , London 1886
CTI	<i>The Cave Temple in India</i> , London 1880
CTWBHS	<i>The Cult of Tree and Tree- Worship in Buddhist and Hindu Sculpture</i> , New Delhi 1964
ECS	<i>Elephanta</i> , The Cave of Siva, United Kingdom 1983
EAAI	<i>Early Andhra Art and Iconography</i> , Hyderabad 1979
EAC	<i>Ellora Art and Culture</i> , New Delhi 1980
EHI	<i>Elements of Hindu Iconography</i> , Delhi 1971
EIS	<i>Early Indian Sculpture</i> , India 1973

<i>EM</i>	<i>Ellora Monoliths, Delhi 1988</i>
<i>EBRT</i>	<i>Early Buddhist Rock Cut Temples, London 1972</i>
<i>ECS</i>	<i>Early Chalukyan Sculptures, Madras 1962</i>
<i>GBCA</i>	<i>A Guide to the Buddhist Cave in Aurangabad Bombay 1957</i>
<i>GPT</i>	<i>A Guide to the Pattadakal Temples, Dharward 1961</i>
<i>HT</i>	<i>The Hindu Temple, London 1977</i>
<i>HEDFA</i>	<i>History of Early Deccan Fine Art, London 1953</i>
<i>I\</i>	<i>Indian Art, Varanasi 1965</i>
<i>IHBJ</i>	<i>Iconography of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina, Bombay 1981</i>
<i>IEBHA</i>	<i>Indian Epigraphy Bearing History and Art, New Delhi 1995</i>
<i>IM</i>	<i>In the Image of Man, London 1982</i>
<i>IS</i>	<i>Indian Symbolism, New Delhi 1996</i>
<i>EIS</i>	<i>Early Indian Sculpture, India, 1973</i>
<i>ITS</i>	<i>Indian Temple Sculpture, Delhi 1959</i>
<i>LAEA</i>	<i>Life and Art of Early Andhradesa, Delhi 1983</i>
<i>LKIA</i>	<i>Life of Krishna in Indian Art, New Delhi 1978</i>
<i>MBSK</i>	<i>A Monography of Buddhist Stupa at Kesanapalli, Hyderabad 1969</i>
<i>MSM</i>	<i>Mahisasuramardini, New Delhi 1984</i>
<i>ME</i>	<i>Men and Environment</i>
<i>MPMA</i>	<i>Maurya and Post Maurya Art, New Delhi 1975</i>
<i>MA SI</i>	<i>Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India</i>
<i>MIA</i>	<i>Mahishasuramardini in Indian Art, New Delhi 1988</i>
<i>MMM</i>	<i>Much Maligned Monsters, London 1977</i>
<i>NSS</i>	<i>New Satavahana Sculptures, Hyderabad 1980</i>
<i>PEPHC</i>	<i>The Proto and Early Historical Cultures of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad 1983</i>
<i>QJMS</i>	<i>Quarterly Journal of Myth Society, Vol.LIV , 1964</i>
<i>RBCT</i>	<i>Report on Buddhist Cave Temples in Westen India, New Delhi 1883</i>
<i>SAA</i>	<i>Sculptural Art of Andhra, Delhi 1980</i>
<i>SIBA</i>	<i>South Indian Buddhist Antiquaties, New Delhi 1897</i>

ESITA	<i>South Indian Temple Architecture</i> , New Delhi 1986
55	<i>Sculpture of Sesasayi Visnu</i> , Baroda 1983
SSPWM	<i>Stone Sculptures in Prince Wales Museum</i> , Bombay 1980
SSAM	<i>Stone Sculpture in Alampur Museum</i> , Hyderabad 1973
TT	<i>Temples of Telingana</i> , Hyderabad 1972
TSWSA	<i>Trees and Serpent Worship at Sanchi and Amaravati</i> , London 1873
TWAI	<i>Tree Worship in Ancient India</i> , New Delhi 1971
WIA	<i>Women in Indian Art</i> , Delhi 1995

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

By the title *Depiction of Nature in the Sculptural Art of Early Deccan*, we mean to understand how nature, i.e., fauna and flora in the context of the present study, came to be conceptualized by the sculptor in its depiction on sculptural art that primarily reflected his perception of understanding nature as he saw it. It also involved representation that was usually embedded in a religious meaning or symbolism that was being conveyed since many of the monuments on which this sculptural art was found were centres of worship. **Hitherto**, very few **scholars** have exclusively studied nature in sculptural art but a large majority of these studies have focused on understanding it only as a marginal or decorative part of art history. In fact, no special attention has been made to study the depiction of nature in its varied natural forms in the context of regional history. Therefore, the present research undertaken by us in this thesis essentially aims at describing the depiction of nature in sculptural art in a regional context, namely, of the early Deccan. In an overall sense this was conceptualized by the sculptor to be embedded in a naturalism that was essentially linked to an ideological belief system that saw human intervention with nature in a holistic and integrative way rather than being separated from it.

Indian naturalism, through various ages and with different degrees, has always relied on the outer aspect of things as a means and proof of understanding a pre-existent inner situation within a cyclic vision of nature. In contrast, in a capillary system, one and the same fluid rises in different and connected tubes emphasizing on

a linear view of understanding the human intervention with nature. The creative acknowledgement of this internal and living connectedness of an inner experience of nature and the visible world, by putting it into form, is a characteristic hallmark of Indian naturalism. It comprises innervations as well as transubstantiation and can be seen palpably depicted in various images and not simply those representing nature.

To understand and expand on this ethos of Indian art through its specimen examples we have confined our study to three broad sub-regions of the Deccan, which according to the present-day linguistic divisions correspond to the States of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The broad chronological framework adopted by us for this study extends from roughly around the 3rd century BC to the 10th century AD. The rationale for taking up such a study was primarily because existing art studies on this broad region seldom treat it as a whole highlighting its sub-regional variations. In fact, most of them are confined to either one of the modern states that define the region or, address the art traditions of one particular site or dynasty. Thus, this study aims to move beyond these narrow boundaries to understand regional variations in the way nature came to be conceptualized in its depictions over different periods of time. One can suggest that this is in essence a broad empirical survey on the subject, the first of its kind on the Deccan. Since most of the sculptures identified for study are found on the religious structures belonging to both the Buddhist and Hindu sects, we have confined the study to explain how fauna in particular came to be understood in both these ideologies. Apart from this, we have tried to describe both flora and fauna in its decorative and every day aspects such as animals used in transport, in hunting as border decorations, auspicious foliage marking entry to buildings and so on. In order to have a clear comprehension of

nature's depiction under these different themes, we have divided our study into three main themes that chronologically cover two broad phases. Thus for our study, Theme 1 discusses the depiction of fauna in Buddhist sculptural art. Theme 2 has dealt with the depiction of fauna in Hindu sculptural art and under Theme 3 we have studied the depiction of nature, both flora and fauna, in the context of its uses in decorations and as representing everyday life. These themes fall into two phases of enquiry. Phase 1 (roughly between the 3rd century BC to the 5th century AD) covers the development and evolution of early Buddhist art while Phase II (roughly between the 6th century AD to the 10th century AD) primarily focuses on the evolution of Hindu art. Before delving into the empirical details of this study, a few words about how art came to be understood in general and in the early Indian ethos has been discussed.

Ever since primitive man scratched his drawings on the walls of caves, the concept of art has embodied the natural expression of man's environment and tempo of the times in which he lived and this has continued throughout history, despite wars and strikes, political vicissitudes and religious disturbances. Nature worship opened the door to art appreciation but also constrained it. The visual art had to limit the infinite and so art came to be only important in its representation of nature². In a strict sense creative activity could never be as important as nature and artists worked within the limits of nature since the power of nature predominated over human will in all work. Thus, it can be said that naturalism and realism were themselves highest values, because of nature's inherent existence in them. Further, just as nature was moral and religious, so the highest art would have to be moral and religious, so that it could be comprehensible to society at large.

Art has developed different meanings based on the ideological notions of scholars and their environment. Primarily two major schools propagate their versions of the definition of art. The one represented by the idealist school is based on the principle of a divorce of art from social life. Art is regarded by them as a product and expression of the absolute spirit, universal will, and divine revelation, or as an emotion of the artist. In contrast to the above view, the other school is represented by the historical materialist school, which observes that art is a reflection of the social being which has much in common with the manifestation of society. **Further**, according to this opinion, aesthetic relation to the reality is the specific subject matter of art and its task is the artistic portrayal of the world³. While the earlier school propagates the theory of art for art's sake, the latter deals with social realism. In the other view to define art, its specific form of social consciousness and human activity has to be highlighted. In keeping with the latter view, the specificity of the present study is important to take note of. It will enable us to appreciate, from different angles, the most important means of aesthetical comprehension and portrayal of the society that produced the art. At the same time, since art is a universal phenomenon, which is as old as human beings,⁴ it has to be also underlined that art is not merely an imitation or record of facts and phenomena in Nature, but an interpretation. In other words, the effort of the human mind to grasp the inner beauty and meaning of the external facts of nature⁵.

Most of the definitions of art fall into one of the two above schools interpreting the purpose and aim of this activity. The early western traditions looked at the world as idea as the main theme of art. This understanding of art was an idealization of nature and especially of man as the culminating point of the process of

nature⁶ that continued during the later period as well. On the other hand, *Ars* in ancient Latin, like *Texvn* in Greek meant something quite different. It meant a craft or specialized form of book learning⁷. In the context of India too some scholars view the supreme element, which is necessary in a series of events to reflect the world as idea, as art . The art of every cultural tradition presupposes that the art itself remains, insufficiently understood because it is primarily enjoyed.⁹ In fact it is suggested that folk-art is the product of mass culture¹⁰ and very much made for enjoyment and utility rather than mere aesthetic appreciation. Art as an expressive symbol is a social product and it is well known that in prehistoric times the artist was not a specialist and thus was unable to live exclusively for his art. It was a daily activity like any other. It has been aptly suggested that art in ancient India was a profession for a few and a hobby pleasure pastime for the many". Therefore, as a phenomenon, it created a web of relationship with particular specialized social groups. Art manifested itself as a social process, as a social activity and consequently needed patrons-a giver and a receiver. Thus like in early Greece, the earliest manifestation of art in India was conditioned by the function of the craft object, which in turn, guided the life movement of the people in the given environment¹ . It has now been clearly understood by modern scholars that art was committed to immediate experience and gave much prominence to the community that transcended differences of style, media, and culture .

All the artistic activity from the early medieval period onwards was centered around religious institutions. The artist still had to be a craftsman who played a predominant part in the artistic history of the time¹⁴. Now, art slowly developed to be a kind of knowledge through which communication by way of signs and symbols

could be done . In ancient times and during the Middle Ages, in particular, all kinds of trades, sculpture and architecture were defined as mechanical arts since they involved making objects by **hand**¹⁶. However, gradually by the medieval times art emerged as the result of different forces, partly culture, partly religion, and in part life-styles dependant on subsistence economic patterns to create a multifaceted vision¹⁷.

Art, as the human urge to create and improve has always been at the forefront of change and is not intra-fixed. It is a fountain rising and falling under varying pressures of social conditions. Some scholars have suggested that **art** should not merely entertain in form but educate and enliven¹⁸. It would be apt to suggest that the understanding of art begins in the first place with the writings on art rather than with work of art itself¹⁹. In this regard many scholars have given their views on understanding Indian art. According to Havell, it is the true expression of Indian **life** and of religion and has inherited the idea of enhancing the beauty of spirit ¹. While some see it as also a part of national culture, others suggest that Hindu art is an integral aspect of Islamic art, which was a total stranger to traditional Indian art." In an overall sense it can be seen as an immediate expression of Indian civilization as a whole according to Swarup since it represents beliefs and philosophies, ideals and its spiritual endeavors in varying stages of development.²⁴ Those who were not so enamoured of Indian art saw this indigenous art being strong in conventionalism and decoration.²⁵ In a more appropriate understanding Indian art was seen as neither religious nor secular for the consistent fabric of Indian life was never rent by the western dichotomy of religious belief and worldly practice. However, most of Indian

art was symbolic and stylized to a great degree and therefore reflective of complex meanings that it conveyed.²⁶

In the classical Indian tradition, Art has been distinguished as *Śilpa* and *Kāla*. Literary references to *Śilpa* allude to it as a work of art that represented a work of divine art.²⁷ A human artist imitated through his artwork only such forms that are known to him in nature. But the metaphysical tradition puts forth that the artist not only has to achieve the form or *rūpa* which is manifested by nature in this world but on the other hand, the artist had to aim to realize the prototype of those very things believed to exist in the conceptual world.²⁸ References to various types or categories of artisans like *rathankara*, *lakṣaka*, and *hamhara* have been dealt with in the *Vājasaneyi Samhita* and the *Taittiriya Brahmana*. The *Mahāvastu* referred to artists like *Kōsavika* (box makers), *Chitrakāra* (painter) and so on³⁰. *Śilpa* has been referred to as professional art and *Kāla* as vocational art. Indian literature also informs us that there are eighteen or more professional arts (*Śilpa*) and the sixty-four are a vocational art (*Kāla*)³¹.

Ever since the modern discovery of Indian art was done scholars have tried to understand and unravel the close relationship between nature and the conceptual underpinnings of art on the Indian sub-continent. We look closely at some of these views that have a bearing on the present study. A personal conception of nature was central to Ruskin's art theory. In his view, the study of nature was to an artist a moral beauty and in fact the highest moral study. Ruskin's truth about nature can be said to stand for a photographic fidelity, a close observation of the details and beauties of nature¹². On the other hand, he characterized the essential quality of Indian art to

never represent a natural fact. His presentation of **these** ideas was incoherent because first he **felt** that art approached nature since the study of nature in itself was the greatest moral force and therefore, the conception of nature in **Ruskin's** view was also related to the notion of truth. He, however, found two clear paths taken by art through the centuries and among different people. Therefore, when applying the pleasure and truth principal to the world art he found that Indians and Arabs put pleasure before their search for truth in nature. Ruskin thus proceeded to equate the notion of humanism with the way artists of a country were concerned with the study of nature. In his argument those that were not concerned with it were necessarily cruel and inhuman".

Another **important** reflection on understanding the nature in Indian art was that by E. B. Havell **1**. He suggested that art was not merely an imitation or record of facts and phenomena in Nature, but an interpretation of it - the effort of the human mind to grasp the inner beauty and meaning of the external facts of Nature³⁴. He was convinced that the true aim of an artist was not to extract beauty from nature but to reveal it. In other words, all nature was beautiful to us, only if we can realize the divine idea within it³⁵. He also stated that the basic common philosophy of art in all countries assumes that art was not a mere imitation of things observed. Clear echoes of an anti-naturalist doctrine can be heard in Havell's writings. He considered that the artist-interpreted nature according to an antecedent idea, mental image, which though derived from nature, transcended it³⁶. When applied to India, Coomaraswamy felt that nature was transcendental and it existed on a metaphysical plan or in the mind of the artists³⁷. He had no faith in the western romantic inspirational theories of art. For him, an artist was not with a special sensitivity vision or plastic power but one with a

vocation to give religious instruction through art. He writes: "An artist is not a special kind of person but every person can be a special kind of artist." Naturally, he pointed out that this person had to be guided by those who are interpreters of the moral order in society, that is, the men who interpret the *Dharma*³⁸.

Stella **Kramrisch** further elaborates that Indian sculpture from the very outset was profoundly, naturalistic. In India appearance of art for its own sake and as an end in itself was never made an object of study. Nevertheless, the surface of things was appreciated for the artist took their visible quality as the result of the living and forming principle in them. Thus, a flower was not rendered only for its swaying and dewy grace. The sap that surged into its petals found parallel channels in the creative attitude and achieved the appearance of a flower. The artist looked at nature and found in it further incitement and actual proof for his experience of it. Thus, in this view Indian naturalism at various ages and with different degree always relied on the outer aspect of things as means and proof of understanding a pre-existent situation. The creative acknowledgement of this internal living was connected to an inner experience of nature and the visible world. While all form was essentially homogeneous as far as qualities of nature was concerned because of emphasis on inner experience different types are made to interchange, that is, varieties of animals amongst themselves, or man with animals and so on⁴⁰.

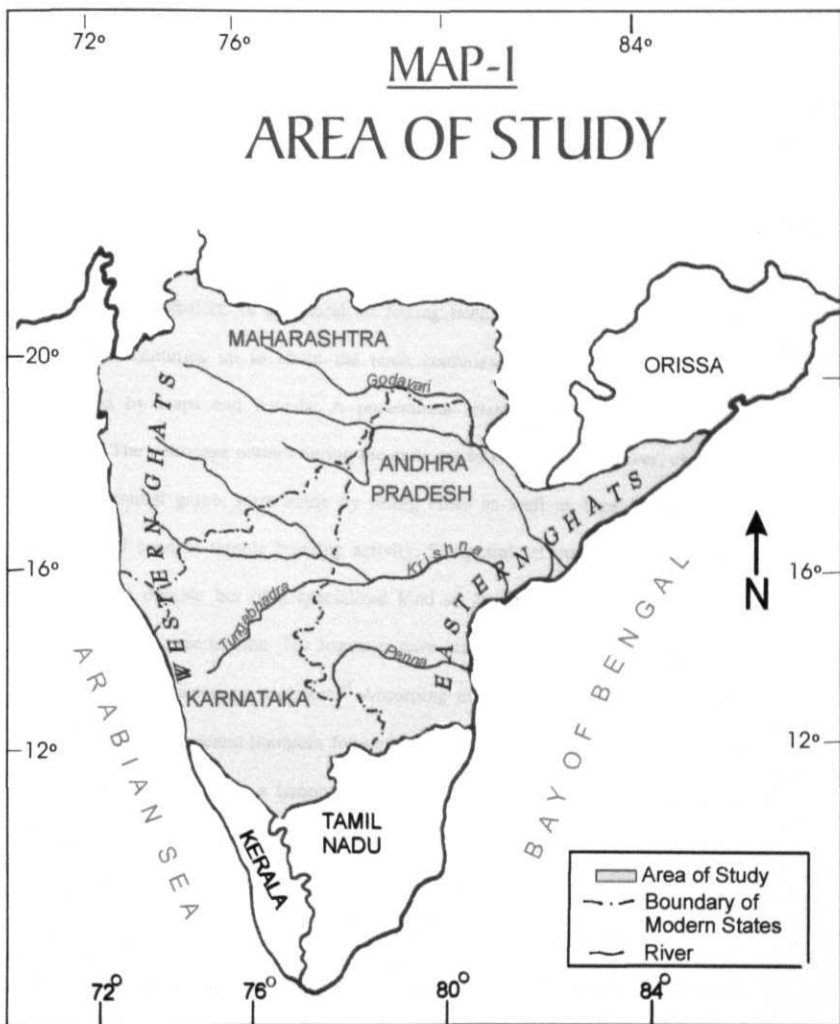
In order to study the history and development of the sculptural art with regard to the depiction of nature we shall now define the region of our study, namely, the Deccan. The region lying to the south of the Vindhya and extending as far as the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers marked the geographical entity called the Deccan

Plateau.⁴¹ Within this area bountiful natural **phenomenon** in the form of rivers, hills, boulders provided materials for the sculptors and the forest with their varied flora and fauna must have inspired the sculptor's mind to copy things from nature and transplant it into art form. In this physical environment human beings over the ages have had to adjust themselves to the intense heat of the tropical sun, the exuberance of the rains, and the exhilarating coolness of the winter, succeeding each other in cyclical measure. Life itself developed amidst crowded forests, lakes, rivers, and rocks that all reflected inexhaustible forms throbbing with the intensity of life. All this must have permeated the mind and heart of the people of the Deccan providing an exalting experience in which Nature emerged as the symbol of their awe and veneration. Nature though not the only influence, therefore had its own role to play in the evolution of the Deccan culture and art was not only a cohesive force but also the physical root of her deeper impulses.

The title "Deccan" for the purpose of this study covers the present-day linguistic states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The above area, one would hope, does have legitimacy as a finite cultural and art-historical unit of study. Geographically, it is all the more explicit that the central and western Deccan areas south of the Vindhyas, marked by the Deccan trap, has wrought on this whole zone what we may term an ecological exclusiveness with its inevitable repercussions on art as much as on life in general, right through the centuries. Claiming the source of three major peninsular rivers of upper Deccan, namely, the Tapi, the Godavari and the Krishna as its hydrological base, it has three high ridges across its land, the **Sahyadris**, forming the western part of the plateau, steeply falling on the coastal side and gently sloping in a slight East-South-East direction towards the coast of India and averaging

an elevation of 300 to 600 meters above sea level; the Satpuras to the north; and those together giving the characteristic relief to the physiomorphic drainage pattern of the upper Deccan. In terms of density of vegetation, however, the eastern part of this zone, watered by the Tapi, Purna and Godavari claim a larger area of dense sub-tropical forests⁴².

Culturally, and from the point of view of the art, the Deccan had proved to be a most natural zone for the convergence and coalescence of the Harappan, Chalcolithic and early Iron Age cultures in the more distant past. Centuries later the "northern", "southern" and coastal indigenous architectural styles- the three most viable art schools-gravitated towards it, under innumerable contexts in the historic periods. In the pre-Christian and formative centuries for art, it was already the natural home and haven for the Hinayana and early Mahāyāna Buddhism. In this context, its cave-art remained its most vital and permanent contribution to the totality of pan-Indian art-legacy especially giving us the foundations of the development of sculptural art. The process that brought about these art-movements were not predetermined and homogeneous but a selective and competitive diffusion trail of agencies that fanned out from their own primal centres be they Magadha, Malwa, Gujarat or Karnataka or even the distant Mediterranean Rome, in its early phase. **But** when these influences intruded into this area, they flowered into sublime products, though disparate in character, swooping with expedient facility religions like Buddhism, Brahmanical Hinduism and Jainism and modes like cave-art, monolithic and incipient structural or plastic arts over unduly long stretches of space and time until a cognizable medieval structural and sculptural style could be recognized. **The** ethos of the Buddhist infiltration was concomitant with the purposeful promotion of



its art mainly because of the patronage by merchant guilds, princes and no less by the ordinary people who provided a social basis for its flourishing in two core areas, namely the lower Krishna valley and the Aparanta, in particular regions along the Western Ghats. The Deccan during the late **centuries** BC and early centuries AD thus blossomed into a veritable paradise for sculptors and artists, writes Soundara **Rajan** that no other region with such a "comparatively sterile and **desolate** basaltic terrain of undulating ridges dominating its landscape, had translated its environmental handicap into such a gain for transcendental religious art, as Deccan had done"⁴¹.

The foundations of sculptural art having been laid we find that during the subsequent centuries up to about the tenth centuries AD the **nature of this art** developed by leaps and bounds. A professional class of sculptors now clearly emerged. The patronage **pattern** during the early medieval period, however, **changed**. Now substantial grants were made by ruling elites as well as local potentates to support and sponsor temple building activity. Sculptural art on **temples** was more tangible and durable but of a specialized kind so that clans of stone-carvers are mentioned from time to time. The Jogimura cave inscription belonging to the second century AD first mentions sculptors. According to Joshi the word, *rūpakāra* was frequently used in ancient literature for sculptor and the term *śilpi* for painter. It is pointed out that Gundaya, a famous sculptor of the seventh century AD, living in Vijayawada was highly honoured as the most eminent craftsman of his time by Visnuvardhana, the eastern **Chālukya** king. It seems that architects, masons, and sculptors found favour of kings in the royal court and thus an epigraph refers to the name of Gundaya who was the court sculptor of an Eastern Chalukyan king of Vengi⁴⁶. This is not a unique reference since several earlier **epigraphic** records of

The source **material** that has been used for formulating this study has mainly been that related to archaeology with reference to buildings and monumental structures. The literary sources have **only** been used to verify certain common themes that were illustrated in the sculptural art. Thus, for instances, Buddhist texts and Hindu *Puranas* as well as texts on iconography give clues of how animals and birds came to be associated with Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Buddhist sources in Pāli pertaining to both Theravada and **Mahāyāna** ideas reflected on human-animal interaction but most important in the present context are our extensive consultation of *Jātakas* that gave information on the fauna dealing with the **previous** life of the Buddha as Bodhisattva. Later Buddhist texts provided us information with regard to the early life stories of the Buddha and how animals were treated in Buddhism. As far as the study of animals and plants in Hinduism is concerned the focus on texts like the *Mahabharata*, the *Visnudharmottara Purana*, the *Matsya Purana*, the **Agni Purana**, the *Visnu Purana*, the *Bhagvata Purana* etc., helped us to get information on flora and fauna in relation to stories about animals and birds in their close relationship to Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Besides, the reports published by the Archaeological Survey of India and catalogues of different museums have also been of great use. Since this work extensively deals with different regions of the Deccan, I have **undertaken** a fieldwork at select sites⁶¹ to collect data in terms of photographs and to get clarification on some related images that have not been studied before. I have visited a number of Museums and Institutes⁶² having a rich collection of objects and photographs pertaining to our study. Secondary books dealing with the importance and symbolic meaning of many sculptures have been consulted. This has also helped to compare the flora and fauna of the Deccan with those of other regions.

It is our main concern in this study to argue that the portrayal of nature in the sculptural art provides us with important source material for understanding early society's attitude towards it. This was the result of different forces of material culture on the one hand, and on the other, religion, life-style, philosophies, ideology and imagination of the artists. Our study of sculptural art up to the 10th century AD would follow both a descriptive and interpretative approach to portray how nature was depicted notwithstanding the fact that to expose the meaning one shall have to look at nature depicted through both allegorical and morphological methods. In this regard, our first aim is to study the depiction of nature in three sub-regions of the Deccan because we find that there is no exclusive work on the subject that deals with these three regions together. Our second aim is to describe nature like fauna such as animals, birds and reptiles and flora such as trees, flowers and foliage because we notice that most of these specimens have so far not been published. Our third aim is to understand how nature like fauna and flora came to be depicted in different religious contexts. Our fourth aim is to comprehend how nature came to be conceptualized in the theoretical understanding of the sculptor.

For this study of sculptural art in the Deccan, we have divided the information into six chapters. In Chapter I: Introduction, we shall endeavour to elaborate on the significance of the title of our research in the historical context. Further, as narrated above we have enumerated our aims of study. This has been done against the background of a broad understanding of art both in the western and particular early Indian context. These introductory discussions were important to explicate that the concept of nature was intrinsic to the way art developed on the Indian sub-continent. Apart from, this the sources used and the approach adopted for the study has been

elaborated. We next present a brief outline of the intending four Chapters and briefly highlighting the possible conclusions in Chapter VI.

In Chapter II: **Historiography**, we venture into examining how Indian art came to be understood and described by scholars on Art history starting from the first historical writings on Indian art. In this regard, based on the approaches adopted by scholars, we intend to discuss these under different chronological periods. The earliest of these are the travelers' accounts belonging to the 13th-17th centuries AD. During this period, we find that most of the writings on Indian art are mere descriptive accounts often projecting Indian art as somewhat derogatory. In the following century that is from the 17th to the 18th century AD, we have the writings of the Romanticists who were sympathetic to Indian history and art. Contrary to the views of these scholars, we have during the 19th century and early 20th century, the writings of British scholars who began to critically view Indian art, often comparing it with the Greek and Roman art. In this regard therefore, they found Indian art as less impressive. Since these scholars were looking at Indian art from the foreign eye they naturally could not appreciate the spirit of nature in Indian art. In a strong reaction to much of these British writings there emerged in the 20th century, the writings of Nationalist writers. The nationalist writers questioned the colonial conception of Indian art and vehemently argued that the essence of Indian art should be seen as rooted in the Buddhist and Brahmanical world-views. The post-independent period witnessed the proliferation of regional writings. As a result, we notice that several writings emerged on studying art in different States of the Deccan. However, all these writings remained largely descriptive and general iconographic or architectural studies. They did not make any endeavour to bring about any change in the theoretical

and methodological perspective **for** the understanding of Indian art. For the period from the **1940's** to the **1980's** we notice that some scholars did focus on the study of nature but did not write exclusively on it. Thus through out this historiographical survey we could only find four to five specific articles dealing specially with nature in the art of the Deccan. In this chapter, having thus discussed the various writings on Indian art history, we point out their lacunae's and how our study would contribute to **fill** in the gap of looking at art history through a focus on **nature**, in all its dimensions in a **regional context**, with a focus on **the** geographical area of the Deccan as a whole.

In Chapter HI: Fauna as Depicted in Buddhist Sculptural Art, we intend to undertake the descriptions at two levels. At the first level, we shall attempt to understand the importance of animals in Buddhism as delineated in the Buddhist texts and particularly the *Jataka* stories. This understanding helps us to know how animals in Buddhism were assigned equal treatment on par with the human beings. To highlight this aspect **we** shall make use of stories from the Buddhist literary texts as a background to our descriptions of the sculptures. Birds like peacock, woodpecker, **hamsa**, quail etc., and animals like elephant, winged horse, hare, bull, deer, buffalo, monkey, snake **etc.**, are some examples in which the sculptor handled these different animals in the limited space provided to explain the virtuous qualities of the Bodhisattva.

At the second level, we shall deal with animals associated with the Buddha's life beginning with his previous births. To understand this, we categorize our study into two parts. The first part deals with the animals depicting Buddha's previous life as a Bodhisattva and in the second part we discuss animals that came to be associated

with the great events of Buddha's human life. In this regard, our data provides several examples that dealt with his birth, the Great Departure, Assault of Mara, protection by Naga *Mucilinda*, Enlightenment of Buddha and so on and also panels showing the adoration and worship of the Buddha depicting animals like the elephant, horse, naga, monkey and others. Significantly, we notice that though most of these depictions were in total conformity with the Buddhist tradition, spatial and temporal variations are prominent in the way the narrative is handled by the sculptor in the limited space provided for the purpose. In our observations, we notice that the size of animals or birds, the decorations on animals, the position of animals etc., varied greatly from place to place in different chronological periods and regions.

In the next Chapter IV entitled Fauna as Depicted in Hindu Sculptural Art, we give a descriptive and interpretative account of the animals in Hindu religion and mythology. Most of the depictions discussed in this chapter can be dated only after the 5th century AD. In this regard, we categorize the descriptions into three different parts to understand the animals personifying divinity, animals incarnated as demons and finally, animals that came to be used as vehicles *i.e.*, the *vahanas* of Hindu gods and goddesses. Interestingly, in this regard we note that in most of the sculptural narratives the animals that symbolize divinity such as cow, bull, lion *etc.*, were also demonstrated as manifesting demonic characteristics. Sometimes, the same animals were also used as vehicles for various gods and goddesses in Hindu mythology.

This study is further bifurcated to understand the depiction of gods and saints in their animal and bird incarnations and animals and birds, which the gods and

goddesses fought with. The exploits of god Krishna and those of goddess Durga are especially depicted prolifically on the Deccan monuments. In this regard, we first discuss the animals and birds in their **zoomorphic** form (i.e., animals and birds in the original form) and **theriomorphic** form (i.e., animals assuming half-human and half-animal form). Our data provides ample examples where the sculptor depicted these animals and birds in sequence to the stories related in the Puranic religious traditions. Apart from this, we discuss the symbolic meanings of some of the animals like the fish, tortoise and boar in their different incarnations. These descriptions help us to understand the importance of nature in Hindu religious art and how the sculptor visualized these animals and birds in their real form thus lending it the color of depicting nature as part of the larger interplay between cosmic, divine and human life.

That the fauna and flora, apart from signifying a religious symbolism, also came to be depicted simply by articulating their importance in everyday life and as decorative motives has been highlighted by us in Chapter V on Nature in Decoration and Every Day Life in Sculptural Art. To understand this, we have divided our discussion in this Chapter into two broad divisions, namely, animals and plants depicted as decorative motives and animals and plants that came to be used in the ordinary life of the times as found in the sculptures pertaining to both Buddhist and Hindu art. Under the theme of decorations, our data produces several examples where animals like elephants, lion, horse, snake and floral aspects like tree, flower, creeper, scroll, lotus and leaves were adorned as decorations either singly or, in accompaniment with water-pot, as garland carried by *Yakṣas*, dwarfs, the *vyāḷas* and ogres. Most of these decorations in our data appear on the columns, pilasters, friezes, bas-relief, cornices festoons, niches, statues etc. of a *stupa* or a temple. From our

observations it appears **that the** artists of **the** Deccan **also** show **special empathy for** trees **like the** Bodhi or **Pipal** tree, the Asoka tree, the **Sal tree**, **the** Banyan tree, **the** Jambu tree and the Mango tree that came to have special significance in both the Buddhist and Hindu religions.

In the next part of this Chapter, we focus our discussion on understanding the animals and plants used in every day life. In this regard, our data has produced **rich** evidence, revealing animals and birds involved in various activities such as serving as a mode of transport for traders and royal personages, assisting warriors in the battle fields and farmers in agriculture and cattle-farming, providing amusements for the public, becoming a prey to hunters in hunting scenes and so on.

We have concluded this Chapter by understanding that the artists in the Deccan worked more in compatibility with the natural environment in which he was living and this had influenced their imagination that came to be expressed through the medium of art. Further, this study also reveals to us the high degree of regional variations between the artists working in the Western Deccan and those working in the Eastern Deccan, as the natural environment and the local traditions in these two regions were significantly different.

Finally, we end the thesis with **Chapter VI: Conclusion**, in which the major contributions of the present work will be highlighted. We intend to underscore the importance of the study of nature in the sculptural art pertaining to three sub-regions of the Deccan taken together, which has not been done so far by any art historians. Against the background of two major historical periods in the evolution of art in the

early historic and early medieval periods we recapitulate on the description of fauna in the Buddhist context and the Hindu context. Further, in both Buddhist and Hindu contexts we discuss similarities and differences in the depiction of flora and fauna highlighting the sub-regional context of these descriptions. Therefore, our data indicates that there was exchange of art motifs in these regions through the ages. There are also similarities in ornamentation of animals from one region to another that suggests to us that the artists working in these regions might be from the same guild or got trained in the same school. A final and major point to be highlighted in some specimens depicting nature like fauna and flora that had not been known to scholars on art history so far have been collected and described for the first time.

The Chapter on conclusions is followed by a list of all the sources consulted by us while writing this thesis in the form of a consolidated **Bibliography**. This thesis has four charts (**Charts I-IV**) and about Ninety specially selected plates that have been used extensively by us in our descriptions in understanding the **Depiction of Nature in the Sculptural Art** beginning roughly from the 3rd century BC up to the 10th century AD. We, however, begin the study with a historiographical survey that forms the content of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER II

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The seeds of sculptural art in India have bloomed ever since early human societies engraved the sculptures of organic things from their environment. However, the writings on the sculptural art in India began fairly recently as part of the larger writings on art history. The first scientific writings emerged with western scholarship and its notions of art. These scholars collected information as travellers, antiquarians, orientalist, administrators, and archaeologists. In this Chapter, we have ventured into examining how Indian art came to be understood and described by scholars on Art history, starting with the earliest historical writings on Indian art. In this regard, based on the approaches adopted by scholars, we have categorized their studies into different phases. The earliest of these are the travellers' accounts roughly between the 13th and 17th centuries AD. We found that during this period most of the writings on Indian art were mere descriptive accounts, often projecting Indian art as somewhat derogatory. In the following century, that is. from the 17th to the 18th century AD, we have the writings of scholars who were relatively more sympathetic to Indian history and art, and they largely considered Indian art as sublime. In contrast to the views of these scholars, we have during the 19th century and early twentieth century, the writings of British scholars usually administrators and officers who in most of their writings viewed Indian art critically. Scholars like Vincent Smith often compared it with the Greek and Roman art, and found Indian art as less impressive compared to the former. Since these scholars were looking at Indian art through the foreign eye, using their own parameters, they naturally could not appreciate the nature of Indian art.

In a strong reaction to much of these British writings there emerged, also during the early 20th century, the writings of primarily Nationalist writers. They questioned the colonial conception of Indian art and vehemently argued that the essence of Indian art is rooted in the early Buddhist and the **Brahmanical** world-views. The chief proponent of this school was Ananda Coomaraswamy whose views were sincerely followed by Stella Kramrisch. The post-independent period witnessed a proliferation of writings on Indian art-history both on a pan-Indian and regional scale. As a result, we have noticed that several writings emerged on studying art in different modern States of the republic of India. The focus here is on discussing only those views pertaining to the Deccan. However; all these writings remained largely descriptive as iconographic or architectural studies. They did not make any endeavour to bring dramatic changes in the way the methodological understanding of Indian art could be reinterpreted. From the 1970's scholars tended to look at art history from the socio-economic point of view and related art to specific historical contexts. Prominent among such studies for the Deccan were scholars like Amita Ray. It must be stated clearly that through out this survey we could only find four to five specific articles dealing exclusively with the depiction of nature in the sculptural art of the Deccan.

The period from roughly the middle of the thirteenth to the end of the seventeenth century may be regarded as the formative phase in the understanding of Indian art by foreign travellers from different countries. Throughout a greater part of this long period ideas about Indian art were much the same and they were mainly derived from existing travel accounts. Their understanding of Indian art was limited primarily because of their brief sojourn in the country. Their observations on Indian

art were initially brief. Some of **them** commented on their form and style **and** often compared it with what was familiar to them in terms of the principles of western notions of art. Nature in Indian art was studied primarily to draw parallelism between **Graeco-Roman** art and that of India. In this regard, they were interested in making this comparison but gave little or no description of the sculptural art. They also made comments on the depiction of nature saying that Indian art was crude. They vilified Indian Gods and Goddesses with the view of them being evil and monstrous. They studied both Hindu and Buddhist art in the context of the Deccan. Most of them confined their studies to the sub-region of the Western Deccan.

The typical reactions of an early western traveller was bound to reflect certain prejudices stemming from his Western Christian background as well as from a clash of tastes involving two very different traditions. Alongside these reactions one also notices the gradual emergence of a counter-tendency, namely, the readiness on the part of the travellers to praise certain formal aspects of Indian art. For example, the fair Odoric of Pordenone was one of the earliest travellers who gave a description of a so-called 'monstrous idol' in the form of half-man and half-ox .

The eighteenth century was a period of rediscoveries. By the third decade of the eighteenth century much information about Indian gods had been received in Europe through missionaries and the efforts of a growing number of ethnographers who sought to present an authentic picture of Hindu religion and mythology by drawing on Indian literary sources and popular paintings. This new development inevitably led to the dissolution of the long-standing image of Indian gods as 'monsters'. No longer were Hindu gods regarded as thoroughly incomprehensible and

bizarre. There was a dramatic increase in interest in comparative religion during the second half of the eighteenth century. The new concern with emphasis on comparative mythology brought about changes **in** the interpretations of Indian art. Thus by then, scholars had become increasingly aware of the importance of sexual imagery in ancient classical religion, as present in its myths or in its sacred art.

Scholars in the eighteenth century without exception were convinced that the sexual imagery of ancient classical and Indian sacred art could only be an allegorical explanation of a different kind. According to Partha Mitter,² the leading writers to discuss these problems were P'erre-Sylvain Marechal, Pierre-Francois Hugles, called d' Hancarville, Richard Payne Knight, and Charles Dupuis. Their main interest was in erotic art. They were thus, the first scholars to make serious attempts to gain knowledge about Indian art not only from literary sources but also from among the few known examples of Indian sculpture and painting in European collections. For instance, Mitter points out that Sylvain Marechal in his *Antiquities d' Hancarville* drew parallels between the Priapus and the Indian *liriga*. He was convinced that the respect paid to the phallus in Greece and Rome and the same paid to the *linga* in India was not a local and isolated phenomenon but was a portrayal of nature in this manner³. Similarly, it is pointed out by Mitter that Charles Dupuis' concerns **on** principles of nature led him to believe that the Indian *liriga* represented a philosophic idea in the form of the union of the two great causes **of nature**.

In these writings, the creative or life-affirming principle represented by the phallus was also, by extension, seen revealed in other forces in nature and the cosmos. Another focus of attention was the sun that was adorned by all primitive people for its

connection with life, and in a very direct way, with all vegetative life. It was Dupuis who saw solar symbolism as complimenting and not contradicting the essential concern of phallic rites with fertility. Payne Knight described the ancient obelisk as solar symbols, and d' Hancarville identified the Andhakasura Śiva figure on the island of Elephanta as Bacchus in the form of the nocturnal sun because this Hindu god appeared to conceal himself behind the veil represented in the sculpture. These elements thus came to be understood by the late eighteenth-century antiquarians as the supreme example of the creative principle⁴.

Apart from the celestial sphere the antiquarians also reflected on to the animal world. Here, they held the bull to be the most important symbol of generation and fecundity. In primitive societies the bull has always been revered for symbolising power and male sexuality and for its association with vegetation. The late eighteenth-century savants found the association between the bull and the vegetation and god Bacchus especially significant. They further equated Bacchus with the Indian God Śiva whose special emblem was indeed the bull. This association between Bacchus and the bull was fully recognised by d' Hancarville when he described the bull as the foremost symbol of creation that was accepted as such by all Asian societies like the Japanese, the Chinese and the Indians. In d' Hancarville's view the Indian form of Bacchus was in fact, the god Brahma, who was supposedly represented at Elephanta in the company of cows. He also believed that Indians revered the bull as Darmadeva (*Dharmadeva*), whose image, he pointed out, was found in a Surat temple which was still painted red and was similar to the bull found in the temples of ancient Greece and Rome⁵. Having discussed the role of Bacchus as the guardian of life and vegetation, the French antiquarian proceeded to examine his role as the god of creation and

preservation, as well as its symbolism that also presided over death. This point was illustrated with the example of the common Hindu desire to hold the tail of a cow before taking leave of his world. Hancarville's **interpretation** was that Hindus were well aware that the cow was the emblem of the god of both life and death⁶.

It was Dupuis who commented on other animals, particularly the goat, which he argued, was equally concerned with fecundity and vegetation. Recalling the role of the celestial goat as a beneficent agent in certain Greek and Egyptian rites, Dupuis turned his attention to the paintings of Indian gods in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. In one of these specimens, the incarnation of Visnu was shown with a four-armed sun god who held a little goat on one of his fingers. In another example the god Isprun (isvara) was shown descending to kill the demon Tiperant (Tripura) who also had a little goat in one hand. Finally, in yet another example the picture of the god **ïogui-Hisper** (Yogi-Iśwar=Śiva) represented him with a crescent moon on the forehead and a little goat in his hand. Dupuis was convinced that there were some historical link between Egyptian and Indian cosmogonies and made this the basis of his arguments. Dupuis was thus one of the first who attacked the view that the symbolic Indian figures were monstrous⁷.

The approach of most of these early commentators on Indian art was to study the art of different nations through a comparative method. The mythological speculations of Dupuis and others had led to a new appreciation of Indian art. Their attitudes represented a radical departure from previous interpretations of Indian art while the new attitude was only possible because of a reliable amount of information gradually accumulated and made available in the West. The dramatic improvement in

the documentation concerning Indian art led to a certain major change in the aesthetic outlook of these interpretations. One of the lasting achievements of these revival movements was the inception and subsequent nurturing of scientific archaeology, and archaeology soon became an indispensable tool for the study of the past. The second important development was the phenomenon 'grand tour' which encouraged travels purely for the sake of visual and aesthetic pleasure. Yet another profound change was the intellectual revolution that emerged in the eighteenth century with the European discovery of Sanskrit and other major Asian languages. These developments were of great significance for the reception of Indian art in that they marked the beginning of a systematic approach to the collecting and recording of facts relating to Indian art. It was this corpus of published material that provided antiquarians, philosophers and other intellectuals with the valuable evidence for their interpretations of Indian art.

The authors of the travel reports of the earlier period had not been able to maintain a clear distinction between objective reporting and subjective comments. It is only from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards that one can clearly discern the growth of two distinct traditions: one which undertook to record systematically all the relevant facts about Indian art, while the other, was engaged primarily in speculations about its nature and importance. In this period on the one hand, traveller's accounts became more reliable and archaeologists, on the other, were able to apply the new scientific method to Indian antiquities. The scholars of this period not only focussed on the Deccan but also on other parts of India.

Partha Mitter tells us that the leading travellers of this period to survey India were Anquetil-Duperron, Niebuhr, Le Gentil and Sonnerat⁸. Anquetil gave an

account of his extensive travels in India wherein he described both art and architecture and especially **tried to** complete the survey of the rock carvings at Ellora but he was not successful. The iconographical details of the Kailasa temple were painstakingly taken down but due to the lack of his knowledge in Indian mythology there was considerable confusion in his interpretations. He highlighted the evidence for the universal worship of the goat but compared the style of the relief sculptures at Ellora with the medieval reliefs in the Notre Dame at Paris. Another traveller Carsten Niebuhr, a natural historian and scientist did not know Sanskrit and therefore, could provide only limited information on Elephanta that he had visited on three trips. However, Mitter informs us that Pierre Sonnerat, the celebrated traveller, and natural historian published in 1782, one of the most profusely illustrated and detailed accounts of Hindu religion and mythology⁹. He wielded great authority over his generation. Among a large number of illustrations in his *Voyagesauxlides Orientates*, mention must be made of the important series of pictures relating to the iconography of Hindu gods that illustrate his text. Sonnerat's opinion of Indian art was, however, coloured by his particular view of Indian society. Thus, he falsely concluded that the art in India made little or no progress since despotic governments always ruled the country. In his view climate and innate conservatism were responsible for the stagnation of Indian art. This had great impact on certain imperialist writings of a later period.

The eighteenth century was also a period of revival and rediscoveries. There was a substantial widening of the aesthetic categories to keep pace with a new awareness of non-classical and non-western traditions. One of the consequences was that the academic and traditional concepts of decisive rules in art were gradually

replaced by the notion of the **primacy** of taste". Secondly, art critics of the period were willing to recognise qualities other than beauty as constituting important aesthetic criteria. The first alternative to merely categorize beauty to symbolize the conception of the sublime was revived in the eighteenth century and it now became linked with the growing interest in nature since in its essential meaning, it was applied to nature. Another influential aesthetic movement to emerge in the latter half of the eighteenth century was that of the picturesque which may be properly described as belonging to the period of transition from what is called "classical formalism" to "romantic disorder". The revival of this movement also saw the inception of scientific archaeology that helped the writers to have a better understanding of Indian art. The prominent members of this movement were Christopher Hussy, Sir William Temple, the Earl of Shaftsbury and Addison. The picturesque movement too was an attack on classical notions of beauty as it advocated disorder and irregularity in landscape in both art and nature¹². It was thus only the change in taste in the eighteenth century when artists were taught to look for qualities other than beauty in a work of art, that led them to take a fresh look at the visual beauties of Elephanta and other cave temples. While searching for the existence of ideal scenes in nature, the picturesque traveller and artist learned to isolate the visual properties of subjects from their features¹³.

The prominent scholars, who gave mere descriptions of Indian art during this period, were William Hodes, Maria Graham. Though their main interest was to study images from an aesthetic point of view they observed the animal world in Indian art as well. We also have some scholars like J. Goldham and Henry Salt who wrote about nature in Indian art¹⁴. They looked at particularly the depiction of flora at both the

general level and at particular regions. Though they focused largely on India in general they took a few examples of the depiction of nature in Deccan art. They equally studied Buddhist, Hindu and Jaina representations of this art. Let us take a look at some of these views briefly to illustrate how studies on nature in Indian art gradually began to emerge. The first artist of this type to arrive in India during the 18th century was William Hodes¹⁵. As an artist Hodes was able to make valuable observations about Hindu art. He acknowledged the Indian skill in ornamenting buildings and admired some of the Hindu relief sculptures for their beauty of execution but felt compelled to criticise Hindu sculpture and painting for their lack of concern with nature resulting in a failure to capture the likeness of subjects. However, the picturesque movement left its mark on artists of this generation. Maria Graham made a detailed account of her journey to Elephanta caves. Impressed by the grandeur of the Trimurti here, she concluded that Indian sculptures often showed a **certain** freedom, taste and concern with naturalism .

The first phase of British archaeological activities in India provided the essential foundations for interpretation of Indian art in the nineteenth century. It is important to note that army officers and officials of the East India Company undertook most of these researches. For the reasons of administration and defence they had to make extensive tours around the country. Since a large number of the officials were trained in and equipped for surveying, the particular task of measuring temples, *stupas* and other monuments did not pose a problem to them. Therefore, they were able to correct the misconceptions of casual travellers and to place Indian archaeology on a more scientific footing. Their official duties involved the learning of different Indian languages including Sanskrit¹⁷, identify ancient places mentioned in

classical literature with archaeological material **available**¹⁸ and so on. These came to their aid in their collection and interpretation of inscriptions and **ultimately, helped** them in the dating of antiquities. In this regard, the earliest contribution on Indian art was by members of the Asiatic Society. J. Goldingham stated that the Indian lion did not look like that animal, especially because of its peculiar mane. He points out that it is evident then that the sculptor was by no means so well acquainted with the figure of the lion as with that of the elephant and monkey. Whereas Indian sculptors have traditionally represented the lion in a formalised, heraldic manner, while animals such as the elephant and the monkey have always been depicted with naturalism¹⁹.

The study of the earliest histories of Indian art reveals four principles that governed its interpretation. These, according to Tartakov, were: racial essence, regressive development, dependent creativity and taintedness²⁰. And according to Inden, on the other hand, these interpretations fall into the following types: Descriptive Accounts, Commentative Accounts and Hegemonic Accounts²¹. The 19th century was both a critical and sympathetic period for the study of Indian **art**. Birdwood, Ruskin, Hegel and Vincent Smith were critical whereas, Ferguson was sympathetic while analyzing Indian art. Birdwood made a notorious statement on Indian art: "the monstrous shapes of the Puranic deities are unsuitable for the higher forms of artistic representation" as according to him they affected decoration²². He introduced in this context the notion of 'racial romanticism' which was influential among the 19th century art histories. He said that though the unnatural figures of the Puranic gods, derived from the Dravidian and Indo-Chinese races of India, their employment for ornamentation is in direct contrast to the use of lovelier and nobler forms of trees and flowers introduced by the Aryan race wherever they went².

Ruskin attacked Indian art. He found Indian art 'unnatural' and 'wanting in truth'. He criticised Indian decorative art in saying that inferior nations were able to produce excellent decorative art, which involved neither the intellect nor a developed moral sense. He closely studied nature. The study of nature for Ruskin did not mean the traditional concern with representation but an empirical study of nature. He studied nature to separate easily Indian art from the European art. Ruskin divided the climates of the various parts of the world into five groups according to their fitness for art. He felt that the tropical forest lands, characterised by moist and enervating heat and represented by India were not conducive to the growth of mind or flowering of good art. He gave descriptions of Elephanta within what he called as a rational approach. A personal conception of nature was central to Ruskin's art theory. The study of nature in his opinion was many-faceted and the role of nature in art had to be elaborated in each context. The conception of nature in Ruskin was ultimately related to his notion of truth²⁴.

Another person, who was of the opinion that Indian art was wanting, was Hegel. The lack of concern for actual works of art and a total dependence on literature for making aesthetic judgements constitutes a major weakness in Hegel's view of Indian art. Hegel's obsession with history prompted his interest in Indian art. His indifference, however, to contemporary art robbed him of a sound empirical basis to judge different forms of art. In short, the image of irrational fancy that he laboriously fashioned for Indian art had less to do with facts than with certain aprioristic assumptions. He did not care to search for the differing norms of Indian art in relation to the classical art of Europe. Hegel held that although Ellora sculpture was in some

cases not unworthy of the Greek chisel, it showed an absence of rules and of the harmony of proportions. The struggle of the wild forces of nature *vis-à-vis* the mighty power of the spirit in art remained unresolved in this world view. According to him Hindu did not attach himself to the regularity of natural vegetation²⁵.

At the level of interpreting the above abstract ideas that looked down on Hindu civilization, Vincent Smith's name became popular as he transferred these ideas to the text-book level. He entered the arena in 1889 with an article on the Greek classical influence on Indian art. His article studied views and assessments of archaeologists on Indian art, especially after the discovery of Gandhara art in around 1833. He was convinced that it was in art that the Greeks had left their indelible imprint, on India. He studied the art of different parts of India including that of the Deccan regions. In his view at Ajanta, Amaravati *etc.*, the local style of art was modified by contact with that of the western world. Further, according to him Indian art did not deserve high rank 'when compared with the world's masterpieces'. But he argues that they were however, entitled to some praise for great art, which was the outcome of commerce with classical culture²⁶. Those scholars who were critical of Indian art thus looked down on it because of their interests to hegemonize and control the colonized people. While looking at Indian art they often drew comparisons with Greece and Rome, which in their view was superior whereas Indian art was categorised as submissive and among the British scholars Smith is a good example to illustrate this tendency.

Some scholars of the nineteenth century looked at Indian art sympathetically. They **also** focused briefly on the depiction of nature in Indian art, gave iconographic

descriptions of it. One of the first scholars exclusively interested in the art of Deccan was J. B. Seely who published *The Wonder of Ellora* written by him in 1825. He elaborated his experience on nature through his journey. He surveyed temples, caves and religious monuments in Ellora and looked at nature such as the fauna and flora depicted at these monuments. He observed different kinds of soil like muddy, marshy and swampy on his trips and weather like hot, sultry airy that he felt while travelling²⁷. He pointed out to excellent fish, abundant vegetables that he found in markets and remarked that there was no fruit in the world equal to the Alphonso mango that grew around Bombay²⁸. He also discussed scenes embellished on monuments with a variety of cultivation and foliage peculiar to the tropical climate²⁹. He told us that the lotus as the emblem of female beauty was held as sacred not only in India, but in Egypt, Tibet and Nepal³⁰. In this book, he reproduced **different** methods for suggesting various aspects of nature as, for instance, the examples of the elephant under the tree, the peacock resting on the tree, the monkey devouring the fruits and so on. In this regard, his account became one of the first that gave vivid descriptions of the depiction of nature in the art of the Deccan.

Compared to earlier part of the 19th century interest in the study of nature in both Indian art in general and sculptural art of the Deccan region in particular, increased in the later part of century. This was mainly because, as part of their official duties, they had to travel to different parts of the country and document its ancient monuments as part of a larger enterprise to understand the culture of the society they had come to rule. Rea, Burgess and Ferguson focussed on the Deccan. Rea mainly concentrated on Buddhist art and architecture while Ferguson was interested in both Buddhist and Hindu art. Among several other interests in their reports they also made

descriptions of the vegetative world and animal world by recording and illustrating them. These are thus some of the best examples of nature depicted in the sculptural art of the Deccan that has been written about.

Foremost among them was Fergusson who studied the history of Indian art dividing it into two broad periods. In the first, he argued, a very high level was reached in artistic achievement and opined that there was no art as good as the early Buddhist art. For the second period, he presented a rather distorted picture of the development of Indian art and architecture by underestimating the art of the Gupta period and the whole development of later Buddhist and Hindu art. From the aesthetic point his remarks on the art of Amaravati led him to conclude that a degree of perfection had been reached in the fine sculptures found here. James Ferguson recognized that elements from nature such as animals like buffaloes, rams and flowers like lotus held a special significance to the people who had sculptured them. For instance, Buddha lying under the Sala tree conveyed a special meaning to the viewers and indicated the end of life³¹. He also commented that, the womb of the Universe was found symbolized in the bell-shaped lotus, indicating particularly the material Universe. He therefore, made special efforts to discuss these aspects of nature in his work³². His interest in depicting various aspects of nature like herds of bull, cows and buffaloes resting in open spaces or, farmers with bulls going to field, snakes with multi-hoods, white elephants in the dream of Maya, the horse **Kantaka** portraying midnight, the lotus issuing from the large decorative vase was mainly because he wanted to convey the true meaning of this art that was intended to convey to the people certain messages. For instance, water from a brimming vases³ indicated

either, the moment or, time of day and also could suggest a deeper philosophical meaning.

Like Ferguson, James Burgess described nature and recorded **exclusively** floral species and animals depicted in the sculptural art. He wrote on ancient monuments of the Deccan region especially about Maharashtra and the Buddhist *stupas* at Jaggayyapeta from where he took the photographs of different aspects reflecting nature and reproduced them in his report. He was interested in pointing out such specimens as the quality of a dwarf holding the tails of a tiger, lotus with **foliage** emerging from the primeval water and a turtle with the goddess suggesting the river³⁵. He also recorded and studied different themes of nature depicted by the sculptures such as the lotus on which the right foot of deities rested that, he opined, symbolized an active and discriminating contact with the world. He further interpreted that the closed lotus indicated evening time, the snake with God suggested *Dharma* the symbol of time and the crane indicated the rainy season³⁵. Further, he reproduced pictures of a dwarf holding mangoes a bull on the pastureland that suggested daytime, while a peacock appearing in the dream of queen Kapina suggested night³⁶. All these depictions indicated the relation between the human world and cosmic world. Unlike both Ferguson and Burgess, A. Rea's work shows that he was more interested in observing vegetation rather than animals. He noted in his report lotus of different varieties, a lotus issuing out of mouth of an aquatic animals that was considered to be a symbol of fertility and related to water cosmology, different kinds of **foliage**, the best loved Indian animal, namely, the elephant as depicted among the flowers, birds walking on water and in search of food in it have been perfectly reproduced by him³⁷. Cunningham another well-known archaeologist was interested in both the celestial

and the vegetative world. He explained how the growth of trees depended on the climate of each locality that had its own size and form of trees. Thus, he explained that the artists had a familiarity of the trees found in their particular environment. This led him to study tall and short trees as depicted on the various monuments³⁸. Another scholar writing during the late nineteenth century was Maisey whose attention was drawn to explaining how the *mucilinda nāga* saved the Buddha, the importance of the lion symbolism and so on³⁹.

The most important discovery of the nineteenth century with a focus on the Deccan was undoubtedly that of the Ajanta caves and their paintings. They were rediscovered by British army officers in 1819 and described in depth for the first time by James Alexander in the second issue of the *Transactions of Royal Asiatic Society* (1830). He recognized the reflection of the artist's mind on nature in Ajanta art. Much of the discussion on the nature that appeared in many of the works of different scholars discussed above was with reference to different parts of India including parts of the Deccan. However, there was no study that exclusively discusses the depiction of nature on this region apart from the book on *Tree and Serpent Worship at Amaravati and Sanchi* (1868) by Ferguson. In this book he was interested in understanding the role of tree in relation to the Buddhist tradition and how nature pervaded its essential philosophy and ethos. He pointed to various aspects of nature as, for instance, a herd of animals resting in open space indicating morning in the summer, a farmer with a cow and a bull going to field indicating day time, a snake with multi-hoods overshadowing the *pada* of the Buddha suggesting the rainy season, depiction of horse *Kantaka* clearly portraying night and so on .

The early twentieth century was marked by the rise of Indian nationalism. Nationalist writings emerged as a reaction to the critical writings of the British administrators. This period witnessed a ferment of new ideas and gave birth to a fresh set of focus in Indian art criticism reacting against the mere descriptive approach of the archaeologist-historians. The creative artists among them initiated this new tendency. The leading scholars under this category were E. B. Havell, A. K. Coomaraswamy, Stella Kramrisch and Heinrich Zimmer. Their writings continued to have an impact well after independence. As against the western classical standard adopted by the European and British writers for evaluating Indian art, Havell suggested new parameters based on traditional Indian ideals for the appraisal of Indian art and architecture. Ananda Coomaraswamy paved the way for a more sympathetic appreciation of Indian art. The criticisms of earlier scholars were considered as based on the wrong understanding of the basic principles of Indian art. More sympathetic western critics like Stella Kramrisch and Heinrich Zimmer presented the contrasting principles of Western and Indian art. Western art too during early twentieth century underwent thoroughgoing rethinking. Avant-garde artists questioned the basic doctrines of Western art. Some of them drew inspiration from Oriental and African art. For Havell the critic should be considered an intermediary between the artist and the audience.

The century exhibits a broad spectrum of cultural phenomena. The writings of E. B. Havell though marked by polemics, and though he was for the creation of an art that blended the best of East and West, they served a purpose in projecting an Indian point of view. He even opined that India required no western ideas for training its art students and this idea subsequently influenced the contemporary artists, critics and art

functionaries. Havell's basic approach to art was essentially Hegelian. Havell's major ideas about Indian art and his basic art theory are to be found in two works, *Indian Sculpture and Painting* (1908) and, more importantly, *The Ideals of Indian Art* (1911). The latter was written with the express purpose of changing the prevailing European indifference to Indian art and to bring about a proper appreciation of its aesthetic qualities. It was the positivistic tendencies in British and European archaeologists and their use of classical standards for judging Indian art that came under Havell's fire. He felt that European misunderstanding of Indian art arose because attempts had not been made to gain a direct insight into it⁴¹. Though his interpretation of Indian art pieces was based on aesthetics and not on scientific models set forth in archaeology his stress on idea pushed criticism into the by-lanes of philosophy⁴². Thus it was in this context that he discussed the pair of elephants pouring water and the *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* indicating birth of Buddha, a pair of deer representing Buddha's first sermon in a park, a lotus in the hand as symbolizing the created universe, other lotus motifs that were employed suggesting fertility or the life giving power of water, the elephant entering the womb of Māyādevi representing the descent of Buddha and so on. He further deeply studied the artist's creation of the obvious law of nature that a smaller object like Mayadevi could not contain within herself a much bigger object like the elephant emphasising emphatically that the idea predominated the artist's in imagination⁴.

In his view, for Indian art, it was thus the idea rather than the imitation of nature that played the crucial part in its development. He was convinced that the common philosophic basis of all art assumed it to be not merely an imitation of the phenomena of Nature, but an interpretation of the inner beauty, and meaning of the

external facts of Nature⁴⁴. He stressed the change of attitude towards Indian art once Europe came into contact with India that led to the ideals and characteristics of the former being undermined or lost. Alongside a detailed study of the keynote principles of Indian art, he also did empirical studies of the sculpture at Elephanta and Ellora and opined that art in India was a living force overall. Havell discussed many critical aspects like the renaissance of art in India, Indian idealism in relation to the art of every day life, art and education in ancient India, art and nature and so on. In this sense his study covers art of the Deccan region. In his work, he reproduced pictures of aspects of nature like fauna such as horse and lion on some the monuments of the Deccan⁴⁵.

Coomaraswamy was an important art historian who vehemently questioned the hegemonic accounts of Western scholarship. The main reason for this was that the latter made efforts to trace the origin of Indian art only to Hellenistic, Roman, Persian or central Asian sources. He therefore, put forward the view that it was rooted in an Indian ethos. To Coomaraswamy naturalistic art was the product and the essential image of materialism and contrary to everything that idealism stood for. This line of argument was pursued further in *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, where he declared that all the forms of Indian art and its far Eastern derivation were ideally determined but was born out of a necessity that explained their very existence⁴⁷. Here, a distinction between the ideal and the sentimental was made and a new interpretation of nature was offered⁴⁸.

Coomaraswamy added a fresh nuance to the **Neo-platonic** doctrine of art by suggesting here that Eastern art was as concerned with nature as the Western. It was

his interpretation of nature that proved to be novel in this context. In the classical tradition, nature as the subject matter of art simply meant the visual external world. Instead of using nature in this traditional sense he significantly equated it with the ideal world of Plato. In other words, based on his study of Indian texts, he put forth the view that nature, the point of departure in art rested on a plane beyond the world of appearances. Coomaraswamy, thus suggested that nature was transcendental and it existed on a metaphysical plane. For, after all, we need to use our sense organs, especially our sight, in order to perceive a work of art⁴⁹. In ultimate analysis Coomaraswamy wanted to link this ideational level of art with its utility at a practical level that seemed to be the continuing thread for explaining all art objects in early India.

His book *Yaksha* studied the depiction of nature in Indian art. He located the Yaksha as being in the midst of nature such as being a garland-bearer or standing on the grove of the tree. He discussed at length the relation between the tree and women in Indian art. He also noticed many unusual aspects of fauna like a fish-tail elephant and other well-known depictions of the horse, the tortoise and the *makara* in Deccan art. He also turned his attention to the study of flora in Deccan sculptural art while describing the depiction of flowers, leaves, lotus rhizomes with flowers, buds and so on⁵⁰. His *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* discussed Indian art in a historical context. The origin of the Buddha image was highlighted in detail. Coomaraswamy questioned the concepts of both Hellenistic origin of the Buddha and the Gandhara origin of the Buddha image. His study focussed on both Buddhism and Hinduism. Interesting aspects of nature like the forest scene described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *makara* as the vehicle of Gaṇḡa, cat and mice and other such examples found in Indian art

were all described. With particular reference to scenes of nature in Deccan art such as the lotus being held by the Bodhisattva, the lotus issuing from navel of Visnu, snake, Ananta on which Visnu is shown seated and so on⁵¹ have been given due attention in this book. His book *Dance of Siva* studied primarily the Hindu view of art in historical context. He looked at beauty of images focussing here too on the depiction of nature like elephants, deer, monkey, tree and so on as they were depicted on monuments in different parts of India. He reproduced scenes of nature in Deccan art with examples of sculptural art found at Ellora but did not discuss or describe these examples at length⁵².

The art historian most emphatically influenced by Coomaraswamy was Stella Kramrisch. In her early writings one notices the tendency to analyse closely the artwork, both sculpture and painting using formalistic methods. Despite her close study of modern methods and a deep understanding of historiography she has not indulged in theorizing on Indian art. She has also carefully steered clear of Ananda Coomaraswamy's romantic glorification of idyllic India as a reaction against the corrupting influence of rising capitalism. She further understood that a solely positivist approach of the archaeologists had failed to support their erroneous assumptions about the inferiority of Indian art. As a consequence, she used different methodologies to put forth her approach. History, myth, religion and philosophy all have a rightful role in her criticism. Aware of the European prejudice against Indian art, she says that the precondition to the understanding of any art is that one must be free from prejudice⁵³. According to her, western methods of criticism have to be recast with the demand of Indian sculpture. At the same time, she also points out the weakness of traditional *Śilpi* texts because the terminology listed in them cannot hope

to explain the understanding of the aesthetic qualities of the art produced that the authors of these texts had not taken into account. These qualities in her opinion were of considerable significance because the structure and consistency of the plastic idiom was conditioned by a certain bent of mind that gave directions to the systems of Indian thought⁵⁴. However, she does not subscribe to the Havellian position that thought precedes a tangible work of art. In her view the experience common to both the subject matter of Indian sculpture and the iconographical elaboration was rooted in the artist or craftsmen's recognition of his experience. With reference to early Indian art Stella Kramrisch views the end of the Mauryan period to mark the end of the ancient period. She disputes the claim that the Indus art was Mesopotamian and therefore, foreign in origin⁵⁵. In India on the individuality of regional traditions she points out that at Amaravati human figure is made the main device of decorative patterns⁵⁶.

An important focus of her work was to study naturalism in Indian art. According to her, Indian sculpture from the outset was profoundly naturalistic. In her view, a flower is not rendered only for its swaying and dewy grace but the sap that surges into its petals finds parallel channels in the creative attitude and achieves form in the work of art and, just as in nature it achieves the appearance of a flower. The artist looks at nature and finds in it a further enticements and actual proof for his experience of it. She also defines Indian naturalism, saying that during various ages and with different degrees, it always relies on the outer aspect of things as a means of understanding a pre-existent situation, whereas in a capillary system, one and the same fluid rises in different and connected tubes. The creative acknowledgement of this internal and the visible world, by putting it into form, is understood by her as

Indian naturalism. While all **form is** essentially homogenous as **far** as **movement** brings it about, the manifold types are keenly understood and stressed as **possibilities** within, or as qualities of nature. On this basis it easily happens that **types** are made into interchangeable varieties of animals amongst themselves, and in relation to man and animals as well. Nature in them is afforded a locality of concentration which it cannot supply itself, but which, through the creative agency of man, reacts upon and impresses the worshipper or onlooker with a sense of the supernatural. In this way she uses the term naturalism not in the western sense of illusionist art⁵⁷ but, its Indian contextual situation, as explained above. She was able to fundamentally notice the relation between the natural world and the spiritual one that was key to the Indian understanding of art. For instance, the higher level of spiritual convention were found on the relief of an animal, real or imaginary i.e., that occupied a prominent place, on a majority of seals. Naturalism, here as elsewhere in Indian art, was not an endeavour as in western art, but it was an unavoidable condition with this conclusion. She took special care to reproduce various examples of flora such as lotus with buds and flowers, garlands and fauna like elephants and horses as depicted in the Deccan sculptural art, for which careful descriptions were also given in her books."

Zimmer's, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* is reconstructed from extensive notes left by the author. His basic idea was to relate myths with the form and symbols of Indian art and civilization. He thus studied nature through understanding the symbolism of fauna such as the serpent, bird, the elephant and floral depictions like lotus and so on. For instance, the symbolism of the serpent is understood thus⁵⁹. The serpent as a dweller in the earth starts forth like a fountain from its hole and crawls along the ground. It is understood as an embodiment of the

water of life issuing from the deep body of mother earth. The elephant on the other hand, is discussed as a symbol of divine power as shown by its popularity in early Buddhist art. However, he points out that the first divine elephant was said to proceed from the right hand of Brahma. The other elephants (*gaja*) that were thus born were understood to support the universe at the four quarters. A thousand-petaled lotus of pure gold, radiant as sun was understood as the procreative aspect of the Absolute in the form of the cosmic lotus. It came to personify the mother Goddess through whom the Absolute moves into creation. To illustrate these points he reproduced the elephant Airavata uprooting a tree, Indra sitting under a flowering tree, the life-giving snake, and elephant caryatids from sculptural art of the Deccan.

In Zimmer's opinion though the carved animal figures on Indus seals rank with the best traditions of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia they were distinct. It was his aim to evaluate the extent of foreign influence on Indian art. As a result, demands of communication to some extent reduced the animals and birds into mere apparition, symbols in static repose. The artistic activity of the Deccan region was studied by him in historical context. He reproduced and discussed aspects of nature such as bull as the vehicle of Śiva at Ellora, lion as the vehicle of Mahishasuramardini, Garuda associated with Visnu and go on and flora like trees associated with the Buddha, a mango tree with a cluster of fruit and lotus as a seat of gods and goddesses. Zimmer was thus, first and foremost, interested in unearthing the deep-rooted meaning of many aspects of nature found in Indian art.

An important art historian who wrote a book around the mid-twentieth century with critical approach to the study of Indian art was Niharanjan Ray. Though he has

one of the first to have used the Marxian analytical method for evaluation and interpretation for art history, he never used it exclusively in all his writings. Ray's articles on Indian painting and sculpture and his books on Mauryan Art contributed to "the history and culture of Indian people" and constitute more or less, a complete history of Indian art. The best way to examine his critical and conceptual statements is to follow his linear approach to Indian art.

Ray's criticism of Maurya and post-Maurya art indicates that he owes much to two of his predecessors, A. K. Coomaraswamy and Stella Kramrisch. He focused on nature in Indian art and in his book *Maurya and Post-Maurya Art*, he recognizes the dynamic naturalism that gives strength to the Dauli elephant and the Rampura bull. He accepts that the elephant carved on a live rock at Dhauli in Orissa shows a creative form and is artistically far superior to the adores lions that seem stylized and artificial. As he puts it: "such plastic presentation of bulky volume, such feeling of live flesh rendered with remarkable naturalism of a dynamic character, such knowledge of physiognomic form of the subject treated and such sense of dignified movement and linear rhythm has no parallel in Mauryan animal sculpture"⁶⁰. He also described other aspects of nature like flora such as the coconut tree, the banyan tree, garlands carried by *Yaksas* and fauna such as an elephant pouring water on its mother elephant and other elephants and horses in the sculptural art of the Deccan⁶¹.

Some historians writing during this period have attempted to present a monastic theory of Indian art. Goetz is one of them and he notices the undercurrent of unity in Indian culture but reminds us not to forget the glaring diversity, which makes it impossible to bring all aspects of Indian art to one denomination. In this context, he

discussed nature. He viewed that the life-giving water becomes the most needed element for man, beasts and plants in this world and that led him to discuss some general aspects of nature. His study found that the presence of water becomes an essential part of the Hindu temple and the lotus, the water flower became the most sacred and common emblem in all Indian art⁶². In his book, *History, Religion and Classical and Medieval India*, he made some effort to understand Indian art by comparing it with the Roman art tradition. At the same time, while closely looking at nature in the art of Deccan, he also compared it with regional traditions in India. He thus, found the elephant and lion depicted at Ellora similar to those that depicted on the Pallava temples. He further noted that the animals associated with the mother goddess particularly depicted sensitiveness and were most naturalistic ".

Many other art historians noted the sensitivity with which nature was depicted in Indian art. According to S. N. Dasgupta in Indian art nature was presented with sympathy and understanding. Human beings were treated as part of nature and they were generally represented against the background of some natural setting. For instance, the figure of a *Yaksa* leaning on a tree emphasized that there was a natural similarity between the flowering life of the tree and the flowering youth of the woman⁶⁴. He further pointed out that Man was born in the world of nature and his life was governed by a harmonious blending of the laws of man and the laws of nature and this was well recognized by the ancient sculptors⁶⁵. Even gods in this tradition were invariably associated with a plant, a flower, a leaf, a bird or an animal. An important philosophical explanation was belief in the theory of the transmigration of the soul that made the Hindu feel that man could be born again as an animal, bird, insect, plant or any other object in nature. Hence, in ultimate analysis, there could not

be any fundamental difference in the life that flowed through different objects in nature. But Dasgupta rightly points out that art was not a mere photographic reproduction of nature and the aim of the ancient Indian artist was not to rival nature but to create forms parallel to nature in a metaphysical sense. Art was a representation of streams of life flowing through man and nature. Though Dasgupta does not particularly focus on the art of the Deccan, his work provides significant analysis of the importance of nature in early Indian art at a general level.

The trend to philosophically project the indigenous essence of Indian art gained momentum and was clearly a reaction against the earlier analysis of art historians that it was merely derivative from the classical traditions of Greece and Rome. Radhakamal Mukherjee in *the Cosmic Art of India* describes the importance of nature. He stresses on this aspect while identifying plant, animal and human figures not with their physical appearances, but with forms of the ceaseless pulsation of vitality (*sat*) and consciousness (*cit*) that penetrated and over-reached nature and that also underlay the dialectic march of the human soul. Classical Indian sculpture, he argued came into existence when, due to India's vision of unity and continuity of life, naturalism and rhythm were unified. This, in turn, effected all depictions of nature in art: vegetation, animals, human figures and symbols, trees and creepers, the bull, monkey, horse, lion and elephant and the *naga*. They were all parts of a vast fluid continuity in this traditional concept of nature and art .

Thus, in this view, Indian naturalism treated the charm and vibration of life replicated in the sculpture with delicacy and grace⁶⁷. This was done without sacrificing the expressive vitality and power that was essential and palpable. The

basic theory put forward was that the aim of the Indian sculptor was transformation and consolidation of emotions into the nine or eleven major permanent or universal moods and sentiments (*rasa*) that ultimately defined their abstract, metaphysical and cosmic character. It was because of this character of man, vegetation and animal that could be seen in their subtle communion and extensive reciprocity depicted in sculpture and painting. He thus wrote: "In the majesty of a group of elephants, the repose of the pair of stags, the devotion and tenderness of the monkey families and the mimicking delight of the ascetic cat, animal sculpture reaches the height of perfection in Indian art"⁶⁸. He further compares and contrasts depiction of nature in India with other parts of the world. Whereas in India it is a full and ardent participant in human lives, in the west, it was fashioned and composed with its variegated and resplendent hues as being outside human life. Thus, he concluded that like the treatment of women, the treatment of Nature in art also illustrates vividly the collective visions and experiences of particular cultures and epochs.

Mulk Raj Anand and Charles L. Fabri were critical art historians. They advocate a comprehensive approach in art criticism. The former's book on Indian aesthetics is on traditional art that can be considered as exemplification of the study of nature in a religious context. He deals with different parts of India and points to the terrible and destructive aspects of nature as well. Some aspects of the art of Deccan from an aesthetic point of view have been highlighted and scenes from nature like horse in the departure scene and various types of creeper were reproduced in his book⁶⁹. Charles Fabri's main concentration was on Indian art in its style and form. He first looked at Indian art by assuming that Indian art was dominated by both Hellenistic and Iranian styles. His interest was also in studying the style of Deccani

art⁷⁰. In his "Truth about Ajanta" he examined the Ajanta cave paintings from the 2nd century BC to the end of the 8th century AD to show the whole spectrum of stylistic evolution from the primitive, classical, mannerist to finally the baroque style. He explicitly says that architecture, just as painting, sculpture or poetry was a result of prevailing attitudes and fashions and that each age brought forth a style that was characteristic of the people. Fabri criticised the effort of art histories to link every dynasty with a style. In his view, dynasties have not made any conscious effort to formulate particular styles. He noticed that despite similarity in contemporary style all over India, there was still variation to make one style different from the other⁷¹.

Another general book of some significance from the point of view of the present study is the book by Shanti Swarup entitled: *5000 Years of Arts and Crafts in India and Pakistan*. In his discussion of nature in Indian art he turned his attention to sculpture at Bharhut, Bodh-Gaya, Sanchi, Bhaja, and the sculpture of the Andhra region. He also took examples from the sculptures at Aihole, Badami, Ellora and Elephanta. His essential argument was that nature played its own role in the evolution of India's culture. Thus, he argued that the Aryans had their vision of Transcendent Reality in Nature and worshipped its grandest and most sublime aspects. Their literature stated that divinities were but the personification of the different phenomena of nature. However, they had also learned to distinguish the smaller gods of nature and the supreme creator. The various gods over time became popular and along with them appeared the spirits of water of herbs, of tree *etc.*. In his work, he thus discussed the depiction of the formation of a rich sophisticated society whose men and women were imbued with an intense feeling for nature in the art of Sanchi and Bharhut. He pointed to the worship of Siva and of his vehicle, the Bull Nandi in Andhra during the

time of **the** Satavahanas and highlighted the prevalence of serpent worship in the form of *Nāgas* at **Amaravati**, Goli and Nagarjunakonda⁷².

Apart from the general books on art history that have discussed aspects of **the** depiction of nature in the art of the Deccan region, in a recent publication, we have an important collection of articles that exclusively deal with the depiction of nature in art. In these writings nature has been viewed as indispensable to the human world. In other words, the two were considered interrelated, interdependent and always transmutable. The world of vegetation had inspired a great variety of motifs throughout Indian art. According to Kapila Vatsyayana, these were naturalistic, beautiful and spontaneous on one level, and imbued with symbolic significance on another level. At Mathura and Amaravati, this Indian characteristic finds its finest artistic expression in the coping stones with flowering sways, vertical stone columns and trees with abundant foliage⁷³. Similarly, she further points out that the life of water and plant was intrinsically related to the first creations of nature, the reptiles. Like the lotus, they too represented a moment in the undifferentiated condition of creation on which human life rested. Snakes also represented cyclical time without a beginning or an end. The animals follow suit and the entire range of evolution, from the hare to the lion, from the rodent to the primate, is vividly represented⁷⁴. In this collection of Essays are also discussed animals associated with Gods guarding sanctuaries. It is pointed out that each animal acquired its own symbolism and they developed into a systematized pantheon closely related to the world of humans and celestials. In this opinion the aquatic, vegetative and animal elements represented aspects of the human psyche. Thus, it is pertinently pointed out how the lotus was related to the mother goddess and the tree to the Yakshinis who represented the water

and earth principle respectively. Lakshmi for instance, the radiant goddess of the lotus represented both the mother and prosperity. Ultimately, all these came to be considered symbols of an universal order and became part of the mythological themes in Indian art⁷⁵.

In an article in this volume on "The Natural World Tree, Flowers and Foliages" it is pointed out that the fact that the force of life is naturally symbolized by the growing configuration of a tree, naturalism was preserved to balance and lend credence to the anatomical naturalism of the multiple images itself even to the extent of rendering the tree slightly asymmetrical but yet, symbolically depicting the ascending axis of creation⁷⁶. In another article "The Natural World Snake Deities", the relation between the tree and serpent has been studied. We are informed that beneath the tangled roots of trees lie the subterranean waters that are the haunt of serpents. In a specific context it is pointed out that the serpents on which Visnu is shown lying, represent the oceanic, undifferentiated condition of the raw material of creation. On the other hand, *Naga* consists of a human head and torso with a serpentine extension below the waist, and a canopy of either five or seven cobra-heads above the human face in the early Buddhist art. Thus, some depictions of *Naga* beneath the tree from Maharashtra and others of a coiled *Naga* in other parts of the Deccan can be discussed in this context⁷⁷. In the article "The Natural World Animal and Birds", it is indicated that warm-blooded creatures upon the land and in the air were considered the companions and allies of man. Animals in India were closely studied by the artists and regarded symbolically as part of the great pattern of life. The meaning and the concept of the creation of some animals is also discussed. For instance, the Deer was created only to die, while the goat was meant for protection.

Man's study of animal behaviour and animal association with particular deities has been elaborated⁷⁸. This volume with its valuable insights on the symbolism and meaning of flora and fauna and their relationship with human life forms an indispensable background to the present study of nature in the sculptural art of the Deccan.

Most of the other studies on art and art history done in post-independent India fall into three categories: those that are general historical, those that are architecture and those that are on iconography. In the general studies, *Early History of Deccan* by G.Yazdani is an important work. He mainly studied and given attention to political, religious, cultural and economic aspects within a conventional framework Of interpretation. He has described art, architecture, sculpture and painting of the Deccan as marginal to his larger concern of editing a textbook on the early history of the Deccan. Thus some interesting references to engravings on rocks in the form of pictorial art of both human and animal figures, depiction of deer associated with Buddha, *nāga mucilinda* protecting the Master, the elephant and horse in transportation are the only particular aspects of his study that drew our attention⁷⁹. Another work, *The Art of South India* by Rajendra Prasad has similarly studied general aspects like the political and religious conditions of the Satavahanas, Ikshvakus and the Visnukundins. However, he has focussed more on how nature pervaded in the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain temple architecture⁸⁰. Yet another general study to throw some light on describing nature is the one entitled *Ancient Indian Army its Administration and Organization*. First, it has focussed on political and social conditions of ancient India but has highlighted a bit on nature like fauna, especially elephants and horses how they were used for military purposes and their importance

in ancient Indian administration. **The** author has reproduced in this **book, animals** engaged in war as found on different monuments of India. With particular focus on the Deccan he has illustrated different types of chariots and elephants as depicted at Ellora and animals used for war in the Amaravati sculptures⁸¹.

The Visnu Purana by Thakar Harendra Dayal focussed primarily on the social, economic and religious **life** of people in ancient India, but from the present perspective, he has also described nature like the mountains and their raw material like wild honey, herbs, roots, fruits, flowers and leaves⁸². Further, he has discussed fauna and flora of the age as described in this *Purana* and has interestingly correlated the use of different aspects of nature to the economy⁸³. Other well-known features like the association of Goddess Laksmi with cattle and other animals and the lotus, animals associated with the incarnation of Visnu, the sacred rivers, trees like the *Caitya* tree, the *Kalpa-vrksha* have all been explained in this book⁸⁴.

Several scholars in the mid-twentieth century were also interested in the study of Indian architecture. One of the first such writings was by Havell who studied the role of nature in the development of Indian architecture. His interest in the importance of the lotus as a symbol of creation, of divine purity and beauty made him link it to how it sustained equilibrium.⁸⁵ He pointed out that the lotus was the seat and footstool of the Gods and the symbol of both the material universe and of the heavenly spheres above it. Another symbolism of the lotus was that of the water pot-the *kalasa* or *kumbha*-which held the creative elements or nectar of immortality churned by gods and demons from the cosmic ocean. Thus he opined that these two pregnant symbols were employed in Indian Architecture and Art, both structurally and decoratively, in

an infinite variety of ways. He further throws light on the correlation between the bell-shaped dome and the lotus dome. In this way, he described the architect's imagination in making pillars with the sacred lotus that from time immemorial was a traditional motif for the capitals of Indian temples.⁸⁶ He also studied the importance of tree motifs and their symbolism that were dedicated to various religious teachers and had become an integral part of Indian temple architecture.⁸⁷

Early Buddhist Rock Temple written by Vidya Dehejia was another important publication on early Indian architecture. A special focus of her book was on how geography impacted ancient Buddhist monuments. Her argument was that the natural formations of rocks were kept in mind while hewing out the monuments.⁸⁸ She further describes some representations of nature on the monuments like elephants, horse, *makara*, fish and so on in various contexts.⁸⁹ In her study, she points out the difference in the works of artists in treating the lotus at Pitalkhora, Nasik and Sanchi.⁹⁰ *The Buddhist Architecture in Andhra* by D. Jithendra Das is another important book on architecture that gives importance to nature. His concern was to describe the Buddhist monuments against the background of how the regions natural resources encouraged for the development of agriculture that led to the growth of rich *gahapati*, *kumara* and *setti* class. These classes, in turn, patronized Buddhism and were mainly responsible for raising magnificent monuments in this region. He has described motifs like *naga mucilinda* and the Bodhi tree depicted at monuments of Candavaram and Dhulikatta. Other elements of nature like a fish, a standing figure with a *naga*, the garland motif and a small lion have been reproduced in this work. ¹

Another set of scholars in the post independent era looked closely at iconographic studies. Though many of these primarily focussed on sacred images, saint and human figures in sculpture they could not avoid the depiction of nature. One of the first such books was *Elements of Hindu Iconography* by Gopinatha Rao whose work soon became the standard text book for iconography. This book mainly studied iconography of Hindu deities with references to instruction of various puranic and agamic texts for cross-referencing. In doing so, he concomitantly described fauna such as bull, the vehicle of Siva, swan, the vehicle of Brahma, Garuda, the vehicle of Visnu etc., and flora like lotus emblem of female fertility and other such natural phenomena. He also discussed the various emblems of Gods and Goddesses that symbolized the power of Nature. These discussions were placed in the context of his main discussion on the role of *prakriti* or nature in understanding the totality of the God-head.⁹² Select examples of elements of nature like bull, elephant, lion, rat, swan, peacock associated with respect to Gods and Goddess as depicted in the sculptural art of the Deccan have also been described by him. The book *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains* throws light on the worship of Nature as integral to this belief system. For instance, worship of the sun as the cause of Being and life-giver, the supreme soul and the creator of the Universe was discussed to show its relationship to the Iranian sun god, how it evolved to become the Indian sun-god, Surya. Another aspect of this book is that it details for readers the instructions that have been given for sculpting the various deities. For instance, Surya should be on a lotus pedestal, holding in his two hands two full-blown lotuses. This is contrasted with the relationship between the lotus and the Bodhisattva. As with other books on iconography, nature relating to particular Hindu Gods and Goddess have been reproduced like the bull with Śiva, swans with Brahma, Garuda with Visnu, and

elephant with **Indra** etc. *Art and Iconography of the Buddha Images* written by Shailendra Kumar Verma is an important book for iconography with special reference to Buddhism. He focussed on the technique and methods of the different schools with emphasis looking closely at Buddha images in both Maharashtra and Andhra schools of sculpture.⁹⁴ He depicted elements of nature like elephants, deer and the most common lotus and *Naga* features of early Buddhism.⁹⁵ Some of these were reproduced by him in the book with reference to monuments and sites located in the Deccan.

In the post-independent era there was also a conscious shift to study Indian art from a regional perspective. Most of the scholars concentrated on writing about separate regions, sometimes focussing on individual states as defined by their present-day boundaries. Many works were produced still highlighting colonialist nationalist methodologies but the content of their work changed incorporating new data from time to time. For the Deccan region, that is the focus of this study, some of the important studies are as follows: *An Eastern Chalukya Sculpture* (1954) by Sivaramamurti, *Stone Sculpture in Alampur Museum* (1973) by Abdul Waheed Khan, *Andhra Sculpture* (1973) by O. C. Gangoly, *Nagarjunakonda- A Cultural Study* (1977) by Krishna Murti, *Sculptural Art in Andhra* (1980) by M. L. Nigam, *Life and Art of Andhradesa* (1983) by Amita Ray and *Andhra Sculpture* (1984) by P. R. Ramachandra Rao are prominent works for the study of Andhra region. Sivaramamurti continued to publish in the post-independent era. *An Early Eastern Chalukya Sculpture* is one example where he discussed south Indian scripts that referred to the political scenario but also provided a history of the eastern Chalukyan artistic activities. He threw valuable light on the depiction of nature in the Amaravati sculpture that had come to be well-studied by

this time.⁹⁶ *Stone Sculpture in Alampur Museum* by Abdul Waheed Khan is another example of a regional study. Though he focused on the depiction of nature he also highlighted different materials utilised in the making of sculptures. Important depictions of portraying the buffalo being killed by Mahisasuramardini, the goat as the vehicle of Agni, lion moving in the forest and so on have been reproduced in this book.⁹⁷

Andhra Sculpture by Gangoly, apart from studying the character of Buddhist art, the rise and development of the Andhra School of art, the cult of decorating and worshipping the *stupa* and the periodization of Amaravati sculpture,⁹⁸ has also shed light on some aspects of the depiction of nature like the garland and some animal motifs. He particularly highlighted and suggested reasons why *stupas* were adorned by garlands. It was considered auspicious and assured great merit to those devotees who placed flowers on the *stupa* and therefore, the placing of a garland on the *stupas* was an established practice. He informs us that the animal motifs occur at Amaravati in three varieties of treatment. The manner of introducing animals on horizontal panels and coping -stones was an old artistic tradition. He highlighted in particular, the Buddhist idea in the representations of animals, which the sculptors must had on their minds. On the other hand, the animals in decorative bands were represented as emanating from the mouth of two *makaras* placed at the two ends of a composition that suggested that all life, including animals were born out of the primeval water at the beginning of the creation.⁹⁹

Nagarjunakonda- A Cultural Study (1977) by Krishna Murti exclusively gave special focus on Nature in the art of Nagarjunakonda. He discussed a variety of

animals such as spotted deer, hare, bull, buffaloes, horse and elephant in both secular and spiritual contexts on the monuments at the site. He also discussed a variety of creeping, jumping, swimming animals and birds. He pointed out that the entire flora like Banyan tree; **Sita-phal** tree and lotus depicted in Nagarjunakonda sculpture was found in the vicinity of its natural environment. Therefore, the surrounding ecology was reflected through the artists mind while portraying the sculptures at Nagarjunakonda.¹⁰⁰ Another regional study discussing the role of nature in art studies is the book *Sculptural Art of Andhra* by M. L. Nigam. He presents for us details on nature like the depiction of *naga mucilinda* that protected Buddha from heavy rains, the Tree spirit, i.e., the tree-god emerging out of the trunk of the tree, the Bodhi tree that stood for the Buddha attaining enlightenment and so on. Depiction of Nature, according to him, was a dominant feature in other early centres of Buddhist art, like Bharhut, Bodhi Gaya and Sanchi but some of the best depictions were found in the art of the Krishna valley.¹⁰¹

One of the most comprehensive regional studies on art history i.e., *Life and Art of Andhradesa* by Amita Ray was set on the socio-economic and the religious background of Andhradesa. This has helped us understand more fully the depiction of Nature in art like flora and fauna on the various monuments of the early historic period.¹⁰² Descriptive accounts like *Andhra Sculpture* written by Ramachandra Rao that was mainly concerned with Buddhist sculpture continue to be published highlighting some of the already well-known depictions of nature in this art. For instance, the Buddha under the jambu tree, lotus in full bloom, snake coming out from anthill etc.¹⁰³

There is, however, more recently a trend to do district-wise studies. For instance, *Sculpture and Iconography Cuddapah District Temples* by A. Gurumurthi aimed at studying the form and style of various deities in the different temples of this district. He reproduced in his book images of the elephant head-god, the snake, bull carrying Śiva and Parvati, the buffalo being killed by Mahisasuramardini and so on.¹⁰⁴

Gupte, Rajasekhar and Krishnamurti are prominent scholars who have studied regional art of Karnataka. *The Art and Architecture of Aihole* (1967) by Gupte has given a description of all the important temples at Aihole, while the latter part of the book deals with iconographic identifications and detailed descriptions of all the important sculptures on many of the temples at Aihole. He has also traced the iconographic evolution of the sculptural form in general. Depiction of nature like fauna such as buffalo killed by the Goddess, bull as the vehicle of Śiva, elephant associated with India, the peacock squatting by the side of Subrahmanya and other representations in which nature directly intervened in forming the unique character of Hindu mythology have been described. Flora like lotus, foliage coming out from the *kumbha kalasa*, the mango tree, with fruits etc., have also been vividly described.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, *Karnataka Architecture* (1985) by Rajasekhara has given a description of some important temples of Karnataka. He has also dealt with the iconographic identification of sculptures on the temple walls. He has described aspects of nature like flora and fauna that directly intervened in forming the unique character of mythology of the times.¹⁰⁶ Both these books cover the early medieval period and look primarily at Hindu mythology and religion.

The Nolamba Sculpture (1987) by Krishna Murthy is another regional study on art but focussing on a particular dynasty. However, in it the study of nature is more elaborate. Descriptions of trees like date palm, plantain tree, fruits and flowers and fauna like creeping and swimming creatures horses, bulls buffaloes elephants and dog can be found discussed. He has also highlighted various influences that went into the making of Nolamba art. It is interesting to find, as noted by the author, that much of the flora represented in the sculpture is still grown in Andhra and Karnataka region. It is quite possible that the surrounding culture should have been the subject matter for the sculptor while portraying some of the scenes.¹⁰⁷

Ajanta Ellora and Aurangabad Caves (1962) by Gupte and Mahajan, *Aurangabad Sculpture* (1966) by Amita Ray are good examples for a study of the regional art in Maharashtra through the ages. Gupte and Mahajan have studied Buddhist, Hindu and Jaina art in Maharashtra. They have given a description of some important sculptures dealing with their iconographic identification and meaning. Nature that directly intervened in forming the unique character of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina has also been described. Thus, they have given detailed descriptions of flora like flowering trees and mango trees with fruits and so on. *Aurangabad Sculpture* (1966) has described specimens of nature in terms of female figures standing near the lotus, holding a branch of flowers or standing under a mango tree. Common sculptures of *niga* have also been described.¹⁰⁸ Such regional studies are primarily descriptive giving much emphasis on style and form of the art. They do, however, add to the empirical base of research though many of the new discoveries and lesser-known features of this art have still to be analysed.

This chapter has given an overview of various historiographical trends from about the 17th century onwards. Each phase marked a change with a focus on the depiction of nature gradually increasing. Nonetheless, it must be concluded that exclusive writings on the depiction of nature in the art of early Deccan have been few. This has been so because the concern of early scholarship had been to primarily focus on understanding the iconographic details of deities and their consorts or, to look at details of decorative art. Thus the scholars up to 17th century, although studied Indian art, first confronted it as travellers and were merely interested in the exotic aspects. The 18th century scholars focussed more on documentation of Indian art. The scholars in the 19th century began its interpretation and were both critical and sympathetic to it. The early twentieth century saw writings that gave special emphasis to understanding the ethos of Indian art while writings of the post independent era brought about a study of art on the particular regions of the subcontinent.

The study and descriptions of travellers up to the 17th century showed little interest in the finer details of how nature was represented in Indian art as they came to India as amateurs. They did not have any substantial knowledge on Indian culture that pervaded Indian art. Their weakness was that they adopted western religious ideals and opposed the very notion of idol worship. Therefore, they vilified Indian Gods and Goddesses insulting them as monstrous and evil. The 18th century scholars were trained in appreciating naturalistic art. They studied the natural world and the celestial world. They were interested more keenly in the art of south India and an emphasis was given on the art of Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta. Their studies on depiction of nature in art were comparative incessantly comparing the Indian notions with the classical Greek and Roman traditions. Many scholars of the 19th century looked at

depiction of nature in the art of the Deccan. However, their discussion on nature is less because most of them were administrators and surveyors. Thus, their main contribution was that they reproduced depiction of nature like flora and fauna as found in the Deccan in their reports and books. The historians and archaeologists of the early twentieth century questioned the colonial interpretations of the concept of nature and its depiction in Indian art by focusing on it as the central theme of understanding the entire world view of the early artistic and sculptural depictions. They began a trend that was appreciative of these tendencies so that we find that studies between the 1940's and 1980's thoroughly discuss the depiction of nature in Indian art. They also draw our attention to nature in the art of different regions of the Deccan. In fact, it is only now that some articles are written exclusively on nature emphasising on the depiction of flora and fauna in Indian art. Finally, studies on regional art began to proliferate during the mid-twentieth century. These were mainly dynastic or site studies and some of them discuss depiction of nature by giving examples. However, they are mainly descriptive and give iconographic details rather than analyze the depictions.

Having discussed the broad trends in which art history on the subcontinent developed, we have found that in each phase of its evolution the depiction of nature remained peripheral to the larger concerns on the writing about the sculptural art of early India. Though many regional studies began to be done right from the nineteenth century onwards, they remained mainly descriptive projecting the sculptural panels depicting flora and fauna as only something extra in their respective reports and books that were focussed on themes around different regions, dynasties or sites. As discussed above, only a few scholars have clearly articulated the centrality of nature

in the experience and craft of the artists and have given due emphasis to it in appreciating the vitality of early Indian art. From the point of view of the Deccan fragmented studies on highlighting the depiction of nature in the art of the different states- Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka- of the Deccan have been done, but only for specific time periods. The present thesis attempts to provide an empirical basis for the study of the depiction of nature in the art of the different segments of the Deccan over a chronological span time from the first appearance of sculptures up to the tenth century AD.

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CHAPTER III

FAUNA AS DEPICTED IN **BUDDHIST** SCULPTURAL ART

The sculptors in early Deccan brought the depiction of nature into their works in various forms and styles and thereby portrayed their skill and ideas in relation to nature. This chapter shows how and why animals and birds as a part of nature appeared on early Buddhist monuments of the Deccan. We discuss in this chapter three broad themes: (a) importance of animals in Buddhism (b) animals and birds that assumed the form of Bodhisattva and (c) animals and birds as they appeared during the major events the Buddha's life. The hypothesis of this chapter is that Buddhist art in this regard pioneered the depiction of natural forms with reference to fauna and thus laid the foundations of the way it could be depicted later.

I

In Buddhist art animals came to be of great symbolic importance. We find different sorts of animals depicted on the Buddhist monuments. These representations seem to have been an old artistic tradition because it appears that the artists had already known that animals were of symbolic importance in Buddhism. In fact, different Buddhist texts describe their ideas with the help of the representation of animals. In the *Mahāvastu*, the Buddhist attitude towards animal life is stated as a stage in the series of evolution to higher types of life on the way to *Nirvana*. This is picturesquely described in the visit of Maudgalayana to the Animal Kingdom thus: "Next **Māhāmaudgalayāna** roamed about observing the painful conditions in which the lower animals had to pass their lives and then reviewing their lives of suffering gave an account of miseries that they were subject to. Hay and wet grass were their

food; cold and hot water their drink, they were harmful to one another; at every step, they were in danger. At Jetavana, he narrated in detail all these sufferings of the lower animals and impressed upon the audience that knowledge of truth should be acquired and sinful acts should be avoided, so that man may not run the risk of being reborn as any of the lower animals"¹.

However, the Buddhists generally accepted animals to be as important as human beings. Therefore, the Buddhists prohibited the killing of animals. The *Pancagatidipana* states that the slayers of goats, sheep, jackals, hare, deer, pigs *etc*; are reborn in the *Sanghata* hell where they are huddled up in one place and beaten to death.² It goes on to explain that somewhere in the hell, the sinners are fastened by the neck and cut to pieces for the sin of slaying fishes, boars, cattle, bulls and goats for food.³ It also mentions that those who hunt beasts and slay birds will suffer terrible pain in hell. These references indicate that animals deservedly attained a worthy place in Buddhism. It is learnt that punishment for killing animals was severe. The ancient Buddhist law advocated that slayer of animals is as equal to a person involved in a murder case. The *Pancagatidipana* further states that those who caused death of living beings by throwing them into fire, *etc* are reborn in hell and are burnt in the dreadful fire.⁴ In regarding animals as important as human beings it is conceded in Buddhism that animals that listen merely to the Law of the Buddha deserve the heaven. Thus in one instance it is narrated that even a frog that attentively listened to the teachings of the Buddha was reborn in a golden mansion, twelve *yojanas* in size.⁵ Twenty-five *suttas* of the *Samyuttanikāya* describe Sakka's character. The sixth *sutta* states that kindness to animals should be shown. According to this, a real Buddhist

should not plunder and destroy the other's properties and not think of taking life of anyone whether of animals or human beings.⁶

Animals were important in the socio-religious life of tribes in ancient India. They used particular animals for economic life and worshipped them. They used to give animals as inherited property to their family members. For example, taking a contemporary example, domestic animals played a considerable role in the life of the Lepchas. Anthropological study among them shows that nearly all the ceremonies in their life demanded animal sacrifices; they were essential for the socio-religious celebrations of birth, marriage and death.⁷ This study indicates that animals had an important bearing on their psychological development. The most objective observers of higher animals cannot avoid allowing him to be repeatedly drawn **into** making analogies with his own subjective experiences.⁸ This close association of animal and human life had a long history though historical data describing it is limited.

Let us turn our attention to Asoka's Edicts where he issued many orders relating to the protection of animal life and specially ordered that their welfare has to be taken care of. Emperor Asoka specifies some classes of animals, birds and fishes, the slaughter of which he prohibited. (Pillar Edict V) on particular days observed as holidays according to the Brahmanical and Buddhist usage. Asoka's Pillar Edit V says: "... on the three *chātūrmāsīs* i.e., on the full moon day which fall before or after the usual season of four months, and on the *tisya* (i.e. *pausa* month) full-moon, fish shall neither be killed, nor sold for three days viz., the fourteenth, the fifteenth, of the first and the first of the second, fortnight, as well as on all fasting days as a rule. On the same days, again, in the elephant-forests creatures must not be killed. On the

eighth (*tithi*) of every fortnight, on the fourteenth, on the fifteenth, on the *tisya*, and *Punarvasu* days, on the full-moon days of the three seasons and at festivals, bull shall not be castrated, nor he-goat, rams, and boar, nor other such animals that are usually castrated. On the *tisya* and *punarvasu* days, on the full-moon days of the seasons and during the fortnight connected with the seasonal full-moons, the branding of horses and cows is not permitted".⁹ It is well known that Asoka was influenced by Buddhist ideals but what is important is the fact that he issued these edicts as orders for the public at large to follow.

Animals are considered helpful to mankind though some of them may look wild. There are several instances to indicate this and one such being the case of a monkey who saved a human baby by jumping into a swollen river¹⁰. In another story a monkey helped a farmer when he had fallen into a pit in the forest of the Himalaya while he was searching for his lost cow". The Bodhisattva as monkey also helped his herd at the time of danger. In another case the Bodhisattva as elephant saved the wayfarers who were in profound distress in the forest,¹² while in another example of the Bodhisattva in the form of an elephant he helped his blind mother by leaving his herd¹³. In a detailed study of the *Jatakas* it has been brought to our notice how the Buddhisattva and the Buddha took many animal forms. Thus for instance, the Bodhisattva had been a vulture twice: once at Rajagriha at an unknown time and on another occasion, at Varanasi in the time of Brahmadata and he was once a pigeon. The Buddha was a lion ten times; or rather, he was a lion in ten *Jatakas* stories. In the same way, the Buddha was an elephant in six *Jatakas*; four times at Varanasi in the time of Brahmadata once in Magadha and once in the kingdom of Anga. The Buddha assumes the snake form as a symbol of morality. The Bodhisattva in the shape of a

snake practiced the five moralities without interruption. Exercising morality he did not end the life of those Brahmins who made him tired of performing the dance. It was easy for the early Buddhists to make hero a lion, a vulture, an elephant, a king and a minister in the same epoch, or to transform a serpent into a ship for the use of carrying persons of morality. Crocodiles were made into creatures filled with kindness towards those who did not wish to kill and so on. Feer further points out that one can distinguish among the *Jātakas* those which deal with morality from the strictly Buddhist point of view and those which deal with it in a more general fashion. Murder and theft, to which we have referred to above are forbidden by all moral concepts; but the ban on the killing of animals, the idea that it is crime to kill birds and eat them, the idea that a harmless serpent is moral, all that is peculiar to India, and in particular to Buddhism.¹⁴

Kinship with animals was deep rooted in the total Buddhist concept of life. So in Buddhist texts animals are always treated with great sympathy and understanding. Some animals, such as the elephant, the horse and the *nāga*, the noble serpent are used as personifications of great qualities, and the Buddha himself is Śākya *Siṃha*, the lion of the Śākyas. His teaching is compared to a lion roar confounding the upholders of false views.¹⁵ When in a *Jataka* story the shipwrecked people were being devoured by a monster on the island of Ceylon, the Bodhisattva as winged horse went there and saved them.¹⁶ The Bodhisattva as dolphin also helped the people who were sinking in the river after their boat was destroyed¹⁷.

Thomas has opined that the animals such as the dog and the horse that had become man's partners might have some glimpse of the practical meaning of

responsibility.¹⁸ We are told that when the future Buddha renounced the world to attain Buddha-hood his horse **Kantaka** died. **Coomaraswamy** points out that *sanyasa* means virtually death. The horse Kantaka, who was the bodily vehicle of the future Buddha, represented his symbolic death.¹⁹ In a later episode an elephant, Parileyyaka and an intelligent monkey were the Enlightened One's companions when he retired to the forest to get away from quarreling Bhikkhus.²⁰ The good qualities of animals is the subject of several *Jataka* stories, the best known being that of the hare in the moon (*Sasa Jātaka*)²¹ and the story of the heroic monkey-leader who saved his tribe by making his own body part of a bridge for them to cross the Ganges.²² The highest quality of an elephant is noted spirit of self-sacrifice. This noble quality of this animal is brought out at its best in the story of the six-tusked elephant in the *Chhaddanta Jataka*.²³ There is even an elephantine version of Androcles and the lion in the *Alina Citta Jātaka*, where a tusker gives itself and its offspring in service to some carpenters out of gratitude for the removal of a thorn from its foot.²⁴

The deer is depicted as the most gentle among the animals. A story narrated tells us how the deer was the symbol of a spot where no harm was possible to any innocent creature. This sacred spot was occupied centuries earlier by a herd of deer of which the leader was the Bodhisattva himself, born as the selfless animal who offered his own life to save a pregnant young doe.²⁵ The deer is also a homonym of emolument and a symbol of prosperity.²⁶ Further Buddhist lore is full of other examples where the human-animal interaction becomes inter-dependent.

We have examples where the animals helped the people by guarding the quarters. So, the Buddhist accepted the tortoise and tiger respectively as the symbols

of the north and west. The lion on the other hand, merges into what is customarily called the dog of the Buddha. Therefore, we find that Buddhist lions guard temples, altars, and the home. The snake, which was universally accepted as the symbol of fertility became the holiest symbol of Buddhism. In one illustrative story a new-born baby standing on a large white lotus was baptized by serpent Nanda and Upananda, who appeared in the sky.²⁸ In another story, the Bodhisattva being transformed from serpent to human life could have emitted poison at those Brahmins who had caught him and made to endlessly dance but he did not do so because of his nobility.²⁹

Apart from animals, birds also have symbolic meaning in Buddhism. Both the peacock and swan are considered symbols of *Dhamma*. The queen of Banaras had dreamt of the peacock and the swan preaching the law of *Dhamma*.³⁰ The duck is said to symbolize the missionary propensities of the early Buddhist teachers. As the ducks are characterized to gather together at certain definite places and at certain definite times of the year, and again migrate to distant countries, so the early Buddhist teachers gathered together at their centers during the rainy season, and annually migrated on their travels to propagate the gospel of Buddhism to the world.³¹ The duck also symbolized wedded bliss.³² The eagle is the symbol of the solitary hero, namely the Buddha, who attained highest goal.³³ Taken in their totality the above examples of animal-human relationship show the fundamental core of Buddhist ethic generally accepting them as of greatest symbolic importance. Concomitantly, therefore, animal sacrifices were prohibited and the kings were advised to everywhere establish services for both men and animals in ancient India. The interaction, interdependence and reciprocity between the human and animal world is beautifully depicted in Buddhist sculptural art that we shall now turn to detail in the following

pages in two parts. This follows the pattern of the story of Lord Buddha's life that can broadly be divided into two parts: his previous life story and his human life. In his previous life he was depicted as different animals and in his human life some animals are portrayed as flanking him, assisting him and most importantly worshipping him.

II

According to Buddhist tradition, Buddha as a Bodhisattva went through more than five hundred births as birds like peacock, woodpecker, *haṃsa*, quail *etc.* As animals like elephant, winged horse, hare, bull, deer, buffalo, monkey, snake *etc.* and as man, persistently qualifying himself by practice of noble deeds involving even self-sacrifice for the sake of others and by the greatest acquisition of virtues like *dana*, *prajñā*, *śīla*, *kṣanti* *etc.* Ultimately, every successive birth of his led him to Buddhahood³⁴. It is generally accepted that the sculptures on the Buddhist monuments are symbols of Buddha though scholars suggest that even a pillar on these monuments is also a symbol of Buddha.³⁵

In Indian mythology, the symbol of the White Elephant had been so popular, and deep rooted that the Buddhists therefore adopted it. On every early Buddhist monument, wherever the life of the Buddha was narrated, it is often used to indicate the descent of the Buddha from the Tushita Heaven into the womb of Mayadevi. According to the Buddhist mythology and legends Mayadevi, the Queen of king Siddhodana of Kapilavastu, saw a White Elephant in her dream before the conception of Gautama Buddha. She also dreamt that the Bodhisattva in the shape of the White Elephant appeared with a lotus in his hand³⁶. The Bodhisattva or future Buddha

descending from the Tushita Heaven to be born of Māyā is represented in different forms. One of the forms found in the *Lalitavistara* describes that Bodhisattva as a White Elephant arriving in a palanquin carried by *devas*, while the humans played music and *apsaras* praised him with their songs.³⁷ All these different descriptions have been popularized through depictions on sculptural panels. We discuss some of them below.

Two of the earliest samples datable to the 1st century BC at Kanheri (Chart I, SN.19) and (Chart I, SN.40) belonging to the 2nd century AD at Junnar respectively depict the White Elephant holding a lotus in his hand. Māyā is not shown because of the narrow space available on the panel. One can easily identify this elephant as the symbol of Bodhisattva because of the lotus in his hand in the context of the *Lalitavistara* story [Plate I]. Further, the story had probably become popular which permitted the artists to take the liberty of using the synoptic method to depict the birth episode.

Besides this, there are several depictions of Māyā's Dream at Amaravati. (Chart I, SN.1). The earliest one is dated to the 3rd century BC. It gives a full description where Māyā is seen lying on her left on a couch. The elephant is shown entering from her hind part while his fore legs are seen slightly bent. His eyes are wide open. In another panel (Chart I, SN.29) datable to the 2nd century AD at Amaravati, Maya is seen as above. The elephant, however, is shown above her. His hind legs are bent at the ground level while his fore legs are slightly raised. This elephant is sculptured in a very charming way. Moreover, on yet another relief at Amaravati (Chart I, SN. 32) dated to the 2nd century AD we have an interesting

depiction of the birth scene that shows the queen and the elephant in the same position but they are also shown in the same size. A similar depiction has also been found at Bharhut (Chart I, SN. 4). At Nagarjunakonda, the depiction of Maya's Dream appears twice. In the first, the elephant (Chart I, SN.70) is shown on a shelf above Maya. In the second (Chart I, SN.76) the elephant is seen hovering above her. His trunk is stretched down towards the womb of Maya. In both these scenes Maya is shown lying on her right on the couch and this can be contrasted with her left pose as found at Amaravati.

Bodhisattva as the White Elephant descending to earth has been described in some other visual examples in a totally different way from the above. For instance, at Amaravati (Chart I, SN. 20) and Nagarjunakonda (Chart I, SN. 23) the elephant is found seated in a palanquin being carried by dwarfs. The trunk of the elephant in this Nagarjunakonda example is bent like an active snake. At Amaravati *devas* are seen holding an umbrella, playing flute or holding a flute near the elephant. Philosophically speaking, it seems that the former appears to be reluctant to come to the perplexed world by leaving his peaceful one, while the latter seems willing to come to this world. However, the Bodhisattva descended to the human world and made great attempts for the good of the people. To popularize this idea stories were also written which then began to be sculpturally depicted. We now turn to describe some of these.

There are **two** interesting *Jataka* stories viz., *Chhaddanta* and *Hasti* that describe the Bodhisattva as elephants making voluntary sacrifices. The stories are as follows:

In the *Chhaddanta Jataka* the Bodhisattva as elephant with six-tusks was **the** leader of a herd of elephants. He had two wives. One of them died desiring to be the queen of the king to revenge her previous master because she had felt humiliated since her master had favoured the other wife. As per her wish she was reborn as the chief queen of Banaras. To fulfill the desire of his queen, when she pretended as taken ill, the king sent the hunter to bring the six-tusks of the elephant that had been pointed out by the queen. When the hunter approached, the elephant voluntarily sacrificed himself and let the hunter cut his tusks in order to delight the king's consort. The hunter offered the tusks to the king that led ultimately to death of this queen³⁸.

The depiction of the above story has occurred once at Amaravati belonging to the 2nd century AD (Chart I, SN.49) and at Goli (Chart I, SN.67) dated to the 3rd century AD. At Amaravati, the story is shown within a medallion whereas at Goli it is on a quadrangle panel. In the first depiction at Amaravati, the elephant, *Chhaddanta* is shown approaching the lake attended by his retinue. In the scene lower down the white elephant with his herd are shown sporting in a lake full of lotus while others hold the umbrella and wave the *chauri* for their leader. The lotus in the lake where the elephants sport are most faithfully copied from nature and effectively used by the sculptor to the presence of water. To the left *Chhaddanta* is shown slowly emerging from the water and higher up he is shown walking away. At the top right hand corner is seen the royal elephant and below in the corner is shown the hunter. In front of this scene, beside the tree, the elephant kneels and helps the hunter so that he can saw and cut his tusks. The topmost scene shows the hunter carrying the tusks tied to the end of a pole. The lion on the left side of this panel indicates the forest and below this is shown the dying elephant [**Plate I**].

Unlike at **Amaravati**, the depiction on a quadrangular panel at **Goli (Chart I, SN.67)** shows *Chhanddatta* along with only four elephants and one sheep roaming in the forest. The Great Being is depicted once in the composition with a huge body. At the extreme right, at bottom of the panel, is shown the noble elephant kneeling and the hunter is shown cutting his tusks. At the extreme right, above the panel, is shown the hunter carrying the tusks that were wanted by the Queen Subhadra. One elephant is shown in the tank and another one looks as though he is coming down into the tank. The eyes of the elephant *Chhanddatta* seem to be shut. Here *Chhanddatta* seems to struggle while cutting his tusks since the trunk is shown closely wrapped around the elephant. At Goli the hunter is shown cutting the tusks of elephant but at Amaravati, the elephant is offering itself and cutting its own tusks.

According to the *Hasti Jataka* once the Bodhisattva was born as an elephant that lived alone in the forest. One day when he was wandering in the forest, he **heard** the loud of wailings of a large number of people. On hearing cries of wayfarers, the Bodhisattva rushed to the place from where the noise was coming. After discovering the wayfarers on the cliff of a lake, all in profound grief, the Bodhisattva made up his mind to sacrifice his body for the wayfarers who had not been able to get food for several days. He told them that at the bottom of the cliff was a dead elephant that would be enough food for them that after their journey. Before they arrived at the place, the Bodhisattva had climbed up on to the cliff, and jumped to his death³⁹. This story has been depicted rather graphically in the sculptural art.

The *Hasti Jataka* depictions have been faithfully depicted at Amaravati. On a bold relief from Amaravati belonging to the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.2**) is seen a

Bodhi tree. Under the tree, we see an elephant that looks rather healthy and is **shown** slightly raising its trunk. It seems that he is getting an impression from a nearby place, that there may be the cry of wayfarers or a party of seven hundred people, **all** in profound grief as suggested in the story of the *Hasti Jataka*. However, the sculptor extracts the episode that happened later to depict here. That is, when the elephant rushed to the wayfarers and spoke to them leading him to make the sacrifice so that his flesh could be eaten by the wayfarers. A somewhat similar elephant of the same period at Amaravati dateable to the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.3**) shows his trunk bent and therefore, it looks like a coiled snake. He is here seen in the act of walking. His ears look stiff and he seems to be listening to a sound which is coming from a distant place where a large number of people who were supposed to be waiting in profound grief. The nature of this scene reveals a tragedy as the wayfarers were in great difficulty and the noble elephant died for their sake. [**Plate II**]

There is a delightful story known as *Mati-Posa Jataka* where the Bodhisattva is again an elephant who helps his blind mother. The story says that once Bodhisattva was born as an elephant king. But, as his mother was blind and constantly needed the support of her son, he left the herd and went to the place where his blind mother was living. This story is depicted on one of the fragments at Goli (**Chart I, SN.65**) belonging to the 3rd century AD. Here, the sculptor shows the mother elephant small in size when compared to her son and recumbent taking shelter. We see the Bodhisattava as a standing elephant pouring water over his mother. The lotus flowers and buds suggest a tank. Apart from the depiction of elephants as part of stories, one comes across a Sannati relief that has represented an elephant and some winged

animals (**Chart I, SN.31**). According to Asher and Gai, this elephant can be understood as the symbol of the Buddha.⁴⁰ [**Plate III**].

In addition to elephants, Bodhisattva was also born as other animals like hare, deer, buffalo, winged horse and monkey. These forms of the Bodhisattva have been described in various *Jataka* stories. In the *Hare Jataka* the Bodhisattva as hare has been depicted as voluntarily making his sacrifice to the guest Saka. According to this *Jātaka*, Bodhisattva as a hare lived in a forest along with his three friends viz., an otter, a monkey and a jackal. One day Saka in the form of a *brahmana* came to the place where these four friends were living and insisted on food for his hunger. At that time, the otter offered six fishes to the hungry *brahmana*. Likewise, a cluster of ripe mangoes and a lizard with source-milk were offered by the monkey and the jackal respectively. The grass-nibbling rabbit, on the other hand decided to proffer **his** own body to feed the guest because he had nothing else except his body. Then it is described that the hare sacrificed himself by jumping in to the fire in order to feed the *brahmana* with his roasted body⁴¹.

The depictions of the *Hare Jataka* appear at least thrice. The first at Amaravati (Chart I, SN.33) is dated to the 2nd century AD. The second at Goli (Chart I, SN.80) and the third at Nagarjunakonda (Chart I, SN.62) are dated to the 3rd century AD. We will discuss the last two of them in detail. At Goli the sculptor shows the hare in the action of jumping into the fire. The body of the hare looks strong in this depiction. His ears look stiff. Behind the hare is seen the otter holding a fish in its mouth. Further, behind the otter is shown the monkey seated while he is holding in his hand something that is unidentifiable. According to the text, the thing in the hands of the

monkey should be mangoes. But here on the sculpture it seems to be in the shape of *laddus*. Next to the monkey is seen the jackal in a squatting posture. Beyond the **fire** the sculptor shows the *brāhmaṇa* squatting while he is stretching out his right hand. At Nagarjunakonda the sculptor shows the hare talking to his friends. This animal is smaller than as seen at **Goli**. In this scene the sculptor shows the hare actually jumping into the fire because the fore part of hare is seen in the **fire**. We can also see the three animals bringing their gifts of food for Sakka. According to Longhurst, the jackal is carrying a pot of ghee instead of a lizard with sour-milk⁴². But in this sculpture it is difficult to identify what is being carried by the jackal [Plate IV].

According to the story of the *Kuru-Deer Jātaka*, Bodhisattva as a Kuru-deer lived in a wild forest. He is said to have rescued a man who was in great difficulty in the forest. A queen of a king dreamt that this deer was preaching the law or *dhamma*. She requested the king to get for her the deer preaching law or *dhamma*. The king ordered the hunter to catch him. The hunters with the help of the man who was rescued by Bodhisattva as deer surrounded him and caught him⁴³. In a portrayal at Ajanta, we see a deer (Chart I SN.95) surrounded by a group of people in kneeling pose. The animal looks beautiful. His horns are raised upward. Following the above story in this *Jataka* it is possible to identify this deer as Bodhisattva. Walter Spink in fact opines that the deer being adored by the devotees is not an animal but the symbol of the Buddha.⁴⁴

The *Suvannamiga Jataka* describes that the Bodhisattva came to life as a young stag (he-deer) and grew up as a beautiful and graceful creature when **Brahmadatta** was ruling at Banaras. The Bodhisattva while leading his herd got his

foot entangled in a snare. His attempt to escape from the snare led him to become injured. With the help of his wife he could get free from the hand of the hunter⁴⁵. On a frieze dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.16**) at Pitalkhora a stag is represented with a long horn, which looks like a silver wreath, his eyes resemble round jewels. His eyes are turned forward in the act of gazing. The descriptions of the *Jataka* are identical with the depiction the physical characteristics of this deer here. It is therefore possible to identify this deer as Bodhisattva as has been done by Spink.⁴⁶

In the *Mahisa Jataka* it is said that Bodhisattva was once born as a buffalo. When he grew up, he became strong, big, and roamed over the hills and mountains. Once while he was standing under a tree a monkey suddenly jumped upon his back started disturbing him in several ways. However, it is said that Bodhisattva did not lose his temper.⁴⁷ The beginning of this story has been depicted on a slab from Sannati (**Chart I, SN. 21**) that shows a big buffalo standing and behind him from above is seen a monkey in an attitude of jumping on to the back of the Bodhisattva as buffalo. This sculpture faithfully portrays the story of how the Bodhisattva even in the life of buffalo had been patient with the wild monkey.

The *Valahassa Jataka* has described that Bodhisattva was born as a winged horse. Some people who were shipwrecked reached the island of Ceylon inhabited by *Yaksinis*. They lived with the female demons, which revealed themselves as man-eaters. The Bodhisattva as a winged horse saved them⁴⁸. The depiction of a winged horse has appeared once (**Chart I, SN.9**) belonging to the 2nd century BC at Amaravati and there is another depiction at Pitalkhora, (**Chart I, SN.10**) dated to the

2nd century BC. Following of above *Jātaka's*, narration it is possible to identify these depictions as those of Bodhisattva. [Plate V]

Apart from animals there are innumerable forms of the Bodhisattva as different types of birds. In the *Mora Jataka* we are told that once the Bodhisattva was born as a peacock. In this story a queen of Banaras named Khema had dreamt that the peacock was preaching the law of *Dhamma*. She informed the king of this. Through the king, she made an attempt to catch this peacock by sending a hunter to capture it but failed to do so. After six successive kings who were unsuccessful in catching it, came a seventh who could catch the bird with the help of a wise hunter⁴⁹. At **Amaravati** there are several depictions of the story of the *Mora Jataka* of which we will discuss two of them datable to the 2nd century AD.

In the middle of one of the three panels, dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SN.44**) at Amaravati inserted between the complete and the half-lotus rosette, is seen a golden peacock being adored by both king and queen. The bird is seen standing. The tail of this bird is rounded in a clockwise fashion. This has been interpreted to be an act of preaching the law⁵⁰. It is clear that a person to the left of the bird is a minister and before him are seen the king and his queen seated on the same seat while all of them look on in adoration at the peacock. To the left of the king is seen a monk with shaven head. In contrast with previous sculpture, which illustrates the story of the *Mora Jataka*, relating to the king named Brahmadatta and his queen, Khema, the last part of it is depicted within a medallion on one of pillars from Amaravati (**Chart I, SN.43**). However, most of the spaces in the roundel is broken. Fortunately, the area where the story can be identified is intact. Here we can see all the queens listening to

the law preached by the peacock. It too bends its tail in a clockwise fashion. We see some noble marks on the tail of this bird. It is a beautiful depiction wherein it is depicted with half-stretched wings. Its beak is slightly bent and its eyes are seen wide open. Physically speaking this bird is bigger than the one described above. Obviously, the sculptor intends to depict this as a he-peacock. A queen seated on a high seat at the backside of other queens maybe **Khema**. The story illustrated on this pillar can be considered the part of the episode of the *Mora Jataka*.

In the *Javasakana Jataka*, Bodhisattva was born as a woodpecker⁵¹. He is described as a wise physician, who helped his fellow-creatures when they were in distress. One day when the bird was flitting about in the forest he saw a lion in great pain because it had a bone stuck in its throat. The Bodhisattva as woodpecker helped him by removing the bone from the throat of the lion'. This story is depicted on a panel from Goli, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Chart I, SN.66) and dated to the 3rd century AD. In this sculpture the lion is shown writhing on the ground with his mane all tangled indicating that he was groaning in great pain. We see a woodpecker perched on a tree and watching the condition of the lion in profound grief. In the second scene, we can see the lion seated quietly with his mouth wide open. The sculptor shows the woodpecker entering into the mouth of lion to pull out the bone stuck in its throat. The bird looks very brave. It is thus clearly depicted how a small bird with a good heart helps the lion in great trouble. Beyond the tree is seen a person who looks at the attempt made by the woodpecker for the lion. This whole scene is located in a forest. This is an only example of its kind in the Deccan.

In the *Mahahamsa Jataka* it is said that Bodhisattva was once born as a king of the swans, that is, as a kind of *hamsa*. The queen of Brahmadatta in Banaras dreamt that some golden geese (swans) had descended quietly on the royal palace. The geese then started preaching the Law in the sweetest voice imaginable. The queen requested the king that she wanted to listen to the preaching of the golden swan that she had dreamt about. With the advice of his minister the king ordered his servants to construct a lake that was more beautiful than the existing one where the requisite swans had been living. Thus the king induced the swans to live in his own lake⁵³

The story of the *Mahahamsa Jataka* gets depicted twice at Amaravati and once at Sannati. In the first sculpture at Amaravati belonging to the 2nd century AD (Chart I, SN.39) we see the birds flying towards the palace. The second (Chart I, SN.55) dated to 2nd century AD show the birds along with lotus buds and flowers. The lotus suggests the lake built by the king [Plate VI]. The story depicted on the Sannati slab, dated to the 1st century BC, (Chart I, SN.18) is somewhat similar to the first one at Amaravati. But at Amaravati the sculpture does not show the palace clearly. At Sannati we can see the palace where the king with his queen and ministers are seen talking about the birds.

When the Bodhisattva had not yet reached human birth, it is said that he was born as a quail⁵⁴. There is a marble carving belonging to the 2nd century AD from Amaravati depicting this (Chart I, SN. 56). We see a tank with lotus plants growing. There are two sculptures of the quail. In one it is shown standing in the water and in the other it is shown prostrating. In this bird life, the Bodhisattva passed through a violent nature that is, when forest was on fire, all of his companions ran away but he

could not. Here the sculptor shows the Bodhisattva prostrating indicating probably **the** time of distress. The quail standing on the water shows the normal condition that is, the time after the **fire** has been extinguished due to his miracle. [Plate VII]

In the *Champeyya Jataka*, the Bodhisattva was a *naga* king of great glory and was named Champeyya. As the story goes, a snake-charmer took him to the court of king Ugrasena of Varanasi to perform a snake dance. The snake had felt ashamed on seeing his wife, Sumana, who sought her husband's release. Finally, the serpent king shares the throne with the king of Varanasi⁵⁵. The story of the *Champeyya Jataka* has been depicted five times; *thrice* at Amaravati and twice at Nagarjunakonda. The story of the *Champeyya Jataka* is depicted in a detailed manner on a panel of a pillar (**Chart I**, SN.59) dateable to the 2nd century AD at Amaravati. This panel reveals the main part of the episode. After learning why the snake stopped performing the dance, the king ordered the snake charmer to set it free. On this panel, the snake is shown coming out from flute in the hand of snake charmer. To the right of the snake charmer is probably seen Sumana. We also see the *naga* returning to his abode. On the extreme right of the panel is the *naga* performing a dance and on the centre of the panel is seen a conversation between the *naga* and the king.

In the second example from Amaravati is a slab (**Chart I**, SN. 27) dateable to the 2nd century AD that has three panels above a circular lotus medallion. It illustrates the snake charmer's mode of earning his livelihood. The sculptor has shown the snake charmer with 'Negroid' looks and curly hair who holds a tray or the lid of a circular wicker box on which a snake lifts itself up to dance before a man of noble bearing seated, on a *pallanka* with his wife to his right. A king, evidently **Brahmadatta** of

Banaras, is shown seated on his royal couch in the company of his queens and attendants, enjoying the tricks of the snake charmer and his monkey. That the scene is laid in a pleasure garden is evident from the tree carved at one end. A similar scene (Chart I, SN. 82) dateable to the 3rd century AD gets depicted at Nagarjunakonda [Plate VIII]. This similarity indicates the fact that there was a relation with regard to art motifs between Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. In another example there is a fragment of a panel from Amaravati belonging to the 2nd century AD (Chart I, SN.46), now in the Archaeological Museum of Amaravati. On that fragment we can see the initial stage of the *Champeyya Jātaka*'s story. Here we see a snake charmer and the audience squatting in front of the ant hill that is, the abode of the snake. A snake is seen coming up to the flute held by the snake charmer.

In contrast with this scene, the relief at Nagarjunakonda (Chart I, SN.81) belongs to the 3rd century AD and shows a king seated on a throne in the midst of the usual type of palace attendants. A snake charmer is seen squatting before the king and holding a coiled serpent in his hands. The king is shown in the attitude of having a conversation with the snake charmer. The female standing next to the king's throne on the left side can be identified as Sumana from the serpent hood that is much damaged in this specimen but can still be recognized, behind her head. Her gaze is fixed on the serpent in the hands of the snake charmer. While the *nāgi* Sumana is shown in anthropomorphic form, according to the practice of the artists of Nagarjunakonda, *Champeyya* is shown in the animal form as the trend of the story makes it essential. The moment selected by the artist for depiction in the sculpture is that in which the king after his conversation with Sumana, ordered the snake charmer to release the *naga*. Thus the first two examples show the initial stage of the *Champeyya Jataka*

story while the latter give a more complete picture. However, both depictions **reveal a** peaceful and cordial relationship between the snake charmer and the *naga raja*, who is in fact the Bodhisattva.

Briefly, the depiction of animals as Bodhisattva are larger in number than those depicting him as birds. Of these the examples of elephants are the maximum. The ape and buffaloes as Bodhisattva are rare. The depiction of the hare and deer is equal to that of the winged-horse. The snake as Bodhisattva is also vividly described in many examples. Of the birds, the peacock and woodpecker were common but the *hamsa* is more frequently depicted. The artists in successive periods could portray their ideas about the fauna in their environment by looking at these fine and aesthetically carved examples of animals and birds as part of the early Buddhist narrative art. The ethics, tradition and legends of Buddhism were integral to these depictions. It is perhaps for this reason that across the different sub-regions of the Deccan, the art motifs and symbols used to describe animals and birds as Bodhisattva •remained similar.

III

In the next part of this chapter we focus on the depiction of fauna as part of the myriad dimensions of life that the Buddha witnessed. There were several well-known events in the life of the Buddha. They are his birth, his enlightenment, his first sermon his death, *etc.* Out of the several events from the Master's life, we have identified some events depicted on the monuments of the Deccan region. They are his birth, the Great Departure, assault by Mara, protection by *naga Mucilinda*, Enlightenment or Illumination, attack by **Niligiri**, offering of honey by the monkey and finally his

adoration and worship. In depicting these events, the sculptors followed the well-laid out practice and traditions of Buddhism. In the earliest phase, the artists did not show the figure of the Master in anthropomorphic form. The Master was substituted by the throne, *pada*, wheel, pillar *etc.* In the later phase, the Master has been shown in human form.

The birth scene symbolized by elephants got depicted frequently on the Deccan monuments. Since the symbol of the two elephants is common in Hindu depictions as Gaja Laksmi we have taken care to look at the locations⁵⁶ closely where the elephants were carved touching the female. Both Marshall⁵⁷ and Foucher⁵⁸ have said that in the Buddhist concept the females touching the lotus and associated with the elephant is the scene of the birth of the Buddha. In this way, the female stands for Mahamaya, the mother of the Buddha, and the two elephants are considered equivalent to the Buddha. There are some sculptures of the elephant connected with the birth of the Buddha. The earliest one, datable to the 2nd century BC, comes from Pitalkhora in Aurangabad district (Chart I, **SN.13**). The sculptor shows this scene over the doorway. The elephants are seen with their legs placed on the lotus. Their trunks are raised over the head of Mahamaya who stands on the lotus between the elephants. The trunks of the elephant hold a pitcher pouring water. The elephants are shown as strong and healthy. There is no embellishment on their body. A similar scene is found at Bharhut dated the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.15**). In this sculpture there is no difference in style and form of the elephants from those of the animal at Pitalkhora⁵⁹. It seems that the sculptors who worked at both Pitalkhora and Bharhut were either from same guild or same school or the same artists who had worked at

both places. This close similarity of depiction indicates that there was a relationship between the art of western and central India.

Next to Pitalkhora, there are two sets of elephants relating to birth of the Buddha datable to the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.14**) at Nadsur. They are **standing** on a half-lotus. The trunks of the elephants are raised as high as the head of **Māhāmāya** who is standing between them. Water pots are seen on the **trunks** of **the** elephants. Stylistically speaking, the elephants are richly decorated. They are depicted with beautiful trappings on their backs. We see their belly bands and on their heads they wear turbans. The bodies of the elephants are shown slightly swaying while their tails are hanging downwards. The elephants look healthy [**Plate III**]. This is a great change when compared to their depiction at Pitalkhora since the elephants at Nadsur are highly decorated while ornamentations on the elephants at Pitalkhora are entirely absent. [**Plate IX**]

Next, the birth of the Buddha has been depicted within a blind *caitya* arch at Junnar dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SN.53**). Here the elephants, symbol of the Buddha are shown standing on the petals of a lotus on either side of Maya who is standing on the half-lotus. The elephants are small in size compared to **the** elephants mentioned above. The bodies of these elephants at Junnar are short and fat. As usual they hold pitchers on their trunks. In addition to the elephants, dealing with the birth of the Buddha described above, some late examples of elephants representing **the** Master come from Aurangabad dated to the 6th century A.D (**Chart I, SN.101**). Above **the** windows of Cave VII at Aurangabad are carved two elephants pouring

water over Mahamaya. According to Douglas Barret, these two elephants symbolized for the Buddhists the birth of the Buddha.⁶⁰

Let us now turn to the bulls that have also been associated with the birth of the Buddha. Foucher has opined that the bull stands for Buddha's human birth, as the traditional date of the birth of the Master was the day of full moon of the month of *Vaiśākha*,⁶¹ when the zodiac sign of Taurus, *i.e.*, the bull was the dominant sign. Foucher has thus argued for the association of the symbol of the bull with the Buddha because of his association with the sign of the zodiac. There are innumerable sculptures of bulls, which are possible to identify as the symbol of the birth of the Buddha. Out of them, two come from an early period. The first one is from Pitalkhora datable to the 2nd century BC (Chart I, **SN.8**). The second one comes from Nasik dated to the 2nd century AD (Chart I, SN.60). The fore legs of the bull at Pitalkhora are bent inside while at Nasik they are raised at the knees [Plate X]. The style of ears and horns are depicted in a similar fashion at both places. Besides, the bulls mentioned above two other bulls are possible examples to point to the scene of the birth of the Buddha (Chart I, **SN.17**). One is from Amaravati datable to the 1st century BC and the second one comes from Nagarjunakonda dated to the 3rd century AD (**Chart I**, SN.77). Both the bulls are in the act of making some movements. Their horns are raised upwards. The former is smaller than the latter. The hump of latter is protruding while former's is invisible.

Let us now deal with animals associated with the Great Departure, a well known event when, after having looked at the sight of an old decrepit man, a sick man, a dead man on three successive occasions in the course of his drive through

pleasure-gardens, Siddhartha realized the miseries of existence and the fleeting character of worldly pleasure. On seeing the serene face of a recluse on **the** fourth occasion, he decided to renounce the world. In the stillness of the night, he bade a silent farewell to his sleeping wife and son and left the palace riding a horse.⁶²

There are two types of sculpture dealing with the Great Departure. In the earlier form depicting the Hinayana stage of Buddhism the sculptors did not show the figure of the Master on the back of the horse. Only in the Mahayana stage of the Buddhist art, the Master is portrayed on the back of the horse. There are several sculptures of horses connected with this event in Buddha's life. Out of those studied by us, two belong to the early stage without Master. The earliest of this type comes from Pitalkhora (Chart I, SN.12) dateable to the 2nd century BC, which has been exhibited at the National Museum, New Delhi and the second one dated to the 1st century AD comes from Amaravati (Chart I, SN.22). The sculptors show both the horses coming out from a gateway. Unfortunately, tip of the head of the animal in the Pitalkhora specimen has been broken. Manes of both horses are shown in a prominent manner. They are decorated with trappings, bridle and saddle. But the trapping on the back of the horse at Pitalkhora is richer **[Plate XI]** than that of the one at Amaravati. The former has a safety belt hanging beside it while in the latter example it is absent. The sculptor shows both the horses in an attitude of movement, taking alternative steps. To show respect the Chatradhara holds an umbrella over each horse.

Apart from two horses depicting the Hinayana or Theravada stage of early Buddhism described above, there are several horses (**Chart I**, SNs. **35, 42, 45**) dateable to the 2nd century AD at Amaravati and four belonging to 3rd century AD (**Chart I**,

SNs. 72, 73, 74, 93) at Nagarjunakonda and finally, one datable to the 6th the century A.D at Aihole (Chart I, SN. 102). The sculptures of horses affiliated with the Great Departure scene are small compared to the animals in other themes. Stylistically speaking, some horses are decorated plainly and some are bedecked richly. The trappings used as the seat on the horseback are broader in the earlier period than the later period (Chart I, SN. 12). In the later period, the artist used the trappings, which only covers the place where a person would sit. Now the saddle, bridle and breast bands are shown thin. The safety belt used at Pitalkhora was omitted in the Amaravati art. The simple and rich noble marks decorated on the bodies of the horses are seen in all examples. Their appearances are elongated but they are calm and contemplative. A *chauri* is seen on the head of the horse at Amaravati. The appearance of the horse at Nagarjunakonda looks active (Chart I, SN. 93) [Plate XII]. The decorative pattern of the horses at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda are the same, but the breast bands of the one at Nagarjunakonda are flatter than those found on the horses at Amaravati (Chart I, SN. 22). The noble marks on the body of the horse at Amaravati have been found at Nagarjunakonda too. Physiologically speaking, a great number of these animals look good while one is rather ugly (Chart I, SN.72). The appearance of one of these animals looks sad, showing the dropping of tears from its eyes. It is well known that this horse, Kantaka had mourned after the leaving of Siddhartha and **returning home (Chart I, SN.102). The sculptor has clearly carved this specimen very closely to its natural form. The horse that dealt with the departure of the Master at Aihole is strong **and healthy**. The artist did not use anything on the body as **part of its** decoration. He shows him in its natural form.**

Broadly speaking, the sculptors show all the horses dealt with in the depiction of the Great Departure in an attitude of movement taking alternative steps. The embellishments on the sculptures are kept continuously but the earlier ones are bedecked richly indicating clearly that this was a horse from the royal stables. The earlier ones are also stylized but later there is a change and the horses are depicted in a naturalistic way.

Before Enlightenment, Siddhartha as Bodhisattva after spreading the grass obtained from Sotthiya on his seat, sat in firm determination and vowed to rise again only after he had obtained Enlightenment. At that time, Mara approached him with his hosts armed with all sorts of weapons on the back of elephants. After approaching Mara's army Sakka, Mahabrahma and the *nagas* fled away. In the assault of Mara's scene, the sculptures of both early and later phases of Buddhism are found. In the early phase, the presence of the Master is indicated by a seat under the tree. Nevertheless, in both types, the elephants, as symbols of Mara's assault can be found.

In this study only one Hinayana stage of the scene of Mara's attack comes from the Deccan region and this is depicted on a marble slab, forming part of the main *stupa* at Ghantasala belonging to the 2nd century BC⁶³ (Chart I, SN.5). Here, the empty seat with four legs under the tree represents the presence of the Master. The elephants symbolizing the assault of Mara are shown each on either side of the seat. In this depiction the elephant on the left side of the seat is seen in an angry mood. It touches the tree with its trunk and it seems that he is attacking the Buddha. The elephant is big enough to crush its enemy. The elephant on the right side of the seat is turned backward and in this case it appears that this elephant is in the attitude of

running away being defeated after the attack on the Master. Here the sculptor has not shown any human figure either around the scene or, on the back of the elephant [Plate XIII].

However, there are some sculptures of the elephants dealing with the Mahayana phase of Mara's attack on the Buddha. Of these, the earliest one comes from Amaravati (**Chart I, SN. 36**) datable to the 2nd century AD, the other is from Goli (**Chart I, SN. 64**) belonging to the 3rd century AD, two are from Nagarjunakonda (**Chart I, SNs. 69, 75**) dated to the 3rd century AD and one comes from Ajanta (**Chart I, SN. 100**) datable to the 5th century AD. At Amaravati the sculptor shows us the elephant withdrawing from the attack. He has not shown the beginning of the episode, namely, the animal attacking the Buddha (**Chart I, SN. 36**). The elephant at Goli is similar to that found at Amaravati. The animal here is shown with its back to the Buddha and it looks as though he is taking off. The elephant is carrying two persons on its back probably members of the army of Mara. Its tusk is coiled inside (**Chart I, SN. 64**). Of the two scenes at Nagarjunakonda, in one the sculptor shows both the elephants making animosity with the Buddha seated **on the** throne under the tree. Here, we see a snake on the throne to the left side of the Buddha seemingly protecting the elephant while a small animal like a *vyāla* on the left side of the Buddha is probably defending the **elephant. The trunks** of both elephants **are seen coiled inside** (**Chart I, SN. 69**). In the **second** example at Nagarjunakonda the elephant **on the right side of the Buddha is in the attitude of running away. Their** trunks are coiled inside while **their tusks** are seen **coming out. Both the animals are shown strong and healthy** (**Chart I, SN. 75**). The elephants at Ajanta are different from each other. The eyes of the animal to the right of the Buddha are wide open

while the ones on the left of the Master are closed. The trunks of both the animals are coiled inside and while the tusks of the left one are seen protruding out those of the right one are invisible [**Plate XIV**]. The elephant to the right of the Master is decorated with a breast-band while the left one is devoid of ornamentation (**Chart I, SN. 100**).

On his way to achieving Truth and Enlightenment, the Buddha was on the one hand, given trouble in several ways by Mara but on the other hand, *naga Mucilinda* protected him from a terrible storm for over a week. In the Deccan region, we see the following five sorts of *naga Mucilindas*: a five-hooded *naga* with expanded hood resting on a wide ring of coils, a seven- hooded *naga* resting on two wavy coils, a five- hooded snake protecting the Master, a seven-hooded snake clouding the Buddha, and a six-hooded snake overshadowing the Buddha. Vogel⁶⁴ has remarked that the *naga* in the semblance of a polychromatic serpent is a frequent occurrence on the earliest Buddhist monuments. I agree with him because in this study we can find innumerable sculptures of polychromatic serpents. Nevertheless, we can divide our discussion of the *naga*, which are found in this case study into two those representing the Hinayana phase showing the earliest types and the other of the Mahayana phase showing the later forms.

In this study, eight sculptures of the earliest Buddhist form of the *naga* are available. One comes from Dhulikatta belonging to the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.7**), one from Pauni dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart I, SN.6**) now in the National Museum, New Delhi, one from Amaravati (**Chart I, SN.34**) datable to the 2nd century AD, one from Sannati (**Chart I, SN.51**) belonging to the 2nd century AD,

one from Banavasi dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SN.52**), two from Nagarjunakonda, one datable to 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SN.57**) and the other belonging to 3rd century AD (**Chart I, SN.78**), respectively. The snake with five hoods at Dhulikatta (**Chart I, SN.7**) and at Pauni are seen protecting the *pada* or feet of the Buddha. There is a minor difference in the number of coils at each of these places. The sculptor shows the snake at Dhulikatta resting on two coils, while the snake at Pauni is seen resting on six coils (**Chart I, SN.6**). The body of the former is depicted as smooth like that of a pickled fish while the latter's is found with spots as is most commonly noticed in nature. The latter is made to appear very realistic. It is interesting to observe the similarities in the number of hoods, coils and form of the edge of the tail among the snakes depicted at Amaravati (**Chart I, SN.34**) and at sites in Karnataka (**Chart I, SN.51**). These snakes are all seen rested on four coils, hooded with five heads and the edges of the tail lie to the left [**Plate XV**]. There is a minor change in the way the body of one of the snake is made. The sculptor makes the body of the snake at Banavasi (**Chart I, SN.52**) in a manner similar to that of the one found at Dhulikatta while the bodies of the remaining reptiles are more naturalistic and resemble the one found at Pauni. Out of the two snakes depicted at Nagarjunakonda, one is seven-hooded and the other one is with five hoods. The former is seen overshadowing the *Pada* and wheel of the Buddha [**Plate XVI**] while the latter looks like the snakes at both Amaravati and sites in Karnataka where the form of the tail is reversed. The edge of the tail of the five-hooded snake at Nagarjunakonda is placed to the right.

The snakes depicted during the later phase of Buddhism come from Nagajurnakonda (**Chart I, SNs .84, 85, 86**). Of these three snakes, one is seen with

five hoods, another with six hoods and the remaining one is seen with seven hoods. All of them are shown overshadowing the Buddha with their respective hoods. Among them the seven-hooded one is seen clouding over the Buddha. It rests on its body coiled. The five-hooded one seems to have the throne integrated with its body. On the coiled snake throne is seen the Buddha seated while the snake with six hoods is shown protecting the Buddha sitting on the throne made of serpent bodies that came out from snakes, each one on either side of the Buddha.

We next turn our attention to the delivering of the First Sermon, which was a great event in the Master's life. With stimulus from the Gods headed by Brahma, and for the salvation of others, Siddhārtha, now as Buddha went to his five former companions at Rashipatana and delivered his first sermon. The architects and artists who worked on making buildings and monuments of the Deccan did not hesitate to decorate the Buddhist edifices with the sculptures in relation to the First Sermon marked by a wheel, which is usually shown set up on a throne or on a pillar. The locality where the episode took place was the Deer Park which in the sculptural art, is generally indicated by two deer in the foreground.⁶⁵ In the sculptures of the Deccan monuments we found three sorts of deer represented: those with single horns, with multi-branched horns and finally deer without horns as they are found in the nature. Two types of deer are sculptured in the Hinayana phase and Mahayana phase.

In the early Buddhist form, two deer on either side of a wheel were often represented when the scene of the First Sermon was intended. Buddha's presence was as usual, suggested by the empty throne and feet on a footstool, and the Deer Park, where he first set the Wheel of Law into motion. Under this study six early

representations of this scene are found. One comes from **Karle** datable to the 1st century BC (**Chart I, SN. 24**), three from Amaravati belonging to the 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SNs. 28, 47, 54**), three from Nagarjunakonda dated to the 3rd century AD (**Chart I, SNs. 88, 92, 94**) and one example from Gummadidurru belonging to the 3rd century AD (**Chart I, SN. 90**). In the **Mahāyāna** Buddhist form, most of the time, two deer facing a wheel appear at the bottom of a seat on which the Buddha has been shown in anthropomorphic form in *dharmachakra mudrā* or turning the wheel. In this form three examples (**Chart I, SNs. 71, 91, 92**) belonging to the 3rd century AD get depicted at Nagarjunakonda and four examples (**Chart I, SNs. 96, 97, 98, 99**) dated to the 5th century AD appear at Ajanta.

We have observed that the sculptors who worked at both Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda usually depicted the deer with both single and multi-branched horns (**Chart I, SN.47**) or the deer without horns, while the artist at Gummadidurru represented it with a single horn. The deer at Karle is not shown with horns (**Chart I, SN.24**). We also noted that in the early Buddhist form, the deer without horns appeared at the left side of the seat for the onlooker at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda while, the animal depicted on the same side at Gummadidurru is shown with a short horn. The similarity of the Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda art reveal that there was exchange of art motifs at these two sites. We also find a similarity in the deer motif at Nagarjunakonda and that depicted in the Gandhara art (**Chart I, SN. 92, 94**). This indicates the fact that there was contact between the two regions. These deer are somewhat similar to those depicted at Ajanta (**Chart I, SN. 99**). Physically the deer at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda are small in size, slim in body with thin and long necks [**Plate XVII**]. The deer depicted at Gummadidurru (**Chart I, SN. 89**) and at

Ajanta [**Plate XVIII**] are strong and healthy, plump in body and with thick necks (**Chart I, SN. 89, 99**).

In a well-known incident of Lord Buddha's life a wild elephant had attacked him. When Devadatta had failed to kill the Buddha he then arranged to let loose a mad elephant, named *Niligiri*, on the Buddha. While he was on a begging round on a street in Rajagriha this incident is supposed to have happened. Different sorts of depictions of the story of *Niligiri* have been found in the Deccan art. This episode is depicted in the following ways: the elephant attacking the Buddha; the elephant trampling down the local people, the elephant bowing in front of the Buddha and the elephant unconditionally surrendering to the Lord.

In this study four examples (Chart I, SN. 11) datable to the 2nd century BC, and (Chart I, SNs. 37, 38, 50) dateable to the 2nd century AD had been represented at Amaravati. One sample (Chart I, SN. 68) dated to the 3rd century AD comes from Goli and three examples (Chart I, SNs. 61, 79, 83) belonging to the 3rd century AD come from Nagarjunakonda. Out of the three depicted at Amaravati, (**Chart I, SN. 11**) the earliest one shows the elephant unconditionally surrendering to the Lord. Its legs are bent so as to touch its neck. Its head bows down to the ground. Its eyes look like one who is intoxicated. The action of the elephant of the 2nd century AD **example** from Amaravati is similar to the one at Goli (Chart I, SN. 68). We see in this case the elephants rushing through the local people. A victim is seen wrapped in the trunk of each elephant that are depicted to look like they are in an angry mood. The same **elephant** is then shown bowing down in front of the Buddha. In the panel dated to the 3rd century AD from Amaravati the elephant is first seen emerging with resentment.

Next, the same animal is shown crouched before the Buddha while its **trunk is seen** touching the ground. A somewhat similar scene is seen at Nagarjunakonda (**Chart I, SN. 83**). This elephant is shown enthusiastically attacking. Its trunk is coiled while its tusks are seen protruding forward. The same animal is shown worshipping the Buddha devoutly like a true Buddhist [**Plate XIX**]. One elephant is graphically shown trampling down a person. The sculptor shows the elephant its legs raised so that it could trample a victim on the ground. The elephant looks to be in an attitude of flying. As a whole, the elephant in relation to the scene of subjugation are in an angry mood. As these elephants are wild ones, the sculptors have not shown any ornaments on their bodies except a control-belt that passes through the place near the chest and legs.

Another remarkable association of the Buddha with animals is of the monkey who nursed the Buddha in the time of great disturbance and sorrow. Buddhist tradition informs us that when he could not make peace on the quarrel among his monks, the Master left for the Parilesaka forest and at the foot of a Sala tree a noble elephant attended on him and looked after his comforts⁶⁶. A monkey joined him to do some similar services for the Master. He collected a honeycomb and offered honey to the Master. Under this study one depiction has dealt with this incident which is dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SN. 58**). The representation of monkey offering honey has been beautifully depicted at Amaravati. The monkey with honey in a bowl is seen approaching the empty throne and *Pada* under the Sala tree. The monkey is next depicted as running away in glee and climbing not a tree, but a creeper sculptured on the border of panel.

The scenes of worship of the *stupa*, and the Bodhi tree, the two important symbol of the Buddha were often shown surrounded by animals worshipping **him**. It is possible to suggest that the adoration of the tree by elephants are understood as **the** symbol of the death of the Buddha. Under this study, we have a scene that has been depicted at Amaravati. The scene dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart I, SN. 48**) shows a *Sāla* tree attended by four elephants, two on either side of the tree. The elephants bow their heads slightly towards the tree while their front legs are seen slightly bent in an attitude of worshipping. Apart from this scene mentioned above there is a *stupa* (**Chart I, SN. 26**) dated to the 2nd century AD at Kanheri. Here, we see two elephants, each on either side of the *stupa*, the symbol of the death of the Buddha. The elephants have raised their trunks as high as the *stupa*. We see a pot in the trunk of each elephant, pouring water just as they had done over the head of Mahāmāyā in the birth scene of the Buddha. The elephants look strong and healthy [**Plate XX**]. The sculptor did not bedeck these elephants with any kind of ornamentation and these two elephants too can be suggested to be an attitude of worshipping this symbol of the Buddha.

When we examine animals in the great events of the life of the Buddha, we find a number of elephants depicted. In terms of numbers the deer is next. The representation of horse is equivalent to the number of times the *naga Mucilinda* is depicted. The depiction of the bull and the monkey are rare. Therefore, we observe that representation of elephant in the great events of the life of the Buddha is outstanding and it had special significance in Buddhist lore. It appears at the auspicious moment of Buddha's birth, as his protector and worshipper but also as his attacker. Similarly, the horse and deer appear at critical moments of the decision. Lord

Buddha has **to** make **about** leaving his home **and** family **and then returning to society** to preach the Law **of Dhamma**, respectively. There is a change in the way the animals are depicted in the art. The artists show the animals as Bodhisattva in a rather natural form while some animals associated with his early life are portrayed with **rich** ornamentation. We also see the creative skill of the artists. For instance, the *naga* is chiseled with several hoods, which is not seen in nature and was therefore, part of the artist's imagination to show how the *naga* ably protected the Buddha. In some of the depictions animals with bad character and intent co-exist with animals who go out of their way to help others in their miseries. We also see some influence of art motifs borrowed from Gandhara, Bharhut and indicating exchange of ideas in art between them and Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. This indicates that art work related to Buddhism has some common themes that artists, irrespective of region or site had mastered in their sculptural depictions.

This chapter in three parts has discussed various descriptions from different texts that explain the close relationship of animals to Buddhist ethics and belief. The depiction of Bodhisattva as animals and birds in the sculptural art and the association of animals with the great event of the life Buddha as depicted on the early Buddhist monuments of the Deccan region. For this purpose, the data (**Chart I**) collected shows one hundred and two specimens. Out of them forty-five related to the Bodhisattva as animals and birds and forty-seven specimens are regarding the life of the Buddha from his birth to his attainment *of Nirvana*.

To sum up, in explaining the importance of animals in Buddhism it was noted that though animals were considered at a lower ladder in the evolutionary process and

therefore, lived in a painful and dangerous way, the Buddhist treated animals as **the** equals of human beings. In fact many Buddhist texts tell us of punishments imposed if animals were ill-treated. The animals were also considered important in the socio-economic life of the people and it was recognized that animals and humans had to live in close association. In this chapter we have given an account on how animals helped the Buddha during his lifetime and how in an animal or bird form looked after people in his previous life. Thus, the symbolic importance of animals and birds in Buddhism cannot be overlooked. It is perhaps for this reason that they were so frequently used as a medium of expression to convey important ideas about the Buddha and his preaching to the people at large.

The artistic representation of animals and birds in his former life and animals associated with Buddha on the monuments of the Deccan as depicted by the artists was both naturalistic and idealistic. The depictions of the elephants in the dream of Maya are naturalistic whereas the elephants in palanquins carried by dwarfs on the same theme are idealistic. In another example the Bodhisattva as snake in the Amaravati sculptural art is portrayed realistically, while the depictions of the *naga mucilinda* with multi-hoods protecting the Buddha closely followed the legend and were thus far removed from how snakes appear in their natural form. We notice the fact that in some representations of animals and birds the artist used the synoptic method. Here the animals are shown smaller than their normal size. The most common theme where this method is used because of narrow space is for elephants in Maya's dream. Often in telling a *Jataka* story like that of the *Chhandatla Jataka* or in the *Hasti Jataka* too this method was used.

The artists had mastered the technique of narrating stories through the art medium. In the above descriptions the representation of the *Hare Jataka* and the *Javasakana Jataka* are masterpieces. We can say that this was possible because the sculptors were well versed in the Buddhist tradition. However, the style and form of the animals and birds chiseled was most often naturalistic. They also used their imagination in a creative way. In the scene, when the elephants pour water over the mother they are shown holding pitcher delicately on their trunks. This scene is usually depicted with elephants standing on either side of Maya as at Junnar. Similarly, different forms of bull connected with the Master's birth were also seen. In the depiction of the Great Departure, we notice the artists followed both the Mahayana and the Theravada traditions and further, we see variations in embellishments on the royal animals from period to period. For instance, the horse from Pitalkhora is shown plainly whereas that at Nagarjunakonda is bedecked richly. The artists also kept in mind the mood of the theme being depicted. Therefore, the depiction of elephants in Mara's assault on the Buddha is shown to look ugly and ferocious. On the other hand, in the same theme the animal running away after the attack shows his movement as fearful due to the great triumph of the Master. The artists are at their best when they depict various forms and mood of the *naga*. They are shown both in a stylized and natural form. Most importantly, their varied forms reveal the scope of their association with the human world. The artists take care to show these different forms of the *naga* with great sensitivity indicating simultaneously, their significance to the religious thought of the Buddhists. The depiction of fauna in early Buddhist art was not only varied, stylistically rich in form but also closely entwined with the ideological content as defined by the early Buddhist practitioners of the Deccan.

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CHART I

FAUNA AS DEPICTED IN BUDDHIST SCULPTURAL ART

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
1	3rd BC	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Dream of Maya	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	Fig. 18
2	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva <i>Hasti Jataka</i>	Asher & Gai, <i>IEBHA</i>	PL.21
3	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva <i>Hasti Jataka</i>	Rea, <i>SIBA</i>	PL. XLV, Fig. 2
4	2nd BC	Bharhut	MP	Elephant	Dream of Maya	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	PL. 62
5	2nd BC	Ghantasala	AP	Elephant	Assault of Mara	Rea, <i>SIBA</i>	PL. XXVII1
6	2nd BC	Pauni	MR	<i>Nāga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	Michell, <i>IM</i>	Fig. 12
7	2nd BC	Dhulikatta	AP	<i>Nāga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	V.V. K. Sastry <i>PEPHC</i>	PL. 61
8	2nd BC	Pitalkora	MR	Bull	Birth of Buddha	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 2
9	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Winged-horse	Bodhisattva	Gangoly, <i>AnS</i>	Fig. 34
10	2nd BC	Pitalkora	MR	Winged-horse	Bodhisattva	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XVI, Fig. 3
11	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	Rea, <i>SIBA</i>	PL. XLV, Fig. 1
12	2nd BC	Pitalkora	MR	Horse	Great Departure	F W data	Ph.1
13	2nd BC	Pitalkora	MR	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS. 132-35
14	2nd BC	Nadsur	MR	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS.699-26
15	2nd BC	Bharhut	BH	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	Asis Sen, <i>AMAIA</i>	PL. IV
16	2nd BC	Pitalkora	MR	Deer	Bodhisattva	Motichandra, <i>SSPWM</i>	PL. XI
17	1st BC	Amaravati	AP	Bull	Birth of Buddha	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 2

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
18	1st BC	Sannati	KN	<i>Hamsa</i>	Bodhisattva	Nagaraja Rao, <i>Marg</i>	PL. 2
19	1st BC	Kanheri	MR	Elephant	Bodhisattva	Louis, ITS	Fig. 57
20	1st BC	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva carried by Deva	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	Fig. 84
21	1st BC	Sannati	KN	Buffalo	Bodhisattva	F W data	AIIS.278.79
22	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Horse	Great Departure	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. XIV, Fig. 5
23	1st AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva carried by Deva	Agrawala, <i>IA</i>	PL. LXXIV
24	1st AD	Karle	MR	Deer	First Sermon	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XII, Fig. 1
25	1st AD	Nasik	MR	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	Douglas, <i>BCA</i>	PL. IIII, Fig. 1
26	2nd AD	Kanheri	MR	Elephant	Worshipping <i>stupa</i>	F W data	AIIS. 455-2
27	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	<i>Nāga</i>	Bodhisattva, <i>Champeyya Jataka</i>	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. XXXVI, Fig. 1
28	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Burgess, <i>RBCT</i>	PL. XIV, Fig. 3
29	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Dream of Maya	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 64
30	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS.463.69
31	2nd AD	Sannati	KN	Elephant	Bodhisattva	F W data	AIIS.276.59
32	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Dream of Maya	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XXVIII, Fig. 1
33	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Hare	Bodhisattva, <i>Sasa Jataka</i>	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 85.d

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
34	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Naga Mucilinda	Protection of Buddha	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i> ,	PL. 126
35	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Horse	Great Departure	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XIV, Fig. 4
36	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Assault of Mara	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. LVII, Fig. 1
37	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	N. Ray, <i>MPMA</i> ,	Fig. 77
38	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	Fig. 85,b
39	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Geese	Bodhisattva	Sitapathi & Sastry, <i>NSS</i>	PL. 6
40	2nd AD	Junnar	MR	Elephant	Bodhisattva	F W data	AIS. 700-45
41	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 15
42	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Horse	Great Departure	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XXXV111, Fig. 5
43	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Peacock	Bodhisattva Mora Jataka	Sivaramamurti. <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. XXXII, Fig. 2
44	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Peacock	Bodhisattva Mora Jataka	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. VIII, Fig. 2
45	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Horse	Great Departure	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL.XL, Fig. 1
46	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Naga	Bodhisattva, Champeyya Jataka	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 40
47	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Fergusson , <i>TSWSA</i>	PL. LXXI
48	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Worshiping Tree	Anamika, <i>ASr</i>	Fig. 33
49	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva Chaddanta Jataka	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XIX, Fig. 1
50	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	Gangoly, <i>AnS</i>	Fig. 2

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
51	2nd AD	Sannati	KN	<i>Naga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	F W data	AIIS. 227-1
52	2nd AD	Banavasi	KN	<i>Naga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	Nagaraju, <i>Marg</i>	PL. 35
53	2nd AD	Junnar	MR	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS.700-79
54	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Gangoly , <i>AS</i>	PL. XXIV
55	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	<i>Hamsa</i>	Bodhisattva	<i>Rea, BASI</i>	PL. XLVII, Fig. 2
56	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Quali	Bodhisattva	<i>Rea, BASI</i>	PL. XLVII, Fig. 1
57	2nd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	KN	<i>Nāga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	FW data	AIIS.A2-27
58	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Monkey	Offering Honey	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. XXXV, Fig. 2
59	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	<i>Nāga</i>	Bodhisattva <i>Champeyya Jataka</i>	Douglas, <i>ASBM</i>	PL. XXVII
60	2nd AD	Nasik	MR	Bull	Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS.689-25
61	3rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	Sivaramamurti, <i>EAI</i>	Fig. 34
62	3rd AD	Nagajurna-konda	AP	Hare	Bodhisattva, <i>Sasa Jataka</i>	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XVIII b
63	3rd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 83
64	3rd AD	Goli	AP	Elephant	Assault of Mara	F W data	AIIS.648-22
65	3rd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	<i>Matiposa Jataka</i>	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 31 '
66	3rd AD	Goli	AP	Wood pecker	Bodhisattva	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 256
67	3rd AD	Goli	AP	Elephant	Bodhisattva <i>Chhaddanta Jataka</i>	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 74

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
68	3rd AD	Goli	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 89
69	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Elephant	Assault of Mara	Sivaramamurti, <i>EAAI</i>	Fig. 30
70	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Elephant	Dream of Maya	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 41
71	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXIV, Fig. a
72	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Horse	Great Departure	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	Fig.34
73	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Horse	Great Departure	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 184
74	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Horse	Great Departure	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 171
75	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Elephant	Assault of Mara	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXII, Fig. 2
76	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Elephant	Dream of Maya	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 84
77	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Bull	Birth of Buddha	N. Ray, <i>MPMA</i> ,	Fig. 86
78	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	<i>Naga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	Sivaramamurti, <i>EAAI</i>	Fig. 22
79	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 154
80	3rd AD	Goli	AP	Hare	Bodhisattva, <i>Sasa Jataka</i>	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 50a
81	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	<i>Nāga</i>	Bodhisattva, <i>Champeyya Jataka</i>	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 203
82	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	<i>Naga</i>	Bodhisattva, <i>Champayya Jataka</i>	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXXVIII, b
83	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	Elephant	Niligiri	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXXII, b
84	3rd AD	Nagarjuna -konda	AP	<i>Naga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 118, 149

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
85	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	<i>Naga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXIII, Fig. b
86	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	<i>Naga Mucilinda</i>	Protection of Buddha	Sivaramamurti, <i>EAAI</i>	PL. 21
87	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 33
88	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 124
89	3 rd AD	Gummadidurru	MR	Deer	First Sermon	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 123
90	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXIV
91	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 175
92	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Deer	First Sermon	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	PL. 229
93	3 rd AD	Nagarjuna-konda	AP	Horse	Great Departure	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXXV. Fig. c
94	3 rd AD	Gandhara		Deer	First Sermon	Marshall, <i>BAG</i>	Fig. 117
95	5 th AD	Ajanta	MR	Deer	Bodhisattva	Spink, <i>AE</i>	PL. 13
96	5 th AD	Ajanta	MR	Deer	First Sermon	Spink, <i>AE</i>	PL. 6
97	5 th AD	Ajanta	MR	Deer	First Sermon	Spink, <i>AE</i>	PL. 14
98	5 th AD	Ajanla	MR	Deer	First Sermon	Yazdani, <i>HEDFA</i>	PL. XXX
99	5 th AD	Ajanta	MR	Deer	First Sermon	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XXXV
100	5 th AD	Ajanta	MR	Elephant	Assault of Mara	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	PL. LI
101	6 th AD	Aurangabad	MR	Elephant	Birth of Buddha	Douglas, <i>GBCA</i>	PL. 22
102	6 th AD	Aihole	KN	Horse	Great Departure	F W data	Ph. 100

CHAPTER IV

FAUNA AS DEPICTED IN HINDU SCULPTURAL ART

In this chapter we describe and discuss the importance of various animals and birds as depicted in the sculptural art of the Hindu temples in the Deccan built during the early medieval period. Among these some appeared as devotees of Goddesses and Gods. They performed their duties as vehicles of Gods and Goddesses. Some animals and birds assumed the form of the incarnation of Gods and saints while some are seen as attacking or protecting of the Universe. In the following pages we shall discuss the importance of animals and birds in Hinduism, followed by a description of various animals and birds as they appear in Hindu mythological stories depicted on the Deccan monuments and finally animals and birds as vehicle of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. From the descriptions that follow it emerges that the number of depictions of the bull associated with Siva are far more important than the other animals such as the lion, elephant or buffalo. Therefore, the Siva cult seemed more influential during the early medieval Deccan. As is well known the role of bull in cultivation was vital and perhaps, therefore this animal was made as important as God Siva himself.

I

There are two kinds of fauna in Hinduism: those that are associated with divinities or are divine themselves and those that are demoniac and themselves personify evil qualities. In the sense of divinity, the animals and birds have been treated as friends and companions. Thus, the cow is the analogy for a mother feeding her children with milk from her udder. The noble elephant was considered as friend of

man in many ways. The horse was loved almost as a human **companion**¹. Human beings, especially saints or other potentially fearful persons were sometimes incorporated as animals². As for instance, when his *guru* had cursed him, a king became an elephant that was tortured by a tortoise in a pool³.

The horse and the cow stand out from all the rest as sacred Indian images. The degree of their sanctity, and indeed its positive or negative force, varied at different periods of Indian history and with regard to the male and female of the species. The persistence and compelling emotional power of cow and horse symbolism in Indian civilization make it possible to use these images as lenses⁴. As goddesses, cows are considered a source of good luck. Cow dung is used even today to smear the house but it is also to be worshipped as an emblem of the discus of Visnu. Urine of cow is considered medicinal. Siva has the bull-standard.⁵ The god Rudra is sometimes referred to in Vedic verse as bull. Cows supplied milk, *ghee* and curds for domestic and religious use. Rama realized the importance of cow for prosperity of a country when he advised Bharata to be constantly alive to the cowherd's welfare.⁶

The most important animal in the earliest Indian religious documents is the horse-usually a stallion. The sun is depicted as a bright bay stallion galloping across with the king. A stallion was sacrificed to ensure fertility and royal prosperity in the Vedic context. It is well known that the **Indo-Aryans** had domesticated the war-horse and harnessed him to the chariot. This explains its importance in early Brahmanical ritual and sacrifice. Asoka used the horse to symbolize fertility, kingship and conquest, as he used other potent royal animals like lion, elephant and bull. The Vedic

horse was **ritually** linked with fire, symbolizing controlled aggression and **the** taming of violent powers⁷.

Second to the horses in importance in the early **Brahmanical** context were cattle. Cattle were the measure of wealth and the symbol of status. The species as a whole played a positive role in Brahmanical religion. Ritually, they were linked to Soma the elixir of immortality, the ritual counterpart of the fiery stallion. Generally, therefore the horses and cattle were known to be sacred, though stallions were considered more sacred than mares and cows were considered more sacred than bulls and horses in general, more important than the cattle. In other literature, too animals were given an important place in religion. In the *Mahabharata*, the gods promise that all beasts would belong to Rudra if he was able to destroy the Triple city⁸ and he agrees to do this.

Further, the animals have been described as full of wit, capable of appreciation and resentment, affection and jealousy and sometimes sacrificing, heroic and noble, soulful and negligent or extremely active and resourceful. All these qualities in birds and animals have formed the theme of delightful fable and stories as for instance, in the *Jatakas* or the *Pañcatantra*.⁹ Animals and birds were made to think and speak like men in these narratives. Their wisdom was sometimes profound while other animals were depicted as quite witty. The tale of the helpless, small sparrow who could wreck vengeance on a wild elephant in one example of this kind. Animals and birds also functioned as a convenient means of distinguishing images of Gods and Goddesses from one another. There is in fact an animal or bird appropriate for almost every god and goddess. Without their human counterparts, in sculptural depictions animals and

birds are able to suggest the deity to whom they belong and are worshipped beyond their connection with gods and goddesses. In fact, animals and birds have a life of their own in the sculptural art on the walls of Hindu temples.

The sacred images of Hinduism abound with numerous human figures provided with animal heads or, human heads with animal bodies. Characteristically, Hindu mythology provides explanations, which attempt to see these hybrid forms as essential to the personality of the deity. The nature of the boar in this regard is important for the boar as the Varāha, incarnation of Visnu is said to have lifted the earth from the depths on his tusk¹⁰. The terrific nature of the lion is said to interpret the man-lion, Narasimha form that Visnu is presumed to have taken in order to devour a particular demon-king. Semi-divine beings and a whole range of mythological creatures are also depicted in hybrid form. The most important among the hybrid animals is the serpent or the (*nāga*) who appear in a variety of forms; their divine nature indicated by multiple cobra heads. A canopy of hoods sometimes combines human and reptile-aspects most intimately. The mythological bird, Garuda has been considered the traditional enemy of the serpents and sometimes holds a pair of them in his eagle-like claws. Garuda is mostly depicted in a hybrid form with a human torso and bird beak, wings and claws. Other hybrid creatures also combine human and bird forms. Among these are the continuous references to the Kinnaras who have a bird body with a human head.

In India each god rides on an animal or bird, his vehicle or *Vāhana*, which is regarded not primarily as carrying him but, rather, it symbolizes an essential aspect of his divine personality. Brahma, the creator of the Universe steers the *Hamsa* (swan).

Hamsa primarily is a symbol of the power of discrimination and beauty". Brahma sometimes rides a chariot driven by seven swans. The association of the *Hamsa* with Brahma also indicates its relations to the more primitive godhead of the country.¹² This bird is sometimes represented as the *Vahana* of Visnu.¹³ Further, the *Hamsa*'s association with Kubera is considered the symbol of love. Later on *Hamsa* becomes a constant companion or *Vahana* of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning.¹⁴ This bird has a very sensitive beak through which it is said, it can discriminate between the right and the wrong and between the real and the unreal.

Visnu rides on the eagle, Garuda. This bird has been considered to have the capacity to see through long distances. It indicates the qualities a devotee should have in serving the lord namely, a vision of spirituality, capacity to transcend the mundane barriers and a constant desire to serve the master¹⁵. Siva rides on the bull (*Vṛṣabha*). The vehicle of Laksmi is the owl that represents perversion of attitudes in material prosperity. Lion, the vehicle of Durga represents power, will and determination. Qualities of lion symbolize the qualities required to meet the challenge of ego¹⁶. Ganeśa's carrier, the rat symbolizes his ability to find his way out of any trap or obstacle.¹⁷ The river goddesses, Gaṅga and Yamuna, are identified by their accompanying mouths-the crocodile monster or *Makara* for the Ganges and the tortoise from Jamuna. It may be noted here that though almost all animals and birds, big and small are associated with Hindu deities, the so-called unclean dog is not the vehicle of any god. They do, however, accompany Siva when he appears as a heretic beggar or, are associated Yama, the god of death. Similarly, the cat is uncommon in Hindu mythology though she is considered sacred to Sasthi, the goddess of child birth.

The 'goddess' as cow is basic to belief. The earth-cow is considered both black and white and is supposed to yield good milk and bad milk.¹⁸ It is said that if the cow were not there god Krishna and the mythology around him would be non-existent. Krishna was nursed and loved by the cowherd women. The cow emerged as a fine example of the cow as mother. In a typical sculptured representation at Badami, the cows are juxtaposed with full-breasted women¹⁹. Krishna is well known to have saved the life of cows and calves by lifting mountain Govardhana. Krishna was also known to have been threatened by an evil cow-mother, Pūtana, who offered the infant a breast filled with poison instead of milk. Krishna killed her.²⁰ There are examples of destructive cows in Indian tradition: There is an instance of a cow whose calf had been beaten by a *brahmana* and who had then vowed to avenge him. In the story she is said to have kicked the *Brāhmaṇa*'s son to death. The lion and Mahisasura are inseparable. Mahisasura symbolizes the demon of ego in a human personality²². When the wife of Rama was abducted in the forest by demon-king Ravana. A mighty bird Jatayu, son of Garuda, saved her. An entire army of monkeys also allied themselves with Rama under the rule of their king Sugriva and the command of their general Hanuman. Hanuman played a vital role in the destruction of Ravana by spying upon the demon's capital city²³. Thus, it is clear from the above that there was a complex relationship between animals and birds with Hindu thought and belief. Apart from their hybrid human-animal/ bird/ reptile form, in their own right, they defined certain essential characteristics of deities. Further, those some of them had good qualities, many of them also had bad and negative characteristics **but**, nonetheless, an essential and intricate part of the Hindu world view.

II

Hindu mythology is full descriptions of animals and birds in relation to its various sects and cults. The artists of ancient Deccan used their skill in depicting these animals and birds as part of the larger mythological story. As parts of these narratives in the data collected by us serpents appear fifteen times, Garuda seven, four boars, elephants, man-lion, fish and bull each three times, horse, Hanumān Ganesa and Jatayu twice each and cow, donkey, crane, a row of swan and tortoise once primarily relating to Vaisnavite explaining aspects of Vaisnava mythology. As part of Saivite stories Ganesa and the bull emerge three times each. Nineteen buffaloes appear depicted as part of the Durga cult. In the broader Hindu context, these animals and birds can be divided into three major categories for purpose of discussion, namely; animal and birds as the Gods and saints, animals and birds who were fought by the God and Goddesses and finally, animals and birds as vehicles of deities. Artistically, they are depicted as entirely zoomorphic or in complete theriomorphic forms.

First, we shall discuss Gods and saints entirely in zoomorphic form. In this study of sculptural art the following themes of *Matsya* dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart II, SN. 64**) from Badami, the 7th century AD (**Chart II, SN. 90**) at Aihole, the 10th century AD (**Chart II, SN. 167**) at Alampur, the theme of *Kūrma* or tortoise (**Chart II, SN. 8**) dated to the 6th century AD at Badami, a boar (**Chart II, SN. 79**) dated to the 7th century AD at Aihole, an elephant (**Chart II, SN.43**) belonging to the 7th century AD appeared at Pattadakal, an elephant *Gajendramōkṣa* (**Chart II, SN. 189**) belonging to the 8th century AD at Alampur and a saint in the form of swans linked with *Gaṅga* (**Chart II, SN.151**) dateable to the 8th century AD at Aihole occur.

The first incarnation of Visnu, the 'fish,' has various descriptions in Sanskrit text.²⁴ Most significantly it seen as a symbol of generative power, which is essential for perpetuation of the human species.²⁵ It is said that there was a deluge and the ocean engulfed the universe. The story goes that Lord Visnu advised king Satyavrat to take into a boat the seeds of all plants, the *rsis* and Brahma. Brahma while holding on to the four Vedas happened to fall asleep and the horse head demon Hayagriva took away the Vedas. The *rsis* and Gods thus implored Visnu to rescue them from the demon. It was then that Visnu incarnated himself as a fish and killed the demon.²⁶ According to Champakalakshmi²⁷ the fish form is said to have been assumed by Prajapati in the *Mahabharata*. In the sculptural art of this study, two examples of fish belong to the 6th century AD are depicted at the Jambuliṅgeśvara temple at Badami (**Chart II**, SN. 64). On the southern shrine of this temple is found a medallion and inside the roundel are seen twenty-four fishes. This perhaps represents the *Matsya avatara* of Visnu. This theme of the *Matsya* was popularized by the artists. Another example is found in a temple dated to the 7th century AD from Aihole (**Chart II**, SN. 90). Here a pair of fish (*Matsyuyma*) has been shown facing over a pair of Kinnaras on a ceiling of the temple. The fishes rest their jaws over the lotus flower. The treatment is well proportioned and brought out with great skill of the artist who was responsible for the image.

A bird swallowing a fish dated to the 10th century AD is depicted at Alampur (**Chart II**, SN. 167). According to Frederic Louis in reality it is not a bird but Siva in the form of a bird devouring a fish. This has been interpreted as Visnu in his *Matsya*

avatara in Hindu mythology. The well-proportioned and skilled treatment of this sculpture sheds light on the aptitude of the artist who made it (**Plate XXI**).

The theme of the Kurma or tortoise form of Visnu, has been, according to Gonda²⁸ mentioned in various texts like the *Mahabharata*, *Visnu Purāṇa*, the *Markandeya Purāṇa* and as early as the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*. It was an important figure in mythology and the legend of the churning of the ocean in the *Mahabharata* describes how the tortoise offered its valuable help to the gods and the demons who approached it. In the *Puranas*, Visnu himself takes the form of a huge tortoise to support the Mandara Mountain. In the *Markandeya Purana* Visnu supports the country in the form of a tortoise that is said to lie beside a representative of the earth. It is also said that Prajapati, in the process of creation, assumed the form of tortoise as the very creator²⁹. Since in the process of the churning of the ocean, the role of the tortoise was pivotal. It is often represented in sculpture. A tortoise upholding the mountain used as churn stick (**Chart II**, SN. 8) dated to the 6th century AD has been depicted at Badami (**Plate XXII**). This, no doubt suggests the Mandara Mountain of the above mentioned Legend. Here lord Visnu is represented as having assumed the form of a tortoise to bear aloft on his shell the Mandara Mountain chosen as churn stick by the Gods and Demons when they churned the milky ocean to obtain from there the nectar of life. The *nāga*, Vasuki is seen in this depiction used as a thread. Earlier scholars who suggested that in Vaisnava iconography the Matsya and Kurma forms are absent in early sculptures have ignored the early Matsya and Kurma sculptures as found in the Deccan as discussed by us above.

The other zoomorphic form of a Visnu *avatara* is the boar. A sculpture dated to the 7th century AD depicted on the pillar of the mukhamañḍapa in the Lad Khan temple at Aihole (Chart II, SN.79). It is narrated that this *vahana* was of thumb-size. After the deluge when Brahma was thinking of the universe created by him, from the nectar regions first came out a small boar of thumb-size from cavity of Brahma's nose³⁰. The sculptor who depicted the boar at Aihole was already aware of this story. Further, he showed in front of the animal, a pillar on which a disc, the emblem of Lord Visnu was kept. He also portrayed a conch above the boar. Since all these emblems of Visnu were integrated into this sculptural depiction it is thus possible to define this boar as an incarnation of Lord Visnu.

We now deal with an incarnation of Visnu named Nṛsimha or Narasimha. This half- animal and half-man means form of Visnu as creator was popular as a deity in South India. In this study on sculptural art, the earliest sculpture of a lion with a pair of human hands emerging from its back appears at Kondomoto in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The date of this sculpture is assignable not later than the 4th century AD (Chart II, SN.3). Stylistically this sculpture bears a continuity of the art tradition found at Nagarjunakonda. Technically it is not half-man and half-lion. Rather, the two hands that emerge from the back of a full lion figure. They hold *gada* and *chakra* that are the common attributes of Visnu. The *śrivasta* mark on the chest of the lion further confirms its Vaisnavite association. Here the whole body of Narasimha is shown as that of a lion which is contrary to the later representations where the opposite is the case, namely, a human body is invariably provided with a lion's face (Plate XXIII). As far as above sculpture is concerned no text mentions

about the art of making this sort of lion and therefore, till date it is an extraordinary sculpture and was **Zoomorphic** rather than **theriomorphic** form of Visnu.

In other zoomorphic forms we draw attention to a **king** in **the** form of two elephants. In this case elephants used in the palaces of the kings came to be linked with Hindu mythology. We are informed that there was a powerful and pious king. As he was engrossed in doing penance, he did not notice his master coming near him, which annoyed the latter who cursed his pupil to be the king of elephants. When as elephant, he went down to the lake to quench his thirst; a crocodile in the pool grasped him. Being exhausted of all his energy in the struggle with the crocodile and fearing death at that time he prayed to Lord Visnu who came to his rescue. The treatment of this episode at Pattadakal dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart II, SN. 43**) is well proportioned and comprehensively depicted (**Plate XXIV**). The elephant in another version of this theme belonging to the 9th century AD and depicted at Alampur (**Chart II, SN. 189**) is rather poor in workmanship. The sculptor at Alampur shows the elephant struggling with the crocodile in the pond but the animal at Pattadakal is shown making an effort to escape from the tortoise that is seen biting the forelegs of the animal. The common thing in both depictions that we can see is a lotus in full bloom on the trunk of each elephant. The elephant with raised trunks seems to be saluting the Lord Visnu who had come to rescue them.

Another zoomorphic treatment is of Saints and philosophers assuming the form of swans. According to **Sivaramamurti** , as part of the narration in the *Mahabharata* a princess, saints and philosophers in the form of swans approached Bhishma lying on a bed of arrows. This scene has been **depicted** in a temple belonging

to the 7th century AD at Pattadakal (**Chart II**, SN. 151). The workmanship and skill with which the sculptor has made this sculpture not only popularizes it but also portrays the episode in a life, like manner.

Apart from zoomorphic forms of the animals dealt with above as the incarnations of Vasnu, we also find *avatara* of Visnu in complete theriomorphic form with both an animal and human component in them. In this context the data collected by us we have the *Varaha* and Narasimha images that we propose to discuss next.

In the traditional order of the *avatars* in the theriomorphic context first comes the *avatara* form of Visnu as boar. It is first mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda* and then is popularized in the *Satapata Brihmana*, as the boar who raised the earth whose Lord was Prajāpati. According to Sindu in the *Varāha-kalpā* Śiva also assumed the form of a boar⁷². Sculptures representing the varaha (or Nara-varaha-hybrid) form of Visnu are found (Chart II, SN. 14) dated to the 6th century AD from Badami, (Chart II, SN. 40) datable to the 6th century AD from Aihole (Chart II, SN. 83) dated to the 7th century AD from Pattadakal, (Chart II, SN. 144) and two images, one dated to the 8th century AD and (Chart II, SN. 185) to the 10th century AD respectively, from Ellora.

The first of these sculptures (Chart II, SN. 14) dated to the 6th century AD at Badami and (**Chart II**, SN. 40) belonging to the 7th century AD at Aihole depict the theme of Varaha rescuing the earth. The Varaha is shown with its face turned to the proper right and with the figure of **Bhūdevi** on a lotus in his left hand. The Devi is seen on the left hand of God but facing to the right. According to T. A. Gopinatha Rao, this Goddess are just rescued from the ocean. The image of *Varsha* (**Chart II**, SN.

144) dated to the 8th century AD on the back wall of a temple at Ellora is noteworthy depicting the same theme. The artist here shows a female figure in *arjali* pose on the tusk of the Varaha facing proper right. Below to the God on the water is also depicted a man with serpent hoods and a woman in *arjali* pose (Plate XXV). This probably indicates the creatures of the nectar world below the ocean. The treatment of this sculpture clearly displays his knowledge of story on *Varahavatara* that was common by this time.

Another well-known and popular *avatan* of Visnu in the Deccan was of Narasirpha. There is a sculpture of this half-man and half-lion *avatara* of Visnu (Chart II, SN. 162) that belongs to the 9th century AD from Yelesvaram now, exhibited in the Hyderabad Government Museum. The Narasirpha mythology reflects the spirit of the earth in its divine form that was sensitive to its surroundings. The lion was thought of as the most important of the ferocious animals on the earth to be propitiated for the goodwill of the earth.³³ In an interesting essay on *avatars* and *yugas*, Huntington has called this the ferocious form of Visnu, because of how it took its form Narasirpha³⁴. This incarnatory aspect of Visnu dated to the 9th century AD located in the Hyderabad Museum (Chart II, SN. 162) is an excellent example of the art of the period. According to Nigam, the workmanship of the figure bears a close affinity with the style of Nalanda School of sculpture.³⁵

In the context of Saivism, the most popular theriomorphic form with an animal component is that of Ganesa. Ganesa enjoys a unique place in Hindu mythology. His blessings are sought at the beginning of any new venture. Ganesa is a symbolic representation of a man of perfection.³⁶ There are three sculptures of Ganesa (Chart

II, SN. 102) dated to the 8th century AD from **Alampur, (Chart II SN. 159)** belonging to the 9th century and (Chart II, SN. 180) dated to the 10th century AD from **Olumpatta**.

Ganesa is the god of luck, the giver of success, the remover of obstacles and the patron of merchants, of writers for he is the scribe of the gods. In fact, every Hindu should invoke him before any enterprise is undertaken or even worshipping any other god. In usually accepted mythology, he is the eldest son of Śiva and legends about the loss of his human head and its substitution by one of an elephant are narrated in the *Puranas*. He is a fairly popular divinity in Indian religion and art. The texts such as the *Viṣṇuḥarmottaram*, the *Matsya Purana* and the *Agni Purana* in abundance describe his images. All of them are agreed on giving him an elephant-head, a dwarfish form, a potbelly and rat as his mount.³⁷ The treatment of the sculpture (Chart II, SN.159) dated to the 9th century at Jayanti depicts with skill this sculpture. It is shown in standing posture and holds a full blossomed flower in his right hand while a *laddu* is in his left hand. We find Ganesa with four hands (Chart II, SN. 102) at Olumpatta and this image belongs to the 8th century AD. In his back arms he holds a parasol (hatchet) and a full- blossomed flower. He is carrying a *danta* in the front right hand and his trunk is shown rising up (Plate XXVI).

Another important image worshipped by Hindus is Hanuman. A special importance seems to be attached to Hanuman in the *Kamba Ramayana*, wherein he is said to be *amsa* of both Vayu and Rudra. In the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, however, he is merely said to an *amsu* of Vāyu and hence, is known as *mārutī* (son of *merut*) and not as that of Rudra. Thus, Hanuman's worship attained an independent importance. We

find a spirited sculpture of Hanuman (**Chart II, SN. 107**) dated to the 8th century AD at Ellora. This sculpture is depicted simply but essentially with all his characteristics. It is to be noted that specimens of both **Ganeśa** and Hanuman in the present study are relatively few and it can be suggested that their worship in this early period particularly up to the 6th century AD had not become so popular as it did later.

Apart from fauna in both zoomorphic and theriomorphic form assumed by Siva mostly by Visnu and others, we also collected data on some animals associated with puranic Hindu deities in a variety of ways. The most popular of these were in relation to Krishna as God, one of the heroic incarnations of Visnu. The association of the cow with him is legendary and very appealingly depicted by the Deccan artists. As the story goes, having come to know that his worship had been stopped at the advice of Krishna, Indra became ferocious and asked Samvartaka to pour incessant water for the destruction of the universe. As desired by Indra the clouds are supposed to have devastated Gokula with heavy showers accompanied¹ by terrible flashes of lightning and thunderbolts. The whole Braja country was in deluge. The Gopas, cows, and calves began shivering with cold and sought shelter in Govinda. Under these conditions, the cowherds requested their saviours Krishna to save the life of both humans and animals. He then asked them to follow him into the hollow of the mountain, Govardhana, which he uprooted and balanced on his hand. Then he caused the clouds to stop pouring down and to the utter surprise and conflation of entire populace, he saved them from the terrible wrath of Indra whom he fully vanquished.

A sculptural panel (**Chart II, SN. 53**) that belongs to the 6th century AD representing the theme of Krishna uprooting Govardhana mountain is found at

Badami. The sculptor shows Krishna as Govardhanadhari holding up the mountain by the tip of his right finger to protect the cows and calves. A cow is seen approaching Krishna while he holds up the mountain. The calves to the left side of Krishna seem to be roaring with fear. As per this story narrated above, Krishna upheld the mountain for seven days. As days went by the calves felt hungry, this led them to search for food, and this too is depicted in the sculpture. One of the calves is shown with a control rope on the neck while the other is shown without it. Such minor details do not in any way diminish the artistic skill with which this theme has been represented by the artists.

In a contrasting story we have a calf being killed by Krishna, which is mentioned in the *Bhagāvatā Purāṇa*. It is narrated that one day Śrī Krishna with Balarama and other cowherds took the calves to the bank of Yamuna for grazing. The former suddenly came to know that a demon had assumed the form of a calf and had joined his herd of calves. He beckoned Balarama and slowly approached the demon. Quickly catching hold of the calf's two hind feet and the tail, he hurled him on a Kapitha-tree (wood-apple tree) and he fell to the ground. The depiction of this theme (**Chart II, SN. 46**) dated to the 6th century AD is found at Badami. The panel shows a small touching its head on a tree that seems to be a Kapitha-tree while Krishna is seen catching hold of the tail of the calf. As Krishna is seen pulling the tail of calf, which is raised upward it undoubtedly depicts the above story (**Plate XXVII**). Once again the artist has to be praised for his excellent treatment of sculpture, which presents a life-like depiction of the event portrayed realistically.

Further, the story of a demon, bull killed by Krishna was a popular theme and described both on the *Visnu Purana* and *Brahmanda Purana*. It is described that Arista, the demon, took the form of a bull and tormented the earth. As the bull was with sharp horns everyone was afraid of him and sought the protection of Krishna. Krishna challenged him and caught hold of his horns and thrust him to the ground and finally killed him. The occurrence of the demon-bull sculptures (**Chart II, SN. 36**) dated to the 6th century AD at Badami and (**Chart II, SN. 39**) dated to the 6th century AD at Pattadakal indicate that the theme was popular in the art of the period. A scene as described above and mentioned in the texts is found sculptured in cave III at Badami, (**Chart II, SN. 36**). A bull with open mouth like an angry dog barging to its enemy is shown dashing onto Krishna while the same bull is displayed with its horn being caught by Krishna and then killed by him. Another symbol of the demon was the Cow -mother associated with Lord Krishna. It is well known that once Krishna was threatened by the evil cow-mother, the ogres Putana who offered the infant Krishna a breast filled with poison instead of milk Krishna kills her though it is said that she goes to heaven. There is a long slab belonging to the 6th century A.D (**Chart II, SN .61**) at Badami. On this slab, the sculptor has carved Krishna killing the Demoness Putana. The sculptor shows Krishna holding *gada* killing the animal as cow-mother (**Plate XXVIII**).

The theme of Krishna fighting with the elephant Kuvalayapida and killing him is interesting. According to Banerjee the *Matsya Purana* and the *Mahabharata* have given description of this episode. When Krishna and Balarama finished their duty at Mathura, they heard the sound of kettledrums and the roar of the combatants. The keeper of the elephant Kuvalayapida by name set the infuriated animal against

Krishna. There was a fierce fight between the two and the animal first assaulted Krishna who then caught hold of his tail and threw it down and crushed it with his feet. The depiction of this theme is represented (Chart II, SNs. 25, 27) dated to the 6th century AD at Badami, (Chart II, SN. 28) dated to the 6th century AD at Pattadakal and (Chart II, SN. 169) belonging to 10th century AD at Hemavati. The panel at Badami (Chart II, SN.25) shows Krishna catching hold of the elephant by its tail and throwing it down. Again, the same animal, but bigger in size is shown being crushed by Krishna's feet. Here the sculptor used the synoptic method. Therefore, he only extracts the event when the elephant is assaulting Krishna .

In another theme Krishna fights with a demon that is a horse. This is found (Chart II, SN.35) dateable to the 6th century AD, (Chart II, SN.37) popularized through the skill of the artist of the period. The story goes that Kesi was a demon in the form of a horse. In short, he was dreadful in form and sound. His mission was to kill Krishna as desired by Kāśā. The sculpture at Pattadakal (Chart II, SN.37) shows the horse with its mouth gaping who assaulted Krishna by striking him with his legs. Krishna is seen catching hold of the Asura by the legs and throwing him. The description of this theme is found mentioned in the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Agni Purāṇa*, *Vayu Purana*, *Viṣṇu Purina*. The workmanship of the artist brought out with skill for this image conveying the action as narrated in the story.

Besides the above animals relating to life of Krishna, there are also others like an ass, a crane and a *niga* that assaulted Krishna. The story of the killing of the demon Dhenuka by Balarama has been depicted on two panels (Chart II, SN.15) belonging to the 6th century A.D at Pattadakal. One day a cowherd called Śrīdama

said to Krishna that there was a great forest nearby abounding in palm trees with fruits. Unfortunately, only the evil-souled Asura named Dhenuka enjoyed the fruits who roamed in the grab of an ass. Krishna and Balarama along with their friends entered the palm forest and shook the palm trees, which angered the ass-demon who came running in great anger and kicked the breast of Balarama with his two hind legs. **Balarāma** caught hold of him by the legs and whirling him repeatedly threw the demon against a palm tree and killed him.³⁸ In the sculpture at Badami (**Chart II**, SN.26) dated to the 6th century AD, as narrated in the *Puranas* and the *Harivamśa*, we find Balarama in the act of whirling the donkey demon in the air by his hind legs and hurling him against the palm tree, which is as much naturalistically depicted as is possible in stone within a space circumscribed. The other panel at Pattadakal shows an ass on the palm tree. Balarama is shown holding the legs of the animal in order to whirl him repeatedly and then throw him to the ground so that the animal is found prostrated at its mouth on the ground.

The story of the killing of the crane-demon has been depicted on a panel belonging to the 6th century A.D (Chart II, SN.16) at Pattadakal in Karnataka. Crane is symbol of inauspicious.³⁹ It is narrated that once as the cowherds with Krishna brought their cows to a tank so that they could drink water suddenly, a great Asura, called **Bakāsura** took the form of a crane there. It quickly devoured Krishna. Seeing this, **Balarāma** and other Gopas became frightened. Bakasura wanted to kill Krishna who was burning up his throat. However, Krishna held the demon by its beak and tore it into pieces. On seeing this miraculous incident, the Gopas were astonished. In the above sculpture, we find most part of this episode is extracted and depicted. The crane is shown with its mouth wide open.

The snake's association with Krishna in this study also indicates the treat of a demon. This story is depicted on two panels (**Chart II, SNs. 157**) belonging to the 9th century AD at the Jayanti temple in Andhra Pradesh. We are told that the river Kalindi, there was a lake, which was the abode of the serpent Kaliya. Kaliya polluted the water of the river by its venom. In order to subdue the serpent, Krishna jumped down from a Kadamba tree into the river and began to play in the water striking it with his arms. The noise created by Krishna enraged Kaliya and the latter coiled Krishna with his coils. As Krishna was caught in the coil of the serpent, his companions were all frightened and fell senseless on the ground. In search of Krishna, the cowherds came to the river Kalindi and they were horrified to see Krishna entrapped by a snake. To the joy of all, Krishna set himself free from the coils of the serpent and in the process Kaliya suffered extreme pain on account of the weight of Krishna's body. Due to the constant fight with Krishna, the serpent became tired and powerless and taking advantage of this Krishna trampled the lower part of the body of the *Nāga*. The sculpture depicted at Jayanti (**Chart II, SN.157**) dated to the 9th century AD has represented the initial stage of this episode. Here Krishna is seen entwined by the snake with its expanded body.

Apart from the association of Krishna with the snake we find other Hindu Gods like Visnu and Siva also associated with its. In the context of Visnu, the snake symbolizes Time. Lying on the snake suggests that during the course of our day-to-day effort to maintain ourselves, we must save something (*sesha* meaning surplus) The word *sesha* associated with Visnu means "Unending remainder" it is two coils of *sesha* on which Lord Visnu is shown seated, in Space context, would mean

(*Ghatakasha*) and (*Mahākasha*) or conditional space and unconditional space. When *śesha* is taken in the context of Time, it means **Absolute** Time. Time is subservient to Lord Visnu who is above the reach of the two coils on which He is seated. It represents both visible and invisible time.

In India at various places we have different notions of installing the snake on which Visnu rests. The *śeṣasāyī* or lying on snake was one of the prominent deities to be offered ritual worship praying for prosperity and progeny.⁴⁰ In this study the serpent serving Visnu as bed comes from eleven examples. Out of them three are dated to the 6th century AD (Chart II, SN. 13) at Badami, two sculptures, one belonging to the 6th century AD (Chart **II**, SN. 41) and another belonging to 6th century AD occur at Aihole, one sculpture belonging to the 8th century AD (Chart II, SN.105) comes from Alampur, one dated to the 9th century AD (Chart II, SN.163) comes from Hampi, one dated to the 7th century AD (Chart II, SN.31) has been depicted at Bokardan, three (Chart II, SNs.74, 91) belonging to the 7th century and (Chart II, **SN.141**) 10th century AD have been represented respectively at Ellora. In looking at these examples we can trace the way the snake form has been integrated with the reclining human form of Visnu in the Deccan region. Most of the snake coils (Chart II, **SNs.41, 105**) are alternatively curved in succession from hood to the tail under Visnu's body. These coils are placed adjacent to each other. The two segments of each of the snake instead of lying adjacent to each other bend downwards (Plate XXIX). Thus, although the coils are at right angles to the horizontal body each of the snake coils goes downward and curls underneath itself. The resultant pattern is that of parallel sections rather than alternating curves. We also find the coil of the snakes are placed parallel to the horizontal body. The curling of the snake takes place at each of

the two ends and is not visible to the onlooker. What the onlooker sees are three parallel tiers of the snake resembling three layers of a bed. Such an idea of horizontally placed parallel curls piled one above the other is found in the seated Visnu on *sesa* or Ananta at Badami Cave III dated to the later part of 6th century AD (Chart II, SN.13). There is a variation here in depicting *sesa* on which Visnu is seen seated (Plate XXX). Though according to Indian philosophy the *sesa* is supposed to be two coils, the sculptor here shows the *sesa* with three coils. Similarly, though the text states that this serpent has a thousand hoods most sculptures in the Deccan region do not show a serpent that has so many hoods. Some of the snakes are carved in a naturalistic form showing the body with spots. The body of the serpent at Alampur is however, as smooth as pickle fish.

We also commonly find some snakes associated with Siva. One example (Chart II, SN.94) is dated to the 8th century AD from Alampur (Chart II, SNs. 54, 60) and the other belongs to the 6th century AD from Aihole. The sculpture at Alampur shows the snake being held firmly in the hand of Siva. This indicates Absolute Time. The sculpture at Aihole portrays a snake with three coils wrapped on the waist of Siva indicating, past, present and future Time. It also seems to indicate the force of destruction, reconstruction and development (Plate XXXI). At Ellora the sculpture shows Siva lifting a snake (Chart II, SN.161) vertically as high as his head. This probably means maintaining equilibrium of the Time, punctuality and accuracy⁴¹.

The descriptions of Goddess, **Mahisāsūramardini** submerging the **demon-asura** (buffalo) is popular in Indian mythology. There are some depictions of demons

on the monuments of the Deccan primarily in the form of animals. The demon or *asura* first assumed an Elephant form against the Goddess Mahisasuramardini, **and** then it surmises as a buffalo. The buffalo is the personification of ignorance and it symbolizes consciousness of one's own superiority. It is also a symbol of death. The cut-head of the buffalo represents completely every type of darkness and ignorance. It is in totality symbol of sloth.⁴² The buffalo association with Mahisasuramardini is woven into a long story that we narrate below.

A giant named Durgā, the son of Ruru, having performed penance in favour of Brahma obtained his blessings and grew so mighty that he conquered the three worlds, and dethroned Indra and other Gods. As the giant tortured the gods and the world in several ways, the Gods in their distress appealed to Śiva.⁴³ Śiva pitying them sent Parvati to go and destroy this giant.⁴⁴ There was a great battle between Parvati and the giant. When the giant was exhausted he surmised the form of a buffalo. In the buffalo form he laid low only occasionally rising to attack others. In his final assault the *asura* rushed to attack the lion of the great Goddess. After a long and strenuous battle she finally killed the buffalo-demon. During the course of this fight the Mahisasura was made to appear in various forms like a buffalo, in other fabulous forms and even in human form emerging out of the served neck of the animal. Some times, the buffalo's neck was tightly held in the left hand of the Goddess and some times the demon was held by the heels and yet, in some other cases the buffalo's tongue was pulled out by the Goddess in an attempt to subjugate it. Occasionally she stands over the buffalo or its severed heads.

In this study, we will discuss the **Mahisāsūramardini** episode in the sculptural art of the Deccan as it had gained much in popularity. There are many sculptures of the buffalo being killed by the great Goddess. Among them, we will describe some of them below. In this study, two sculptures of buffaloes belonging to the 6th century AD (Chart II, SN.42) have been depicted at Badami. The representation of three sculptures datable to the 7th centuries AD (Chart II, SNs. 20, 21, 58) appears at Aihole. The depiction of two buffaloes (Chart II, SN.85) belonging to the 7th century AD and (Chart II, SN.140) to the 8th century AD come from Mysore. Seven sculptures of the buffalo-demon datable to the 8th century AD (Chart II, SN.104) and to the 10th century AD (Chart II, **SNs.172**, 173) have been depicted at Alampur. Six belonging to the 8th centuries AD (Chart II, **SNs.108**, 109) come from Ellora, one dated to the 8th century AD (Chart II, SN.110) comes from Aurangabad (Chart II, SN.171) one belonging to the 10th century AD from the Godavari District and one finally (Chart II, SN.165) dated to the 10th century AD is found in the Dharwar Museum.

The buffalo depicted at Badami is not visible in a good position (Chart II, SN.42) The left elbow of the Goddess presses the neck of the animal while it is snouting near her left hand. The fore side of the body of animal is pressed with a mace in one of her left hands while the animal is pierced by a *trisula* in one of the right hands of the Goddess. The *trisula* comes out of the body of the animal and touches the ground. The tail of the animal is bent in clock-wise form. In another sculpture at Badami, the hands of the Goddess are shown up turning the snout of the buffalo while the *trisula* in her hands pierces through the neck of the animal.

The buffalo on the northern pillar of Durga temple at Aihole (**Chart II, SN.58**) depicts the last attempt of the Goddess to kill the demon-buffalo. The buffalo-demon upturns to see body of the goddess in fierce form. The animal is shown watching interestingly the upper side of the body while the Goddess is seen charging to pierce the neck of the animal. As it raises its head the neck of animal is shown in a prominent way and overall he looks strong and healthy. The right side of his fore leg is bent at the knee. In another depiction at Aihole the buffalo rises upward while the snout of the animal is held in the left hand of the Goddess. The body of the buffalo is shown injured as the *trisula* of the Goddess is shown pierced into the body of the animal and probably due to severe pain, its tail is shown turned in an anti-clock wise form.

It is of special interest to note that depicts the cut-head of the buffalo signifying darkness and ignorance is found in the Alampur Museum. The tip of the head of the animal is broad enough for the Goddess to stand on. The eye of the animal is shown open while the nostrils of the animal are shown broad with ball snout.

Also at Alampur a buffalo is seen being killed by the Goddess. The body of this animal is pressed by left leg of the Goddess while a *trisula* is shown piercing into the body of the animal. The head of the animal is raised upward while its tongue is being pulled out by the Goddess. Probably due to great fear, the animal is shown as rather feeble (Plate **XXXII**).

In the **Somanathpur** temple at Mysore dated to the 8th century AD (**Chart II, SN. 140**) is also seen a buffalo being slain by the Goddess. The right leg of Goddess

tramples the body of the animal while the head of the animal is laid on the ground. The eyes of the animal are wide open and he is shown with prominent nostrils. The animal looks strong and upstanding. Another buffalo is shown seated on its four legs while the left leg of the Goddess crushes his head. The head of the animal is slightly raised and looks to be in the shape of a boat, while its mouth is shown slightly open and its tongue comes out. While his eyes are wide open, his ears look stiff. This sculpture of the buffalo strongly resembles the one found at Alampur and discussed above. A scene depicting the killing of a buffalo by Mahisasuramardini belonging to the 10th century AD has been exhibited in the Dharwar Museum. The animal seated with its legs bent half at the knees while its head is shown pressed a *gada* that is held in the right hand of Mahisasuramardini. The snout of the animal is held by the left hand of the Goddess **(Plate XXXII)**.

A relief panel at the Kailasa temple of Ellora has depicted a buffalo-demon (Chart II, SN.108). The neck of the animal is seen being crushed by the right foot of the Devi. The *asura* is depicted emerging from the Mahisāsura's body and he is shown kneeling. A long *trisula* is plunged into the body of *asura*. The *chaturbhuj*a panel of the Rameswara Caves at Ellora shows a buffalo being submerged by the great Goddess. Her right foot crushes the body of the animal. The snout of the animal is held by one of her left hands while a *trisula* in the corresponding right hand is seen plunging into the neck of the animal. The animal looks troublesome. Taking a look all these forms of Mahisa, the Deccan sculptures show three types of depictions on this theme. One is with Buffalo's head cut off and the real *asura* emerging from the neck that is half visible. Secondly, he is shown with Human body but with the head of a buffalo as in the case the Ellora, sculpture **(Chart II, SN.109)**. Except for the horns,

the rest of the face is human. Finally, the complete Mahisa or buffalo form is depicted as in the case of the Aihole Durga temple and Ellora Rameswara caves.

Another *asura* discussed occasionally in Hindu mythology is Mollasura or the demonic boar. The boar is generally associated with a large brood and detestable habit. The boar is also considered among the most important wild animal for a chase. There is a sculpture of a demonic boar Mollasura associated with Rama and Parasurama belonging to the 10th century AD (**Chart II**, SN.188) from Alampur. The face of boar is serene. The mouth of the animal is slightly open and it seems that the boar had roared with fear. The body of the animal is shown as slightly swaying backwards. At the rear of boar is seen Rama and in front of the animal is seen Parasurama. They are shown aiming at the boar their arrows (**Plate XXXIII**).

Apart from the animals, we have seen some birds like Garuda and Jatayu who play a significant role in Hindu mythology. The Garuda is the most sacred " and the golden-winged bird. It is considered the symbol of human mind.⁴⁶ When a pious Hindu happens to see one of these birds hovering in the sky, he offers it obeisance and considers it a very good omen especially when one goes on any important business⁴⁷. The mythological bird, Garuda is the traditional enemy of serpents and sometimes holds a pair of them in his eagle-like claws. Garuda is depicted in a hybrid form with a human torso but with a beak, wings and claws. There are innumerable sculptures of Garuda on the monuments of the Deccan. It occurs four times dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart II**, SN.32) and (**Chart II**, SNs.97, 100,101) belonging to the 8th century AD on a door at Aihole. One specimen (**Chart II**, SN.179) belonging to the 10th century AD comes from Sravana Belgola. In these examples the sculptor shows the

birds without the rider though usually it is commonly depicted as the *Vāhana* of Lord Visnu. Here they have outstretched their wings and are seated on their knee. Their faces look serene and calm (**Plate XXXIV**).

The eagle is considered the very embodiment of far-sightedness and a keen piercing look. The eagle is mythologically understood as the son of Garuda. In the *Ramayana*, Sapati, the old eagle, could from this side of the Ocean, view easily that Sita was seated in the Asoka grove in the palace of Ravana in Lanka, a hundred leagues away. At Pattadakal there is this singular capacity of the bird illustrated on a panel from the Papanatha temple dated to the 7th century AD (Chart II, SN.92). Here the bird is seen carrying a ring, which was given to it by Sita (Plate XXXV). In another context the eagle is also considered the embodiment of great strength and power to fight. In the *Ramayana*, Jatayu was so conscious, not only to perform the duty to help Sita, but also of his power still unabated that he resolved to attack Ravana. The bird put up a wonderful fight until his wings and legs were cut off and he was thrown helpless on the ground, lingering on in death, waiting to give his last message of the tidings about Sita to Rāma. The fight between Ravana and Jatayu is a favorite theme at Ellora dated to the 8th century AD (**Chart II, SN.118**) and is repeated more than once. The best sample is from the Kailasa temple that depicts a vivid representation of the fight between the lord of the demons Ravana and the prince among the birds, Jatayu.

III

Whether in Zoomorphic or theriomorphic form, as described above, the association of a variety of fauna with Hindu mythology was deep. It was integrated to

their world-view about the place of all living being in this Universe. Pertinently, in the above examples, animals and birds appeared either as incarnations of divinities and as their protectors or, as their adversaries symbolizing the evil in society. There was therefore, an overlapping of human and non-human forms. However, in an independent capacity as supporters and carriers of various divinities, a complex array of fauna was central to defining the Hindu mythology as well.

Almost all of Hindu Gods and Goddesses have a *vāhana*, Vehicle, or Mount. The term *vāhana* is a Sanskrit word, which is used for the animals and other beings that appear beneath the feet of the Hindu deities. This *vahana* is not only a means by which the Gods or Goddesses are transported; it is also an internal part, which symbolizes an essential aspect of the divine personality. These *vahanas* are vividly depicted on the monuments of the Deccan. During the course of field works it was possible to collect one hundred and twenty sculptures of animals and birds as vehicles with their respective deity. Though it would not be possible to discuss all the examples we begin with a description of each of these Vehicles or *vahanas* based on a select number of samples available for our region and period of study. Being a region that was largely influenced by Saivism during the early medieval period a large number of Lord Siva's images have been found on the walls of temples. Naturally, therefore, his vehicle the bull has been found well depicted. The bull is conceived of as eternally pure and auspicious. It is also commonly understood as the symbol of virility⁴⁸. *Tamas* (non-apprehension of Reality and *Rajas* (Misapprehension of Reality) are understood to protect themselves as the two horns of the bull. Thus, the bull is explained as the symbol for the extrovert man⁴⁹. Under this study, thirty nine examples of sculptures of the bulls come from the different sub-regions of the Deccan

(**Chart II, SN.4**) belonging to the 5th century AD from Vijayawada, (**Chart II, SN.5**) datable to the 5th century AD from Ellora, (Chart II, SN.18) datable to the 6th century AD is discovered in Karnataka now, in the Hyderabad Museum, (Chart II, SNs.23, 24, **29, 47,48**, 55 56, 63) dated in the 6th century AD found at Aihole, (**Chart II, SNs.9, 19, 50**) belonging to the 6th century AD come from **Badami** (Chart II, SNs., 75,76,77, 80,81) belonging to the 7th century AD from Pattadakal, (Chart II, **SNs.71**, 87) dated in the 7th century AD from Elephanta, (Chart II, SN.65) datable to the 7th century AD at Ellora, (Chart II, SN.86) dated in the 7th century AD from Alluru, (Chart.2, SN.122) belonging to the 8th century AD from **Alampur**, (Chart II, SNs. **123, 124, 126,127, 150**) belonging to the 8th century AD from Aihole (Chart II, **SNs.130**, 131, 147, 148) datable to the 8th century AD from Ellora, (Chart II, SN.149) dated in the 8th century AD from Badami , (Chart II, SN.155) dated in the 9th century AD from Aihole, (Chart II, SN.156) datable to the 9th century AD from Bikkavolu, (Chart II, SN.170) of Alluru, (Chart II, SN.164) from Ellora and (Chart II, SN.166) from Alampur belonging to the 10th century AD and one example (Chart II, SN.181) belonging to 10th century AD, respectively.

We take up the discussion on the bull as *vāhana* of Lords Siva in the way they were depicted in the sculptural art, namely, in their naturalistic form. Within its naturalistic form we can additionally further analyze them in two parts. In some sculptures the artist has shed light on the forepart of the bull while other sculptors, we observe, high light on the complete body of the bull. A bull belonging to the 7th century AD conducting its duty as vehicle of Siva as Ardhhanarisvara is to be seen at Elephanta (Chart II, SN.71). The sculptor shows this bull with a big body and a broad face. The hump of this bull is too big for Siva to keep the elbow on it for

comfort. The horns of this bull are tubby and its ears look stiff. The artist has treated this animal in a naturalistic form. Another bull dated to the 8th century AD from Alampur (**Chart II, SN.122**) is depicted with its body thin and standing behind Śiva as *Ardhanārīśvara*. This bull is seen with its head slightly tilted while its hump is shown protruding. The face of the bull looks as though it is in contemplation with almost closed eyes. The sculptor here shows the bull licking the leg of Śiva in a very naturalistic way having treated it realistically. There are two specimens where the bulls standing behind the Siva who performs a dance. The artists in this case show the fore side of the animals only. These Nandi bulls are seen to be slightly touching their body with that of lord Siva. Of them, the horns of one are raised upward while the others' are seen out-stretched. The face of the bull at Papanatha temple in Pattadakal is oval with a round snout while the face of the bull at the Jambuliṅga temple (Plate XXXVI) is serene and calm. Ears of both bulls look stiff and it seems that they are listening to the sound of the dance being performed by Siva. The lack of ornaments on their bodies indicates that the sculptors made these animals with an universal appeal of as they appeared in nature.

The attention of the artists was also draw to depict the complete bodies naturalistic bulls in two examples. We see a bull standing horizontally on a panel from the upper Sivalaya temple at Badami (**Chart II, SN.19**), treatment of which is very realistic. The bull is seen with its face turned to the left side. It looks strong enough to carry both Śiva who is standing on the right side of the bull while Parvati who is seen leaning on the body of the bull. There is another bull seated at the bottom of the throne of Śiva and Parvati (**Chart II, SN.5**) at Ellora. The horns of this bull are as short as the one at upper Sivalaya. Like former, the body of the latter is big enough

for Śiva and Parvati to sit on it. The attractive hump of the latter is as big as its body. The artist has made it rather artificially. In another example the bull seated at the legs of Śiva depicted at Bikkavolu turns left while its eyes are half-closed and mouth slightly open. The hump is mounted upward. The right leg of Śiva rests on the back side of the animal while its tail passes from its body and is shown hanging to the front of the onlooker (Plate XXXVII).

Let us now discuss some decorated forms of the bulls found on the monuments of the Deccan. In this form, the artists show trappings, a neck-band, a chest-band and a head-band but do not portray a halter by which the animals could be controlled easily. A rather big bull (Chart II, SN.164) is seen standing as part of a panel at Ellora. This bull is shown carrying Siva and Uma on its back while they have seated horizontally on it. It turns its face to the right. In another similar example at Alampur (Chart II, SN. 166) the face of the bull looks contemplative. The sculptor here has decorated the bull, with a neck-band, a head-band and cluster of bells passing through its neck (Plate XXXVIII). The artist shows horns of the bull at Ellora while he omits it in the one at Alampur. The artists shed light on the complete bodies of both these bulls. The bull associated with Siva and his family (Chart II, SN.181) dated to the 10th century AD at Aihole, is seen bedecked with a nose-band, bell hanging from its neck and head-band with noble marks. This noble mark does not appear on any other bull before. The artists were engulfed with the naturalistic form of the bull during the earlier period. Later on their minds changed drastically towards adorning them with embellishments. It was thus common to find examples of bulls of a later period bedecked with trappings, chest-bands, neck-bands bells *etc.* Without loosing sight of their integral significance to Saivite belief and mythology.

Apart from the sacred bulls, we find horses associated with Hindu Gods depicted prolifically on the Deccan monuments. It is well known that the horse played an important role in the life and culture of the Indo-Aryans in north India and of the Megalithic people in south India and the Deccan. In a symbolic sense the horse signifies a quantum of energy that stands at a man's disposal⁵⁰. There are eight depictions of horses that we propose to discuss. The earliest one (**Chart II, SN.1**) dated to 1st century BC (Vehicle of Sūrya) at Bhaja, (**Chart II, SN.11**) belonging to the 6th century AD (vehicle of *Uchhairava*) at Badami, (**Chart II, SN.82**) dated to the 7th century AD at Pattadakal (**Chart II, SN.96**), dated to the 8th century AD at Alampur, (**Chart II, SN.125**) at Aihole, (**Chart II, SN. 137,139**) at Ellora, (**Chart II, SN.III**) (Vehicle of Niruti) at Badami and (**Chart II, SN.183**) at Gadambahalli are belonging to the 10th century AD respectively. Among some scenes we see a single horse associated with the god, Sūrya and in some we find seven horses associated with him. It is interesting to see seven horses dragging a chariot at Bhaja as one of the first examples under study (**Chart II, SN.1**). The forelegs of these horses are raised. It looks like the horses are taking alternative steps indicating movement as they are supposedly engaged in a journey. For this purpose they are equipped with saddle, bridle and rein. The rein as depicted is simple and plain and appears to have been knotted on the bit (**Plate XXXIX**). The style of the depiction on the whole is artificial. A similar scene is found at Ellora (**Chart II, SN.137**). The sculptors did not show any decoration on the bodies of these horses. We find these horses well made and their treatment is naturalistic. At Alampur we see only one horse that is shown fixed with the chariot (**Chart II, SN.96**). The horse is seen dragging the cart forcefully and has lifted up his fore side by putting its weight on its hind legs. The sculptor has decorated

the horse with a forehead band, check-pieces and nose-band. **Aruna**⁵¹ holds the rein of the horse. The action of the horse suggests a movement- perhaps of galloping forward. In a very interesting depiction we see a horse carrying Kubera and his consort at Gadambahalli. The sculptor shows this horse in the attitude of movement. The animal is also richly decorated with trappings, saddle and bridle. It is further bedecked with a breast band and another at the back passing from below the tail (**Plate XL**). In Gandhara art too we find this sort of treatment which may have influenced the work of the artists of the Deccan. They were certainly aware of making sculptures of horses pertaining their symbolism in the religious context and also in terms of their role in worldly life.

We next turn to discuss lions depicted on the Deccan monument. They are primarily associated with Hindu Goddess Mahisasuramardini and with the zodiac sign's deity called Buddha. According to Zimmer, lion is the symbol of the female-principle⁵². It represents power, will and determination and further is known for his sober habits. The qualities of the lion symbolize the qualities required to meet the challenges of ego that is inherently supposed to be very wicked. The Goddess riding the lion in the battle-field symbolizes her mastery over all these qualities. We describe ten sculptures of lions (Chart II, SN.78) at Pattadakal and (Chart II, SN.84) at Mysore dated in the 7th century AD, (Chart II, SN.112.) dated to the 8th century AD from Alampur, (Chart II, SN.120, 134) dated to the 8th century from Aihole and (Chart II, SNs. 66, 67) from Ellora dated in the 7th century AD and (Chart II, SN.136) belonging to the 8th century AD from Ellora. These lions are commonly described as the vehicle of the Goddess Mahisasuramardini, but they not only serve as her mount but also functions for her as her forceful associations. A frightful lions with

open mouth and prominent mane at Alampur is seen seated beside the Goddess who is engaged in killing the Demon in this sculpture (Chart II, SN.112). The artist shows this lion in a naturalistic form. A somewhat similar episode is seen at the Durga temple of Aihole **(Chart II, SN.120)**. This animal is better made than the one mentioned above. Here, the lion is shown at the right side of the Goddess. There is a wonderful depiction of a brave lion helping its mistress in the battlefield at Ellora **(Chart II, SN.136)**. The action sculptured seems to be the movement when it is about to bite the left leg of the Demon who in turn, has raised his leg at the knee. The mouth of the lion is wide open big enough to submerge demon's hind legs while its fore legs are raised in the act of engaging in a terrible battle. As the lion is seen fighting its foes forcefully, its tail is depicted as coiled up. On seeing this form of its tail one can assume how this lion is enthusiastically fighting its opponent and one can only imagine the power being exerted by the lion together with its mistress **(Plate XLI)**. A somewhat similar episode is also seen at Alampur.

Further, in our discussion on the vehicles of Gods we find the elephant as the *vāhana* associated with lord Indra. In this context the elephant is the symbol of the rain cloud⁵³. It is also said to symbolize the life-giving force of water. The elephant has been most popularly understood as the guardian of the four quarters too⁵⁴ and thus is considered a symbol of sovereignty. In this study three elephants linked as the vehicle of Indra are found **(Chart II, SN.7)** dated to the 6th century AD at Badami, **(Chart II, SN.68)** dated to the 7th century AD at Aihole, **(Chart II, SN.182)** and dated to the 10th century AD at Gadambahalli. An elephant in a half-seated posture **and** with wide open eyes as vehicle of Indra is found at Badami Cave III carved within a floral roundel **(Chart II, SN.7)**. The right side of its tusk is shown coming

out while its trunk is seen coiling inside. The elephant is seen carrying Indra on its back. Indra is seen supporting his left hand on the head of the elephant while a person on the back of same animal is seen holding an umbrella over the head of God. Another elephant, as vehicle of Indra has been depicted on the ceiling of the antechamber of the Ravanaphati temple at Aihole (**Chart II, SN.68**). This is shown flying through the clouds, carrying his royal burden. The elephant at Gadambahalli (**Chart II, SN.182**) is seen bedecked with trappings and a kind of band passes from below its tail. The elephant is depicted as strong and huge. It is seen with its trunk coiled upward, which looks very much like a coiled snake. On its trunk is seen an object which looks like a three hooded *Nāga*.

Apart from elephants, from the data collected by us we find three goats associated as the vehicle of Agni which are (**Chart II, SN.6**) dated in the 5th century AD at Badami, (**Chart II, SN.143**) dated to the 8th century AD at Alampur, (**Chart II, SN.174**) dated in the 10th century AD at Gadambahalli. Agni is well understood as fire God. Though it was iconographically not so prolifically depicted in sculptural art, we do find some specimens that we discuss below. The Museum at Badami exhibits a goat being ridden by Agni (**Chart II, SN.6**) and it seems to be a he-goat. The face of this animal wears an expression of calm contemplation. The ears of the animal are shown hanging downward. The slightly bent knee of the fore legs of the animal indicates the fact that this animal is beginning to move, perhaps to take steps forward. One of the attendants of Agni is shown standing at the rear of goat. It seems that this attendant is motivating the animal to move because his right fore leg is bent at the knee and is touching the tail of the goat. The sculptor intends to reflect the animal in a naturalistic form. He has, therefore not shown any embellishment on the body of this

animal (**Plate XLII**). This type of depiction was changed by the artists in later periods. The goat as vehicle associated with one of the **Aṣṭa-Dikpāla's** is depicted at **Gadambahalli (Chart II, SN.174)**. The sculptor shows this animal with richly decorated ornaments. Though the treatment of the sculptor is good it hardly portrays the animal in a realistic way.

Furthermore, two sculptures of rams as vehicle of Agni also come from the data collected by us. These animals have been depicted at western *prakara* face (Chart II, SN.152) and western *prakara* wall (**Chart II, SN.153**) dated to the 9th century AD at the Kailasa cave at Ellora. The sculptors depicted them in a naturalistic form and style. The western face one is bigger than that on wall. However, the latter is better made than that of the former one.

In the next examples we have from the data collected three deer (Chart II, **SNs.154, 160**) dated to the 9th century AD from Ellora, (Chart II, SN.184) dated to the 10th century AD from Gadambahalli, being ridden by Vayu (God of wind). In the two examples from Ellora (**Chart II, SNs. 154, 160**) we find their faces have an expression of calm and contemplation. The bent knees of the fore legs suggests as if it is galloping or perhaps taking alternative steps forward. The stag at Ellora is seen being ridden by Vāyu, the guardian of north-west quarter, while the stag (Deer) at Gadambahalli is shown trotting while carrying Vayu and his consort. The horns of both animals are shown tapering upward. The appearances of these two wear a calm and contemplative look. It seems these animals are content in doing their duty of carrying this God. The fore legs rise at the knee of these animals and suggest a movement of taking a step forward. Nevertheless, the sculptor shows the stag at

Ellora in a naturalistic form while he is shown richly decorated in the one at Gadambahalli with trappings, saddle, and bridle. We see a kind of band passing from below its tail. The artist throws some light on the movement of these animals, which make it look like that they are engrossed in activity.

In the data collected we have four examples of buffaloes, understood as the vehicle of Yama. They are (**Chart II, SN.145**) dated to the 8th century AD at Alampur, (**Chart II, SN.158**) belonging to the 9th century AD from Hemavati and (**Chart II, SN.175**) from Gadambahalli dated to the 10th century AD. Buffaloes are generally understood as the symbol of death. In tantric literature it also symbolizes ego or *ahamkāra* which is born of ignorance and can feed on falsehood and deception. The animal at Alampur (**Chart II, SN.145**) dated to the 8th century AD is unfortunately mutilated its face (**Plate XLIII**) but the trappings on its back are visible. It is rare to see the animal bedecked with earrings that are found on this animal. Both the animals at Hemavati (**Chart II, SN.158**) and the one at Gadambahalli (**Chart II, SN.175**) are richly decorated with chest bands, bells and on the back a band passes through from below the tails of these animals. We see trappings and safety belts on the buffalo at Hemavati while the artist omits these things from the animal sculpture of Gadambahalli. Both animals are marked by an expression of calm in their appearances but with slightly open mouths. The bent knees of the fore legs and hind legs of both the animals indicate as if they are making a journey. Both animals look strong and upstanding. The artist at Alampur tried to make the animal look naturalistic with only a few decorations while at Hemavati and Gadambahalli the artists have revolutionized the depiction in form and style and made the animals look rather artificial.

Another *vahana* that is depicted in the sculptures of the Deccan is the rat as the vehicle associated with Ganesa, the popular elephant headed God that removes obstacles. The concept of rat as the *vahana* of Ganesa is intriguing. The features that are associate the rat with Ganesa, may be traced to the character of the creature itself. It is the habit of destroying the rat, which brought the animal in contact with Ganesa, the Vighnaraja. The rat or mouse was a constant problem in ancient times in villages, towns and in agricultural field. Even Manu advises the kings not to select a fort that was made with brick ramparts around it as it may become infested with rats and mice.⁵⁵ Rat symbolizes the ability to find (or gnaw) his way out of any trap or obstacle⁵⁶ and therefore was appropriately suited to be the *vahana* of Lord Ganesa who is also well-known as remover of obstacles. In this study two sculptures of rats as vehicle of Ganesa (**Chart II, SN.159**) dated to the 9th century AD at Jayanti and (Chart II, SN.180) belonging to the 10th century AD at Alampur respectively. The rat on the south Bhadra shrine of the Jayanti temple in Andhra Pradesh looks is made in a very attractive style (**Chart II, SN.159**). His face is oval in shape and its ears look stiff. The tail of this rat is slightly raised. The sculpture of rat in the Hyderabad Museum too has been made artistically. Its head is raised to see its master while its tail at the back in straight. The head of the rat is oval in shape as usual but both its ears unlike the earlier one are invisible. The right side of its body is defaced. A similar sculpture of the rat with intact face is found at Alampur (**Chart II, SN.180**). The artists depict both these rats in a naturalistic form.

Apart from land animals as vehicles of the Hindu God and Goddesses, there are some water (aquatic) and some sub-water (amphibians) animals found depicted on the monuments of the Deccan region. Almost all the aquatic animals symbolize the

male generative principle⁵⁷. *Makara* is the sign of love. It is half-fish and **half** dragon. *Makara* is primarily a conjoint sexual symbol⁵⁸ and also a symbol of continuous cohabitation⁵⁹. In this study, we found eleven sculptures of *Makaras*. The earliest (**Chart II, SN.2**) belonging to 2nd century AD is from Amaravati associated with river goddess, Ganga, (**Chart II, SN.12**) dated to the 6th century AD connected with Rahu is from Badami, (**Chart II, SN.88**) to the 7th century AD linked with Varuna is found at Elephanta, (**Chart II, SN.89**) dated to the 7th century AD at Bikkavolu, (**Chart II, SN.133**) dated to the 8th century AD in the Dharwar Museum (**Chart II, SN.135**) belonging to the 8th century AD at Aihole and (**Chart II, SN.168**) dated to the 10th century AD at Mandya district of Karnataka are all linked with god Varuna(**Chart II, SNs. 113, 114, 129**). Also are *Makara* associated with Varuna belonging to the 8th century AD from Ellora, (**Chart II, SN. 186**) and from Aihole dated to the 10th century AD. On a rail at Amaravati a pair of *makaras* carrying the river goddess Ganga are depicted. (**Chart II, SN. 2**). This is now in the British Museum collection. These *makaras* are like leaf-fish. Their heads are raised upward while their gills appear clearly. Of these, one looks in a fearful state. The tail of one is bent in a clockwise fashion while the coil of the other is made in wavy length. At Elephanta the artist shows the mouth of the *makaro* with wide open at Elephanta (**Chart II, SN.88**). Its face appears terrible and fearful appearance like that of Kali. Further, its nose is prominent and horns fall downward. The *makara* carrying Varuna on the western *prakara* wall in the Kailasa temple at Ellora is lustrous. (**Chart II, SN.114**) The artist shows its' mouth wide open and its trunk raised upward like that of a hungry elephant aiming at its food. This *makara* is made well as it is usually found in nature. The sculptures of *makaras* with mouth wide open and foliate-tails in the Dharwar Museum

and at Aihole (**Plate XLIV**) are full of life. Here, the artists are careful to show them in a naturalistic form without any ornaments on their bodies.

We also found two sculptures of crocodiles as vehicle associated with river Goddess Gaṅga (Chart II, **SN.115, 116**) dated in the 8th century AD at Ellora. Between the two faces, one looks like a human being, the other's face is as sharp as a crocodile found in the nature. The crocodile with human face turns its face to the left while the other looks straight ahead. The animal with human face is treated realistically and the artist tries to depict it in a naturalistic form. We see no ornament on the bodies of both these animals (Plate **XLV**).

An important sub-water animal the tortoise is also found in the data collected by us on the monuments of the Deccan. We find two sculptures of tortoises as vehicles of the river goddess, Yamuna (**Chart II, SN. 51**) one is dated in the 6th century AD at Aihole, and the other (Chart II, SN.117) belonging to the 8th century AD from Ellora. The one seen on a pillar of the Lad Khan temple at Aihole (Chart II, SN.51) has on its back the Goddess Yamuna. It is shown its head raised upwards. As usual, the shape of its body is round. The other example of a tortoise with upraised head is found in Cave 16 at Ellora (**Chart II, SN.117**). It seems a lotus stem is coming out from its mouth, which is supposed to suggest prosperity.

The depictions of birds like the swan, Garuda, peacock and owl also appear as vehicles of Gods and Goddesses in data collected by us for the monuments of the Deccan that we propose to discuss next. The swan is supposed to be symbol of love⁶⁰. In the *Ṛg Veda*, the swan was described as the vehicle of the *Aswins*. However, in the

Epics and the *Puranas* this bird came to be clearly understood as the *vahana* of Lord Brahma. From the *Mahabharata* it is learnt that Prajapati taking the form of a *harpsa* pervaded the world. This swan was considered as a capable creature of separating milk from water and would drink only the milk from a mixture of milk and water. This became indicative of its discriminative intelligence and a rare species of its own kind. This is as well known and an essential faculty for creation of anything. Hence, it seems Brahma, the creator of the Universe is said to be carried by a swan. In this study, the depiction of swans is represented eight times associated as the vehicle of Brahma (Chart II, SN.62), dated to the 6th century AD from Aihole, (Chart II, SN.70) dated to the 7th century AD from Elephanta, (Chart II, SNs.73) dated to the 8th AD from Pattadakal, (Chart II, SN. 95, 98) datable to the 8th century AD from Aihole (Chart II, SNs. 118, 138) dated to the 8th century AD and (Chart II, SN.176) the 10th century AD from Ellora. At Aihole a swan with out-stretched wings is seen standing on a lotus flower (Chart II, SN.62). The artist depicts it in a very naturalistic way and follows tradition that Brahma should be seated on the swan. The artist has made this very well.

We see a row of swans as vehicle below the seat of Brahma datable to the 7th century AD at Elephanta (Chart II, SN.70). The wings of these swans are half-out stretched and it looks as though they are about to fly. They all are looking forward in the same direction. A swan is seen on the right side of the lotus seat of **Brahmā** at the Hucchappayya Gudi temple at Aihole, now in Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay (Chart II, SN. 95). Here, the swan has raised its neck as a hooded *naga* while its breast is shown protruding out. The beak of the bird is shown slightly bent. The eyes of the bird are shown wide open. The bird looks like as if it is listening to something

that its master is saying. The bird has raised its neck and so the feathers of its tail are shaped like a fan. The artist shows this in a naturalistic way (**Plate XLVI**). A similar sculpture has been depicted at Ellora (**Chart II, SN.176**).

One of the most important birds depicted on the monuments of the Deccan region is the Garuda (eagle). Garuda has been considered the most sacred bird⁶¹ as it is the vehicle of Visnu⁶². This celestial bird, according to the *Mahabharata*, attained the position after his encounter with Visnu while returning from *Indraloka* carrying the nectar pot (*amṛta-ghata*). This episode has been discussed in considerable detail in the *Mahabharata* explaining the story of how Garuda became the carrier of Visnu⁶³. Besides the epic, the Puranic texts also mention Garuda as the mount of Visnu⁶⁴. Under this study; eight Garuda images (Chart II, **SN.10**) from Badami, dated to the 6th century AD, (Chart II, **SN.17**) from Aihole dated to the 6th century AD, (Chart II, SN.69) dated to the 7th century AD from Elephanta (Chart II, SN.103) dated to the 8th century AD from Pattadakal, (Chart II, SN.106) dated to the 8th century AD, (Chart II, **SN.177, 178**) belonging to the 10th century AD from Ellora and (Chart II, **SN.187**) from Alampur, respectively. We will discuss some of these examples in detail below.

We see a sculpture of Garuda with out-stretched wings and a calm and serene face carrying Visnu at the Virūpākṣa temple at Pattadakal (**Chart II, SN.103**). We see a mark on its forehead and it wears a top-knot on its head. He is sitting on the head of an elephant caught by a tortoise. It has bent its left leg at the ground level while his right leg is risen up to the knee. Another sculpture of a Garuda with a round face is seen at Elephanta lifting Visnu, on its back (**Chart II, SN.69**). We see locks of hair

falling on his shoulders. Its eyes and mouth are closed while its prominent nose is marked clearly. It wears an ornamental ear-plug. We see a cobra (symbol of time) around its chest. Like the Garuda at Elephanta, we see a similar Garuda at Ellora (Chart II, SN.178). The artist shows this bird landing on the ground while carrying Visnu on its back. He has stretched out its wings. It bends its right leg at ground level. The left leg is raised up to the knee level. The Garuda at Pattadakal is well made and shown to be full of life.

In addition to the Garuda, we can find the sculptures of the peacock on some monuments of the Deccan region. The Peacock is considered as the symbol of energy and strength.⁶⁵ For this study, we have collected eight specific examples from different parts of the Deccan region. They are (Chart II, SN.33) belonging to the 6th century AD now in the Dharwar Museum (Chart II, SN. 34) dated to the 6th century AD from Mukhalingam, Badami and (Chart II, SN.44, 49) Aihole dated to the 6th century AD, (Chart II, SN.146) dated to the 8th century AD from Alampur, (Chart II, **SNs.128**, 142) from Ellora dateable to the 8th century AD and (Chart II, SN.121) also belonging to the 8th century AD from Aihole. We see at the Archaeology Museum in Dharwar. (Chart II, SN.34) a peacock with a tail in clockwise form carrying Lord **Subrahmanya**. The crest of its hair is heaped high while its neck is slightly bent (Plate **XLVII**). We see at Aihole a beautiful peacock with a long tail and noble marks on it being ridden by Karttikeya and spiritedly attacking the fallen Tarakasura. The peacock from Aihole (Chart II, SN.121) is also shown with a long tail and the usual noble marks on its tail. The crest of hair is similarly heaped high. The bird is gazing at a *deva* that has fallen. It seems the left leg of the bird is resting on the right one of the fallen *deva*. The physical structure of the peacock indicates that

it is a he-peacock. We again **find** in Karnataka a peacock associated with Karttikeya. His right leg is hanging while the left one is bent at the ground level while he sits on the back of the peacock. The neck of the bird is raised up while the crest of hair on its head is heaped high. The tail of the bird is shown bending in a clockwise form. The peacock standing behind Karttikeya at Alampur (Chart II, SN.146) and the other standing beside Karttikeya at Ellora (Chart II, SN.128) are found. Rao is of the opinion that Karttikeya should be seated on a peacock and not standing beside the god. The sculptors in the above two cases have not followed this rule and make the peacocks in own tradition. In the other cases, however, the iconographic rules have been closely followed making some of the peacock's look very attractive and beautiful on the sculptures.

The last of the birds associated as a *vāhara* is the owl. It is well known as the symbol for the messenger of death⁶⁰. The owl is considered inauspicious⁶⁷. But this bird was given great importance in agriculture in many parts of the world⁶⁸ because it annihilated animals and birds such as squirrels, rat and mice that caused damage to crops. Owl as a vehicle associated with Goddess Laksmi is found at Ellora (Chart II, SN.119) belonging to 8th century AD. The bird is seen resting with half-stretched wings. This owl with its wide-open eyes is taking a look at Laksmi. The artist has highlighted the chest of this bird. Unlike the swan, which is the vehicle of goddess Saraswati, the owl was not so **prolifically** depicted on the monuments of the Deccan.

For this chapter one hundred and eighty nine specimens have been studied. Out of them ninety seven appear as vehicles of various deities, nine were considered divine, fourteen were described as demons, four of them were gods in **zoomorphic**

form while two were **theriomorphic** form and lastly, two were forms given to saints. The method employed for description was both comparative and interpretative through allegory. Undoubtedly the popularity of a variety of fauna as vehicles of various deities stands out as their most visible representation.⁶⁹

As the vehicle of Gods and Goddesses seventy-five specimens were of animals such as bull, lion, horse, lion, deer, elephant, goat, ram and rat. Fifteen of the examples were of aquatic animals like *makara*, crocodile and tortoise and twenty-five examples were of birds such as garuda, swan, peacock and owl. Of the animals the numbers of bulls discussed were greater than the horse, followed closely by the lion. The deer, elephant, buffalo and goat appeared in more or less the same number with a couple of examples of the rat and ram. The number of examples of the garuda, swan and peacock were the same while the owl occurred only once.

In conclusion, in the part of this chapter, we find two sorts of animals associated with Hindu belief. They were those graphically described as demons attacking Gods and Goddesses, and those that were friendly often associated as helping the elements of truth and goodness. In each case we first described the importance and symbolic meaning of the animals as given by scholars. It was important to discuss the respective nature of different animals and birds as it was due to this that their relationship with Hindu Gods and Goddesses could be described and highlighted. The sculptors tried to follow this pattern in their artistic depictions.

In the depiction of animals and birds as vehicles of various Gods and Goddesses it was emphasized that they were projected as serving particular divine

Masters and Mistresses **in performing their duties. Important** depictions of swan as **the** mount of Brahma, Garuda, the vehicle of Visnu and the bull as vehicle of **Śiva are well known.** We not only described these but also animals like lion, the vehicle of Mahisasuramardini, the rat as vehicle of Ganesa. elephant as vehicle of **Indra**, goat and deer (stag) as vehicle of Agni, buffalo as vehicle of Yama (god of death), *makara* as mount of Vayu. Some birds like the peacock as vehicle of Subrahmanya and owl the mount of **Lakṣmi** were also described and detailed.

Comparatively speaking, the quantity of the bull specimens that were associated with Siva were found in large numbers on the Deccan monuments than the other animals. By and large their depiction was naturalistic. It was noticed that the bull with big body and broad faces in the Maharashtra region looked healthier than those depicted in other parts of the Deccan region. Generally with regard to most animals the later phase shows that the artists while chiseling the sculptures began to adorn the animals with different kind of ornamentation. This emerged in different ways indicating that reveals artists belonging to different schools or different guidance used their own artistic skills to make the animals and birds look pleasing and attractive to the worshippers. Though the embellishments seem to be reflection of the **artist's mind** we notice an evolution of ornamentation from period-to-period and region-to-region that definitely indicates the existence of different schools specific to particular localities. Culturally, a large number of animals and birds associated with particular deities showed the prominence of **that** particular region. **Apart** from variation in style we also observe that emotions were well depicted. The two types of **lion** that associated with the Goddess Mahisasuramardini are a good example. The animal seated beside the deity usually looked tame while the one in action on the

battlefield was sculptured in a ferocious manner. The artist gave special emphasis on the appearance of the animal in each case especially in **the latter case as he was** narrating the most famous story of the destruction of evil. Though **in** reality ferocious the lion was shown close proximity to human beings through the work of artists to indicate that even such a ferocious animal could help humankind.

Thus, in this chapter we tried to understand the depiction of Gods, Goddesses and saints in their animal and bird incarnations and animals and birds, while not denying that Gods and Goddesses also fought with them. In this regard, we noted that animals and birds were in zoomorphic form (i.e., animals and birds in the original form) and theriomorphic form (i.e., animals assuming half-human and half-animal or bird form). This emphasizes on the fact that a clear-cut distinction between the animal and human forms was sometimes not maintained underlying an important conceptual basis of world-view. Our data provided ample examples where the sculptor depicted these animals and birds in the sequence of the stories related in the *Itihasa-Purana* traditions where human and animal association was close. Apart from this, we have discussed the symbolic meanings of each of these animals in their different incarnations that further underscore this close linkage between the two. This study thus helped us to understand the importance of nature in Hindu religious art and how the sculptor visualized these animals and birds in their real form thus lending it the color of depicting nature as part of the interplay of the larger cosmic, divine and human life.

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CHART II

FAUNA AS DEPICTED IN HINDU SCULPTURAL ART

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
1	1st BC	Bhaja	MR	Horse	Vehicle of Sūrya	F W data	AIIS. 686 -5
2	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	<i>Makora</i>	Vehicle of Ganga	Sivaramamurti, <i>EAAI</i>	Fig. 14
3	4th AD	Kontomotu	AP	Man-lion	Incarnation of Visnu	Narasimhachari, <i>HCNAP</i>	PL. 1
4	5th AD	Vijayawada	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Sivaramamurti, <i>ECS</i>	PL. 11, Fig. a
5	5th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	Fig. 147
6	5th AD	Badami	KN	Goat	Vehicle of Agni	F W data	AIIS. 395. 74
7	6th AD	Bad ami	KN	Elephant	Vehicle of Indra	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XVI, Fig. 93
8	6th AD	Badami	KN	Tortoise	Incarnation of Visnu (Churning of Ocean)	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLII, Fig. 6
9	6th AD	Badami	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XI, Fig. 64
10	6th AD	Badami	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLII, Fig. 2, 3, 4
11	6th AD	Badami	KN	Horse	Vehicle of <i>Ucharavas</i>	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. VIII, Fig. 3
12	6th AD	Badami	KN	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Rahu	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLII Fig. 5
13	6th AD	Badami	KN	<i>Śeṣasāyī</i>	Creation of Universe	F W data	AIIS. A 21 -29
14	6th AD	Badami	KN	Boar-man	Incarnation of Visnu	Banerjee, <i>MASI</i>	PL. 3
15	6th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Ass	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, <i>LKIA</i>	PL. 13, Fig. 4
16	6th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Crane	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, <i>LKIA</i>	PL. 14, Fig. 2

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
17	6th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Viṣṇu	Gupte, AAA	PL. 61
18	6th AD	Hyderabad Museum	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Sivaramamurti EAAI	Fig. 46
19	6th AD	Badami	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	Ph. 9
20	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Gupte, AAA	PL. 76
21	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Buffalo	Mahisāsura's Story	Gupte, AAA	PL. 123
22	6th AD	Badami	KN	Snake	Water god (<i>vāśuki</i>)	F W data	Phase 2. 11
23	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, AAA	PL. 213
24	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, AAA	PL. 75
25	6th AD	Badami	KN	Elephant	Krishna's Story	FW data	Ph. 12
26	6th AD	Badami	KN	Donkey	Demon	F W data	Ph. 13
27	6th AD	Badami	KN	Elephant	Krishna's Story	F W data	Ph. 15
28	6th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Elephant	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, LKIA	PL. 15, Fig. 2
29	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, AAA	PL. 88
30	6th AD	Badami	KN	Cow	Krishna's Story	F W data	Ph. 16
31	6th AD	Bokardan	KN	<i>Śeṣasāyī</i>	Creation of Universe	Parimoo, SS	Fig. 56
32	6th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Auspiciousness	Meister, SITA	PLs. 59
33	6th AD	Dharwad	KN	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	F W data	Ph. 55
34	6th AD	Badami	KN	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	Gupte, IHBJ	PL. XV, Fig. 83
35	6th AD	Badami	KN	Horse	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, LKIA	PL. 13, Fig. 3
36	6th AD	Badami	KN	Bull	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, LKIA	PL. 13, Fig. 1
37	6th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Horse	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, LKIA	PL. 15, Fig. 2

SNO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
38	6th AD	Badami	KN	Snake	Part of Śiva's body	Sivaramamurti, <i>IA</i>	PL. 130
39	6th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull	Krishna's Story	Banerjee, <i>LKIA</i>	PL. 14, 15
40	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Boar-man	Incarnation of Visnu	Gupte , <i>AAA</i>	PL. 97
41	6th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Sesasyi</i>	Creation of Universe	Parimoo, <i>SS</i>	Fig. 189
42	6th AD	Badami	KN	Buffalo	Mahisaura's Story	Mishra, <i>M</i>	PLs. 35, 36
43	6th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Elephant	King, Indradyumna	F W data	AIIS. 464. 84
44	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	<i>Marg</i> , XXXV, No.1	PL. 95
45	6th AD	Badami	KN	Cow	Krishna's Story	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. VII, Fig. 2
46	6th AD	Badami	KN	Calf	Krishna's Story	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. VIII, Fig. 7c
47	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	PL. 97
48	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	PL. 117
49	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XV, F. 85
50	6th AD	Badami	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	AIIS. 274-53
51	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Tortoise	Vehicle of Yamuna	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	PL. 68
52	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Monkey	Symbol of Peace	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	PL. 73
53	6th AD	Badami	KN	Cow & Calf	Krishna's Story	Sivaramamurti <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 27
54	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Snake	Symbol of Fertility	F W data	Ph. 21
55	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 135
56	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	AIIS. 396. 20

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
57	6th AD	Bijapur	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	F W data	AIIS. 397. 5
58	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Shanti, <i>MIA</i>	PL. 52
59	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisāsūramardini	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLIII, 4
60	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Snake	Part of Siva's body	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLIII, Fig. 5
61	6th AD	Badami	KN	Cow-mother	Krishna's Story	FW data	Ph. 52
62	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Khan, <i>BP</i>	PL. IV
63	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, AAA	PL. 59
64	6th AD	Badami	KN	Fish	Incarnation of Visnu	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 178
65	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 146
66	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 144
67	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 145
68	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Elephant	Vehicle of Indra	Gupte, AAA	PL. 138
69	7th AD	Elephanta	MR	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	Berkson, <i>E</i>	PL. 48
70	7th AD	Elephanta	MR	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Bekson, <i>E</i>	PL. 37
71	7th AD	Elephanta	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Sivaramamurti <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 23
72	7th AD	Badami	KN	Cow	Krishna's Story	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. VIII, Fig. 7b
73	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Anngeri, <i>GPT</i>	PL. 67
74	7th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>śeṣasāyī</i>	Creation of Universe	Parimoo, <i>SS</i>	Fig. 34
75	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	Ph. 31

SNO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
76	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	Ph. 32
77	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	Ph. 33
78	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 278
79	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Boar	Incarnation of Visnu	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL.
80	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 195
81	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 198
82	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Horse	Vehicle of Sūrya	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 202
83	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Boar-man	Incarnation of Visnu	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 1. 197
84	7th AD	Mysore	KN	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini	Mishra, <i>Mahisasuramardini</i>	PL. 63
85	7th AD	Mysore	KN	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Mishra, <i>Mahisasuramardini</i>	PL. 53, 54
86	7th AD	Allure	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 433
87	7th AD	Elephanta	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Berkson, <i>Elephanta</i>	PLS. 32 -33
88	7th AD	Elephanta	MR	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Varuna	Berkson, <i>Elephanta</i>	PL. 35
89	7th AD	Bikkavolu	AP	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle Varuna	Sivaramamurti, <i>AI</i>	Fig. 125
90	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Fish	Incarnation of Visnu	Govinda, <i>IS</i>	Fig. 210
91	7th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Seṣasāyī</i>	Creation of Universe	Parimoo, <i>SS</i>	Fig. 36
92	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	<i>Jatāyū</i>	Embodiment of Strength	F W data	Ph. 101
93	8th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Jatāyū</i>	Embodiment of Strength	Sivaramamurti <i>AB/IS</i>	Fig. 74
94	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Snake	Part of Siva's body	Khan, <i>SSAM</i>	PL. 19

SNO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
95	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Kramrisch, <i>AI</i>	PL. 63
96	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Horse	Vehicle of Sūrya	Sauna, <i>TT</i>	PL. 101
97	8th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Auspiciousness	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	Pl. 59
98	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Gupte, AAA	PL. 61
99	8th AD	Pattadakal	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Solidarity	F W data	Ph. 34
100	8th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Auspiciousness	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 199
101	8th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Auspiciousness	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 152
102	8th AD	Olumpatta	AP	Elephant-man	Symbol of Luck	Sarma, <i>TT</i>	PL. 96
103	8th AD	Pattadakal	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	F W data	AILS. 464. 84
104	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Sarma, <i>TT</i>	A11S. 169-45
105	8th AD	Alampur	AP	<i>Śeṣasāyī</i>	Creation of Universe	Sarma, <i>TT</i>	PL. 62
106	8th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 152, 153
107	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Hanuman	<i>Ramayana</i> Story	Michael, <i>HT</i>	Fig. 16
108	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Buffalo	Mahisaasura's Story	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 148
109	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Mishra, <i>Mahisasuramardini</i>	PLs .28, 48
110	8th AD	Auranga - bad	MR	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLIII
111	8th AD	Badami	KN	Horse	Vehicle of Niruti	F W data	Ph. 36
112	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisāsūramardini	Khan, <i>SSAM</i>	PL. 56

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
113	8th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Gaṅga	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XXI, Fig. 120
114	8th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Gaṅga	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XXI, Fig. 121
115	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Crocodile	Vehicle of Yamuna	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXV, Fig. 4
116	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Crocodile	Vehicle of Yamuna	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXV, Fig. 5
117	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Tortoise	Vehicle of Yamuna	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XXI, Fig. 123
118	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Rao, <i>EHI</i>	PL. CX
119	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Owl	Vehicle of Lakṣmi	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXII, Fig. 2
120	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisāsūramardini	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XVIII, Fig. 104
121	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Peacock	Vehicle of Kārṭtikeya	Rao, <i>EHI</i>	PL. CXXVIIa
122	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Khan, <i>SSAM</i>	Fig. 10, 28
123	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Sivaramamurti, <i>EAAI</i>	Fig. 49
124	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	PL. 65
125	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Horse	Vehicle of Sūrya	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 50
126	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	PL. 117
127	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XIII, Fig. 73
128	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XIV, Fig. 82
129	8th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Gaṅga	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XXI, Fig. 122
130	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XXIII, Fig. 134
131	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Śiva	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXVII, Fig. 2

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
132	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXVII, Fig. 3
133	8th AD	Dharwad	KN	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Gaṇḡa	F W data	Ph. 37
134	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini	Mishra, <i>Maḥisasuramardini</i>	PL 17
135	8th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Varuna	F W data	Ph. 38
136	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Lion	Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini	Gopinatha Rao, <i>EHI</i>	PLCIV
137	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Horse	Vehicle of Sūrya	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	PL XXXIII, Fig. 2
138	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. 1, Fig. 3
139	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Horse	Vehicle of Surya	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	Fig. 150
140	8th AD	Mysore	KN	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Mishra, <i>Mahisasuramardini</i>	PL. 46
141	8th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Śeṣasāyī</i>	Creation of Universe	Parimoo, <i>SS</i>	Fig. 35
142	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	F W data	AIIS. 558-18
143	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Goat	Vehicle of Agni	Khan, <i>SSAM</i>	PL. 44, b
144	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Boar-man	Incarnation of Visnu	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	Fig. 126
145	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Buffalo	Vehicle of Yama	F W data	AAB .167-45
146	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Peacock	Vehicle of Karttikeya	F W data	AIIS. 578-18
147	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Sivaramamurti <i>EAAI</i>	Fig. 47
148	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Sivaramamurti <i>EAAI</i>	Fig. 48
149	8th AD	Badami	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	Ph. 39

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
150	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 200
151	8th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Swan	Symbol of Prince	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 65
152	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Ram	Vehicle of Agni	Rajan, <i>EM</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 1
153	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Ram	Vehicle of Agni	Rajan, <i>EM</i>	PL. XXXI, Fig. 1
154	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Deer	Vehicle of Agni	Gupte, <i>IHBJ</i>	PL. XVI, Fig. 94
155	9th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Gupte, <i>AAA</i>	Fig. 65
156	9th AD	Bikkavolu	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	AAB. 193-16
157	9th AD	Jayanti	AP	Snake	Krishna's Story	F W data	AIIS .275 -49
159	9th AD	Jayanti	AP	Rat	Vehicle of Ganesa	F W data	AIIS. 557. 37
160	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Deer	Vehicle of Vayu	Rajan, <i>EM</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 2
161	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Snake	Part of Body of Siva	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXIX, Fig. 2
162	9th AD	Yelesvaram	AP	Lion-man	Incarnation of Visnu	Sivaramamurti, <i>CS</i>	PL. Ia
163	9th AD	Hampi	KN	Śeṣasāyī	Creation of Universe	Parimoo, <i>SS</i>	Fig. 59
164	10th AD	Ellora	MR	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 3c
165	10th AD	Dharwad Museum	KN	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	F W data	PH. 70
166	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	AAB. 169-19
167	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Fish	Kiritaguniya theme	F W data	AAB. 169-30
168	10th AD	Mandya district	KN	Makara	Vehicle of Yamuna	F W data	AIIS, A. 11 -29
169	10th AD	Hemavati	AP	Elephant	Krishna's Story	F W data	AIIS. 624
170	10th AD	Allur	AP	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	Meister, <i>SITA</i>	PL. 435
171	10th AD	Godavari	AP	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Burgess, <i>RABA</i>	PL. XX, Fig. 7

SNO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
172	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	Khan, <i>SSAM</i>	PL. 45
173	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Buffalo	Mahisasura's Story	F W data	PL. AAB, 167 -45
174	10th AD	Gadambahalli	KN	Goat	Vehicle of Agni	F W data	A. 29 d
175	10th AD	Gadambahalli	KN	Buffalo	Vehicle of Yama	F W data	AIIS. 11 -79
176	10th AD	Ellora	MR	Swan	Vehicle of Brahma	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 3a
177	10th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. 3c
178	10th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	Gupte, <i>IHBI</i>	PL. 11, Fig. 7
179	10th AD	Sravana	KN	<i>Garuda</i>	Auspiciousness	F W data	AIIS. 138-11
180	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Rat	Vehicle of Ganesa	Sarma, <i>TT</i>	PL. 96
181	10th AD	Aihole	KN	Bull	Vehicle of Siva	F W data	ACC. 59. 331
182	10th AD	Gadambahalli	KN	Elephant	Vehicle of Indra	F W data	A. 29, b
183	10th AD	Gadambahalli	KN	Horse	Vehicle of Sūrya	F W data	A. 29, F
184	10th AD	Gadambahalli	KN	Deer	Vehicle of Vāyu	F W data	A. 29, f
185	10th AD	Ellora	MR	Boar-man	Incarnation of Visnu	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	Fig. 59
186	10th AD	Aihole	KN	<i>Makara</i>	Vehicle of Gaṇḍa	F W data	Ph. 44
187	10th AD	Alampur	AP	<i>Garuda</i>	Vehicle of Visnu	Sarma, <i>TT</i>	PL. 123, a
188	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Boar	Ramayana Story	F W data	AIIS. 169 -32
189	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Elephant	Symbol of king, Indradyumna	Sarma, <i>I /</i>	Fig. 123, c

CHAPTER V

NATURE IN DECORATION AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN SCULPTURAL ART

The monuments of early Deccan are embellished beautifully with the things from nature in terms of flora like trees full of flowers and foliage, fruits, lotuses, creepers, flowers, honeysuckles and fauna like horses carrying royal personages and engaged in war, elephants both in war scenes and as helpers in public activities, elephants in hunting, camels in travel, oxen and bulls in everyday life, buffaloes, bulls, cocks in the role of amusements and birds such as doves carrying fruits and parrot breaking fruits. In this chapter, we first discuss the importance of decoration, followed by the depiction of Nature in decoration as part of the symbolism of life and finally, the depiction of animals and birds in decoration on the religious monuments. The hypothesis of this chapter is that the artists commonly used the things found in nature as decorative motifs and exchanged their ideas through art motifs from both within localities and abroad. The number of flora and fauna in each theme varied from region to region and over time. In this regard there was no uniform pattern or iconographic rules that were followed but rather, artistic convention was followed and the relevance of the subject matter for the viewer of these depictions.

I

Throughout the centuries the building of shrines and temples in India have been decorated for these were centres of worship, learning and the arts. Shrines and the temples in the Deccan region were also ornamented in the form of decorative motifs during all periods of their construction. Here, we shall first discuss the

meaning of decorative art and decoration. Decorative art is a generic term, used to designate that branch of the **fine** arts, which is exclusively devoted to ornamental enrichments of every kind¹. According to the "Oxford Dictionary", fine arts cover poetry, music and visual arts, especially, painting, sculpture, and architecture². According to the "English Dictionary" painting and sculpture in which objects are produced that are beautiful rather than useful, can be referred to as fine art or as fine arts. According to Ganguly⁴ decorative arts can be divided into *tandula-kusumavikara* and *puspastarana*. The former comprises of three different sub-branches. (a) *tandulavikara*- forming properly the images of elephants, horses, camels and lotus with the display of rice grains. According to other scholars, this fine art meant forming beautiful *naivedyas* with edible articles upon different plates, which were offered to the deities. (b) *Kusumavikara* referred to making garlands of flowers of different colour in order to decorate the figures of deities. *Kusumavikara* could also be made of different types of bunches of flowers put in water in some pots to suit the decorating or displaying of flowers. The proper arrangement of flowers in different pots and places for worshipping the deity was thus developed into a decorative art. Decorating a temple with flowers or the gate of a house or a *mandapa* on some festive occasion and proper placement of flowers in a flower vase is most common even today. (c) By *puspastarana* we can understand this to be flowerbeds. In ancient days, customs were prevalent to make a sort of "flower beds" in one's own bed-room or inside the temple of a deity for purpose of decorating and beautifying the place. By decoration we can thus understand the ornamental parts on an edifice comprising the columns, pilasters, friezes, bas-relief, cornices festoons, niches, statues and which form the decorations of the **facade** of a place or temple. It also meant the gilding, arabesques, paintings, panelling, carving, and the draperies, which compose the

decoration of an interior.⁵ According to Collins, decorations are features that are added to something in order to make it look more attractive.⁶

Ever since human beginnings the home was the centre of all activities. A way of life and all sorts of thoughts sprang from this protective shelter. We find that people in prehistoric time began to draw and paint things such as animals and birds found in their natural environment inside and outside the walls of their dwellings to satisfy their inner creative urges. In later periods shrines and temples became the main centres for producing critical intellectual and spiritual wealth. Thus, the early Buddhist *caitya* hall (cathedral) and the *vihāra* (monastery) and subsequently, the Hindu and Jaina temples became sites for displaying creativity that was often related to basic elements of life around people or symbols related to each of these respective faiths. Through the centuries, these religious buildings played an important role in promoting the social, religious and cultural life of the people. In a true sense they had become centres of religious and cultural education. This has led Surya Kumari to opine that the Hindu temple, for instance, was a practical centre for imparting audio-visual education⁷. Thus, the particular architecture of the ages seems to have lent the form, the place and the basic material for the artistic creations of man to find fulfilment. His home, his place of worship, his implements, the receptacles for his food and drink and ritualistic offerings, his wearing apparel and all other commodities of utility and dedication were thus fashioned with deep thought according to his way of life, and inspired by the surroundings of Nature, which he decorated with instinctive refinement.

Nature played a vital role in influencing artistic endeavour since earliest times. Trees and flowers, birds and bees, animals and **fish**, the streams and rivers, snows and mountains, men and women, all figure as motifs to show the craftsmen's skill. The various art motifs in India indicate that not only religion and the way of life but Nature also played a vital role in their creations. For instance, inspiration was taken from the parable stories of the *Jatakas* that were used to explain the various incarnations of the Buddha and these abound in descriptions of Nature. Similarly, the fine descriptive Nature hymns of the *R̥g Veda*, the oldest sacred book of the Hindus reflect the close association of human beings to nature. In addition, going back to civilisation of the Indus valley, one finds that simple patterns like trees, animals from the Nature were utilised in their ornamentation. According to Devangana Desai, in the medieval Hindu temple⁸ the teaching of sages explaining the worldly knowledge to devotees including sexual education was decorated. Stella Kramrisch views sculptures of animals and birds that had decorated the perishable architecture of Mohenjodaro return to the structures of later periods as well. It is important to note that through the decorations on architecture it is possible to discriminate the doctrine of any religion, personal experience, and way of life of the people for any period. Before the invention of studio education, the artist had to learn things not only relating to religion but from the all abounding Nature. Further items of relaxation and sport or amusement, like gambling, cock-fighting, archery found a part of decoration on the architectural facades.

II

All through the ages, all over India, **we find vivid** examples of the artists' strong urge to express his creative and aesthetic instincts in visual form. With his aesthetic instincts, he decorated architectural monuments with examples from not only religious symbol and aspects of everyday way of life but also from nature. We find decorative elements on the monuments of the Deccan region as found in other parts of India. In this chapter, we will discuss decorative ornamentation emphasizing on examples from nature like tree, flower, creeper, scroll, and lotus and leaves either singly or, in accompaniment with the water-pot, as garland carried by *Yakṣas*, dwarfs, the *vyālas* and ogres. Next, we will discuss trees, animals and birds associated with roundel motifs that were explicitly used as decoration.

The very old cult of trees and tree-worship was closely affiliated with Nature and this has lent materials for subject matter in art motifs on monuments of the Deccan region for all the periods from the 2nd century BC to the 10th century AD. The artists seem to have had a special feeling for trees and have always introduced them in their decorative motifs, giving them a rare and noble beauty. The tree appears to have stood since ages past as the symbol of strength, security and protection, lending the idea of giving shade, succour and even food for man. This significance and value of the tree made the artists use them liberally as embellishment on the monuments of the Deccan. In this context, we will first describe some specific trees as symbols of the Buddha because of his association with them. These are found on the different sculptures of the early Buddhist period at some sites in the present-day states of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra from about the 2nd century BC to the 6th century AD.

In Andhra Pradesh, we find Bodhi tree decorated as symbol of Buddha in a different form thus highlighting regional variation.

There are several trees from the events of the life of the Buddha, associated with Nature. The most common was the Pipal (Bodhi) tree associated with the Buddha since he got Enlightenment under it, the Jambu tree under which he did much of his meditation, and the Sal under which his birth and death took place in a grove of these sacred trees, and the Asoka tree under which he was actually born into the world. A sample of Asoka trees under which Mayadevi gave birth to the child, who later became the Buddha that are depicted at Amaravati belong to the 2nd century AD (Chart III, SN.26) and at Nagarjunakonda dated to the 2nd century AD (Chart III, SN.27). The drum slab at Amaravati, portraying the Asoka tree branches are shaped like a wheel, under which is shown Mayadevi standing with cross legs and grasping the branch of a tree above with her left hand. The bas-relief at Nagarjunakonda shows Mayadevi standing under an Asoka tree, grasping the branch of the tree with her right hand (Plate XLVIII). Relatively, the tree at Amaravati is shorter than that at Nagarjunakonda. Though at Amaravati on account of the bunches of flowers it can easily be recognizable as an Asoka tree while, at Nagarjunakonda, due to lack of flowers it is difficult to identify the tree. Here, it could either be an Asoka or Sal tree. It has been pointed out that it was a great miracle when the Sakyas while at the ploughing festival left the baby prince Siddhartha under the Jambu tree and its shadow remained stationary all through the day so as to protect the child. In fact, Siddhartha chose this tree to meditate under when the time came for him to renounce the world. A vivid example of the Jambu tree, under which Siddhartha is seen meditating, dated to the 3rd century AD, comes from Gummadidurru (Chart III, SN.

36). Here, the sculptor shows the head of the future Buddha surmounted by six branches with pointed leaves of the tree. As the prince is seated in an erect posture, the trunk is invisible. The trees as symbols of the spirit can be seen at Amaravati and it is suggested that the Buddha was a tree spirit. In this form, he is said to have helped the people who came to its stem desiring to fulfil their needs. In this context, two trees are shown as decorative motifs at Amaravati. The first one belongs to the 2nd century BC and is depicted in full bloom. The flowers seem to shine like the morning sun as they and the leaves are seen fully open (Chart **III**, SN.2).

There are innumerable trees symbolizing the Buddha depicted on the railings, on separate slabs, on the stele, on *caitya* pillars and on friezes at Amaravati dated from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD. They do not seem to have formed an integral part of the architecture of the buildings but they occur as decorative elements of the constructions. In one example, a pipal tree bedecked on a rail at Amaravati dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart III, SN.1**) is the sole salient feature. This tree with a broad trunk, spreading out its branches are thickly covered with broad, flat, tapering leaves that create a majestic and refreshing canopy of green above its trunk. As the tree is covered thickly with leaves, it is difficult to identify whether it is one or two trees. Another Bodhi tree is carved with a great sense of realism at Amaravati dateable to the 2nd century BC (Chart III, SN. 4). The branches of this tree are spread out, making a fan like shape. The trunk of this tree is raised upward with branches on which leaves are shaped like hearts. This tree is relatively somewhat similar to the one on the Prasenjit pillar at Bharhut dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart III, SN. 6**). The Bodhi tree on the abacus of a pillar at Kanheri dateable to 2nd century AD (**Chart III, SN. 22**) makes a sharp contrast with those found at

Amaravati, Sanchi and Bharhut. The tree is with wheel shaped leaves at Kanheri and is shorter (Plate XLIX) than the trees at Amaravati. Here, one can say from the depiction of leaves that the artist was working in a region where the weather was different from that at Amaravati and other places. There is a rarity of trees symbolizing the Buddha in decorative motifs at Nagarjunakonda. There are two reasons for the non-availability of the symbolic tree at this site. One is that work was dependent on local sculptors working in local traditions or under the master of guilds and plausibly because now there was a change in the doctrine of Buddhism from Theravada (Hinayana) to Mahayana, the symbol such as the tree were replaced with images of Lord Buddha.

The Pipal is believed to be generally associated with the home of spirit. It was thus appropriately connected with the death of the Buddha his (*Mahāparinirvāṇa*). It is rarely depicted as a decorative motif and the Pipal tree to mark the episode of the death of the Buddha appears only once. We can see it in the scene of *parinirvāṇa* portrayed on the left wall of cave XXV at Ajanta dated to the 6th century AD (Chart III, SN. 47). Here, we observe a Pipal tree full of flowers at the head and another at the foot of the Buddha. Flowers tilting toward the master are worthy of praise because of the masterly work of the artist who could show the scene realistically (Plate L). The Banyan is also believed to be the home of spirits. It is frequently depicted on the monuments of the Andhra region and has been described as a symbol of eternity¹⁰. It is in the Buddhist tradition that pouring water on to a Banyan tree is considered auspicious. The festival of pouring water on the Banyan tree is celebrated with great zeal in the month of Kason in Myanmar. At this time both virgins expecting prosperity, charm and couples hoping for offspring are seen pouring water on the

trunk of the tree. Burgess" missed this point while explaining these panels about telling us that when a tree is seen with people pouring water, especially by two couples as at **Amaravati** dated to the 2nd century AD (Chart III, SN.25), it indicates the worship of the tree. This tree with a long trunk and circular shape like a sun is depicted here as a decorative element on the slab of the *stupa* (Plate LI).

There are some trees of special significance in Hinduism. They are the palm and the Arjuna trees. A palm tree is depicted as part of a scene showing the killing of Sugriva by Rama depicted on a panel at Alampur dateable to the 10th century AD. This is a beautiful depiction (Chart III, SN. 92) and the palm here is probably the symbol of victory . The palm tree can easily be recognized on seeing its plain cylindrical trunk, topped by clusters of fan-shaped leaves and bunches of round fruits. Here, the sculptor also shows the tree with a plain cylindrical trunk but topped by long rectangular leaves that are shown pointed at the edges, like mango leaves (**Plate LII**). The difference in the shape of the leaves was dependent on the particular style adopted by the sculptor who was responsible for the work. The Arjuna tree is said to be the symbol of two divine persons. It usually has a long rectangular trunk and a scatter of leaves and this has been depicted on a frieze in the veranda of Badami Cave III dated to the 6th century AD. This is not the part of the temple but was added as a decorative element of the Cave (Chart III, SN. 43). This depiction of the tree has not been seen in any other region and it is difficult to explain.

There are some other trees depicted, which do not relate to any religious symbol. They are the trees of fruits like **Sītā-phal**, coconut, banana, mango and the famous **Kalpavṛkṣa**. On the panel from a *stupa* dated to the 3rd century AD at

Nagarjunakonda (Chart III, SN. 41) we find a tree depicted with a long trunk and its branches shaped as a hand spread out. On the tree are seen bunches of fruits. Under the tree is seen a fruit lying, that resembles a Sita-phal or custard apple that has probably fallen from the same tree. On seeing the shape and form of the fruit we can identify it as a Sita-phal tree. A panel dated to the 3rd century AD at Nagarjunakonda (Chart III, SN. 42) depicts a Sita-phal tree on the way when the Buddha and Nanda paid a visit to heaven. The tree is shown with a thin trunk, full of leaves and fruits. On the tree are seen two monkeys plucking the fruits (**Plate LIII**). A coconut tree on the facade of a monastery at Jaggayyapeta belongs to the 2nd century AD and has simply been used as a decorative motif in this case (Chart III, SN. 12). This tree is popularly recognizable with its fruits shaped round and with its long narrow leaves. It seems that the sculptors were familiar with coconut trees that commonly grow in tropical regions.

A banana tree carved on the southern face of a pillar at the extreme right of the Lad Khan temple (Chart III, SN. 49) dated to the 6th century AD at Aihole is salient as a decorative motif depicted almost exactly as found in Nature. It is well known that every part of the banana tree is used. The raw banana is cooked and eaten. The ripe fruit is luscious and juicy. The stem too is cut and cooked, as is the flower. The fibre of the tree is found to be useful as string¹³. The leaves are used as plates and are even folded into cups. Serving food on a banana leaf is quite an art. The banana leaves symbolize coolness, composure and above all, fresh natural piety and beauty¹⁴. In a world where the environment is growing increasingly important and wastage a dire threat, the banana stands as a symbol of complete utility. In addition, the banana plant is believed to fertilize itself giving rise to many baby plants around its base. This has

made the plant a symbol of fertility. During an auspicious or special occasion, a banana plant complete with fruit and flower is tied to the entrance. This plant is a symbol of completeness- symbolic of a complete and prosperous family. From a nutritional perspective, the banana is rich in fibre and potassium. With an abundance of vitamins and minerals, the banana is healthy part of any diet. The stem of the banana is also considered a symbol of physical beauty¹⁵. On a higher plane, they represent the combination of “*tava*” (real knowledge) and *bhakti* (devotion). It is well known that the banana plant seldom bears fruits a second time. The trunk of the banana plant is made of multiple layers. If one starts removing the layers one by one, one reaches where one finds nothing further to remove. This suggests that according to scholars that “*tavajñana*” (real knowledge) leads us to a state fertility¹⁶. Perhaps this meaning was being translated into artistic expression. The banana tree depicted at the Lad Khan temple dated to the 6th century AD (Chart III, SN.49) is tall, with firm leaves, under which are seen a couple. Another banana tree is depicted at the Mukhalingam temple dated to the 8th century AD at Srikakulam (Chart III, SN.68). This tree is seen with a single leaf spread like a fan and with a bunch of bananas hanging from it. The trunk of the tree is wrapped by the left hand of a Mithuni seen standing beside a Mithuna.

The artists working in the Deccan also represented real mango trees with fruits as found in nature and transformed them into sculptures depicted on the monuments. One of the mango trees depicted on the bracket of Badami Cave III belongs to the 6th century AD (Chart III, SN. 44), and another on the bracket of an Aurangabad cave dated to the 6th century AD (Chart III, SN. 48). Yet another mango tree is observed with clusters of fruits on a pillar of the Sangamesvara temple at Pattadakal dateable to

tree dated to the 7th century AD at Aurangabad are similar in size and shape to those found at Ellora but bigger than those found both at Badami and Pattadakal. Relatively speaking, the mango tree with its fruits as depicted at Aurangabad and Ellora and those at Badami and Pattadakal partly explain local varieties of mangoes available in these localities which the sculptors were familiar with and partly also reflect the stylistic training they revived in their respective traditions. A Kalpavrksha tree with fruits rectangular in shape with pointed leaves at the edges carved on a slab of one of the temples dated to the 8th century AD (**Chart III**, SN. 76) at Aihole, now in the Aihole Museum, is full of grandeur (**Plate LV**) and probably depicts a stylistic trend moving away from the natural form. A similar kind of tree dated to the 10th century AD is found at Ellora (**Chart III**, SN. 91). Achanta Lakshmipathi has named it as the Kalpavrksha with it all characteristics and this seems to be a probability. These sculptures show that there was exchange of art motif from region to region in different periods. It is interesting to note that the depiction of fruit independent of the tree is very rare in the art of the Deccan region. A sole example is from a panel at Amaravati that belongs to the 2nd century AD (**Chart III**, SN. 34) illustrating a pear being held by a man. It is seen tapering towards the stalk and thus indicates that it looks, in shape and form, very much as found in Nature.

The roundel has always been a popular decorative device. The use of roundel to enhance and bring into relief texture, form and structure became a significant aspect in early Deccan art. A decorative roundel on a pillar at Amaravati dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart III**, SN. 33) is ornamented with a flowering Asoka tree that has a long trunk with an equally long stem and branches shaped like an umbrella. Though the roundel is a common motif they are invariably decorated with different

flowers, sometimes issuing from the mouth of marine animals. A roundel with a flowering creeper emerging from the mouths of marine animals seated back to back inside the roundel has been carved on the outer rail pillar at Amaravati dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart III**, SN. --). It is an outstanding piece of decoration. Like at Amaravati, an elephant appear inside the roundel at Nagarjunakonda (**Chart III**, SN. 39). A small tree full of flowers is found represented inside a decorative roundel at Ajanta dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart III**, SN. 52). The peacock with foliated tail and crest is found within a roundel decorated on a pilaster at Ajanta dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart III**, SN.53) and which is not commonly found also elsewhere.

A *naga* inside a roundel decorated on the ceiling of a Hindu temple was not an uncommon decorative motif. The *naga* within a roundel dated to the 7th century AD (**Chart III**, SN.51) on the ceiling of Jambulingcsvara temple at Badami, holds two lotuses in a half-opened form, one in each hand (**Plate LVI**) while the *naga* inside the roundel depicted on the ceiling slab of one of the temples belongs to the 8th century AD at Alampur (**Chart III**, SN.67) holds a garland horizontally on the palms of the both hands, The sculptor shows the *naga* with three coils at Badami while he shows the *naga* with only one coil at Alampur. A seven-hooded canopy surmounts the head of each *naga*. An amorous lady and monkey are found depicted within the decorative medallion on the pillar at the Lad Khan temple dated to the 7th century AD (**Chart III**, SN.65) which is probably only one of its kind. Here, the lady is seen with her bent body in a *tribhāṅga* mode. Her amorous posture has attracted the attention of a female dwarf who looks up in surprise. Unfortunately, the young lady has no one to make love to except a monkey that is seen on her left²⁰. The decorative slab on the ceiling of the *mukhāmaṇḍapa* of the Durga temple dateable to the 7th century AD at Aihole

(Chart III, SN. 66) is worthy of note. On a huge stone slab are carved two circles, one inside the other. The inner circle shows fishes forming the spokes of the central wheel. In between, the two circles are carved floral designs. Though the decoration of the tree inside medallions is commonly found in early Buddhist monuments, it disappeared during the later period. This example indicates that the representation of particular animals in this form, however, continued. The sculptors selected animals like the monkey, fish *etc.*, for decoration in different ways without purpose. They probably found others difficult to carve on the ceiling and inside a limited space. The simple form of snake, fish *etc.*, enabled them to overcome very prudently and successfully these difficulties.

Next, we shall draw our attention towards the lotus as a decorative symbol. The lotus is India's most popular (lower and is found in every part of the country as a very common motif. It is the symbol of the Divine Seat, and is also the Tree of Life and Good Fortune²¹. This is found either singly or in accompaniment with pot or with Gods, Goddesses or the Buddha in decorative motifs in particular places on the monuments of the Deccan. First, we shall describe the lotus associated with the *pūrṇa-ghata*. Throughout the history of Indian art, the full vase (*pūrṇakalasa* or *pūrṇaghata*) is the commonest of all auspicious symbols, employed equally by all sects. The vase of plenty described above is clearly a life symbol, and the formal offering of such a vase can only be the expression of a wish that the recipient, or in general, all those present may enjoy health, wealth, and long life. The representation in art implies similarly a desired instigation by suggestion of all the vegetative energies involved in the current conceptions of well-being and as a symbol it clearly depicts ideas and characteristic of life cults and fruitfulness²². Lotus in this sense

represents **the** birth of the individual and cosmos **together, which** was **a commonly** accepted symbol of fertility, abundance, and blooming of **life**²³. The lotus was also seen as the emblem of purity for it symbolized the heart, which remained unsullied by contact with the world. Since it is grown in the mud, it **still** remains spotless²⁴. The Lotus originally is said to have symbolized creation and **detachment**.

The lotus coming out from the mouth of pot can be seen on the monuments in different parts of the Deccan. The varieties of form and shape differ from place to place. Amaravati, the earliest Buddhist centre of the **Andhra** region shows three sorts of lotus emerging from the mouth of a pot. According to Coomaraswamy the lotus associated with pot is sacred and auspicious symbol during all periods and among all the sects. It was universally employed in **embellishing** houses, shrines, monuments and cities²⁵. R.G Chandra informs us that today in **India**, the leaves of five trees, the *Asvattha*, the *Vata*, the *Amra*, the *Panasa*, and the *Bukala*²⁶ are put in the mouth of pot as decoration. We see different kinds of lotus and buds coming out from two pots decorated on a slab of the *stupa* dateable to the 1st century AD at Amaravati (**Chart III**, SN. 19). The flower buds and leaves coming out of the pot on two sides of the vase does not look like those of a lotus but are similar to those of an orange and strawberry (**Plate LVII**). In another example, the buds emerging from the neck of the pot at Amaravati dated to **the** 1st century AD (**Chart III, SN.18**) also do not look like those of a lotus but that of a pomegranate and a bottle- gourd shaped like a bell. According to E. B. Havell the bell-shaped fruit was the mystic *Hiranyagarbha*, the womb of the universe, holding the germ of the worlds innumerable still unborn²⁷. The lotus was the seat and footstool of the Gods, the symbol of the material universe, and of the heavenly sphere above it²⁸. The central lotuses in both of the above pots are

seen tilted towards the front, presenting a frontal view of the flower. It is beautiful to see lotus flowers, buds and leaves issuing from the mouth of another pot shaped like a jar dated to the 1st century AD at Amaravati (Chart III, SN. 16). In fact this example does not look like a lotus but like a flower of a wreath. This kind of vase with flowers is seen in ceremonies in urban areas. People assume it as symbol of auspiciousness. Another example of a lotus vine with buds and flowers in full bloom, leaves rising up from the neck of pot belonging to the 2nd century AD at Amaravati is outstanding (Chart III, SN. 28). Where this creeper ends, another decorated pot is shown from the mouth of which come out a pillar and two leaves. Over this pot is seen sitting a lion. Like at Amaravati, (Chart III, SN. 29) we have several other examples showing lotus, leaves, and buds coming out of the pots. A pot on a dome of a *stupa* in a panel belonging to the 3rd century AD at Nagarjunakonda is (Chart III, SN. 35) seen decorated with a girdle of the robe design interspersed with discs bearing lotuses. Near the base of the pot, there are seen three lotuses and on the shoulder below the neck of the pot, there is shown a garland. From the pedestal of the tier on which the pot is placed, emanate two open lotus flowers. On its mouth is shown a full-blown lotus flower tilted to face the spectator. On the side of this central flower there are seen two leaves followed by two full-blown lotuses and two buds. The lotus coming out from the mouth of a pot at Ghantasala dated to the 2nd century BC (Chart III, SN. 14) is entirely different from those found at both Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. Here, we see hibiscus leaves on both sides of the three-tiered base, which touch the lower part of the pot. Underneath the pedestal, a design of lotus flowers in compartments has been carved on a panel. On the shoulder, we see lotus petals running downwards. From the mouth of the pot, as usual, come out lotus flowers and buds.

We can also see lotuses, leaves, and petals decorated on a vase belonging to the 9th century AD at Ellora (**Chart III, SN. 87**). The vase here is placed on an elaborately decorated pedestal at the top of which there are seen lotus petals. Out of the mouth of this pot come out two leaves, which fall over the vase. The central lotus flower has been given a frontal representation and the other flowers and leaves have idealized forms. The leaves look more like those of the hibiscus than of the lotus. On a pillar of the Durga temple dated to the 7th century AD at Aihole, we see lotus leaves and flower coming out of a pot (**Chart III, SN. 62**). The leaves issuing from two sides of the pot fall downwards. On the mouth of the pot, there is a full-blown flower, which does not look like that of a lotus but of an umbrella surmounted on a miniature *stupa* of the Buddhists. On the two sides of this central flower are seen two leaves slightly tilted on each side. There are lotuses, leaves, and buds coming out of the mouths of pot on the façade of the front porch of the Lad Khan temple dateable to the 7th century AD at Aihole (**Chart III, SN. 56**). The leaves emerging from the neck of the pot on the extreme right falls on its shoulder. Below is seen a double lotus pedestal on which the pot is kept. The leaves and buds coming out of remaining two pots do not look like those of the lotus but it instead seem to be that of mango leaves and unseasonal fruits. Though the lotus, leaves and flower appear along with the pot on the Buddhist monuments unmistakably and are clearly recognizable, in the later period there is a change it seems that lotus on the pot is substituted by mango leaves and fruits. The mangoes and leaves coming out from the mouth of a pot on a pilaster belonging to the 8th century AD from **Alampur (Chart III, SN. 71)** shows how the change took place from lotus to mango. In this scene we see bunches of mango leaves with fruits emerging from the mouth of a pot and hanging on its two sides. In the

center of the pot there is seen a full-blown flower rising upwards (**Plate LVIII**). The petals shaped like banyan leaves are shown tilted in frontal view. The leaves and fruits show drastic change from the earlier use of the lotus.

Apart from lotus coming out of pot, we can see lotus issuing from mouth of dwarfs and other marine animals. This sort of decorative motif solely appeared at Amaravati. On the shaft of a *catiya*, pillar dateable to the 1st century BC (Chart III, SN. 9) we see a dwarf and from his mouth emerge a lotus vine, which makes a coil shaped like a ferrule or crescent. Within the crescent, are shown full-blown flowers and flower buds. At the end of the vine is seen a banyan tree with a rail. On two sides of the tree are seen full-blown lotus flower rising upwards. We again have a beautiful example of a lotus being vomited out by a marine animal. This is a decorative band along the base of a pillar on the outer rail dated to the 1st century BC at Amaravati (Chart III, SN.7). Here, we see a lotus vine coining out from the mouth of a marine animal. The vine coming out of the animals makes semi-circle inside which is shown a full-blown lotus flower.

Next, we draw our attention to both Buddhist and Hindu pantheon associated with the lotus in decoration. The lotus has much importance in both the Buddhist and in Hindu religion. It symbolizes self-creation and this explains why the Hindu god of creation, Brahma, sits on a lotus. In Buddhist legends, we are told that when the Buddha was born, he took seven steps and immediately lotus flowers sprang up underneath his feet. Every Buddha is considered *svayambhu*, i.e., self-existence. The *padma* pedestal on many Buddhist sculptures is indicative of divinity. The Adi-

Buddha manifested himself in the form of a flame arising from a lotus. The lotus also represents the active female principle or in Vajrayana, the female-sex organ²⁹.

It is a common form in the Buddhist art to show the Buddha seated on an open lotus flower and legends inform us that those of his disciples who go to heaven are supposed to either, rest upon it or, support it. On the interior wall of the cave at Kuda, dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart III, SN. 46**) is seen a lotus stalk that rises from water and this make a seat with a double pedestal on which is seated the Buddha. On two sides of the seat is a double lotus seat, small compared to the centra! one. On each seat is seen a *chauri*-bearer. Beyond the seat on the right rises a lotus, which reaches as high as the head of the devotee standing on the seat, who also holds a stalk of the lotus in his left hand. At the end of the stalk is a lotus bud tapering on its tip. The stalk of the central lotus is supported by two *nagas*, each on a lotus seat on either side of central lotus stalk (**Plate LIX**). On the left wall of the verandah recess of Cave VIII at Ellora belonging to the 7th century AD (**Chart III, SN. 58**), is seen a lotus pedestal on which there is a sculpture of Bodhisattva, Avalōkitesvara standing. The stalk in his left hand holds a *padma*. On his left shoulder is an *ajina* who stands holding a lotus bud in her left hand. Scholars opine that the lotus seat represents evolution. Further, that the right foot resting on the lotus symbolizes an active and discriminating contact with the world³⁰. There are Buddhist *saktis*, may be Tāra, Locana and Vajrahastīśvari on the left side of the shrine door of Cave II dated to the 7th century AD at Ellora (**Chart III, SN. 59**). They are seen sitting on a double lotus rising up from the water. At the bottom of each stem of lotus branches out a stalk with double lotus flowers slightly tilted. On each flower rests the right foot of the respective *śakti*. Here, the

lotus seat on which the *sakti* is seated with the left leg folded on the seat indicates clearly her discriminating contact with the world and evolution.

The lotus is also the highest Hindu symbol in the art of religion and cosmology of life floating on the surface of creative waters. It is the supernal sun in heaven, and the lotus is seen as the flower of life blossoming on earth. It is considered the visible sign of consciousness in matter³¹. Thus, a gamut of meanings are associated with the lotus³². The white lotus seat is said to represent wisdom that nourishes truth or supreme knowledge. White as a whole means supreme knowledge in activity. The Divine mother presides over this indicating that for acquisition of supreme knowledge, one has to perform activities founded on divine wisdom. On the right side of the door of Cave VI dated to the 7th century AD at Ellora (Chart III, SN. 60) is seen on a double lotus scat white in colour, on which is seen standing the Goddess Sarasvati, as the Divine mother. On her left side is seen a lotus rising like the lotus supporting the Bodhisattva but unfortunately, it is mutilated. The lotus seat as connoting evolution is also represented at the end of the verandah of Cave VII dated to the 9th century AD at Ellora (Chart III, SN. 88). The lotus as the symbol of prosperity and fertility is found as a lotus bud held in the left hand of a female dated to the 8th century AD from Alampur (Chart III, SN. 75). Here, the sculptor shows an amorous couple engaged in love and the female holds a lotus indicating prosperity and fertility. The lotus in her hand is tilted backward signifying enhancement of prosperity and fertility in their future life. The lotus pedestal on which Surya or sun god is seated in northern style is not shown. However, in iconographic representation a *padma*, and two lotus either full-blown or in bud form as emblem and seat are usually associated with **Sūrya**. The sun god found in the present-day Cuddapah district

of Andhra Pradesh dated to the 10th century AD (**Chart III, SN. 90**) does not show the lotus pedestal. Here, on the other hand, Surya is seen holding two lotuses each in his one hand. These lotuses are depicted so as to reach as high as his shoulder and are slightly tilted backward (**Plate LX**). These lotuses do not look like those found in original but are similar to an umbrella shape held by the Buddhist monks. However, they are here primarily depicted as a part of a decoration.

Now we shall discuss depictions of lotus floating on the water without necessarily a religious symbolism. In this context, two examples dated to the 2nd century BC come from Kesanapalli, an early Buddhist site (**Chart III, SN. 5**). The slab on which they occur is crescent in shape. It represents a vase carved, on the model of a *Śrīvasta* from which sprouts lotus flowers, which is in full bloom with pliable or lissom stalks quivering with life. We see in the intervening space on the left side of the slab two fishes making an attempt to come out of water, like those fishes caught within a fishing net in the water. Another slab is rectangular that also represents lotus flowers with stalks. From this stalk, branch out three big stalks and on their tips is shown a full-blown flower rising upwards as usual. In between, these stalks are also seen small lotuses in full-blown form and a bud with a long stalk. On this slab, we also see fishes in the intervening space. Abdul Waheed Khan left the problem unsolved saying simply the fishes here symbolize the lotus thriving in a pool carved on the slab.³³ Actually, these fishes represent the lotus floating on the water and are considered to represent the various experiences or powers that one is likely to achieve in the course of one's spiritual journey. The representation in the form of a floating lotus is also considered a reminder to the seeker of knowledge that he is not to stop after gaining intermediary powers³⁴. It was probably here that the sculptor's

aim, who was conversant with these symbols of the lotus tried to explain spiritual ideas to enhance the knowledge of the seekers.

The beauty of Nature seems to find its full expression in an unusual example from the Andhra region depicted against the purity of a marble background. There is a Buddhist marble slab placed along the top of a coping stone dated to the 2nd century BC from Amaravati (Chart III, SN. 3). On this marble band we can see a beautiful expression of Nature in the form of a tree with leaves that are clearly and artistically carved. It is a long bunch that issues from a stem and is seen bent horizontally. Two sides of the bunch are full of foliages towards its edge and the leaves look to be that of a Banyan tree (Plate LXI). The artists of Deccan seem to have had keen observers of Nature. The artist clearly made use of elements of Nature to mostly fill up the background, to decorate pilasters, facades, pillars, ceiling walls, borders and the friezes of the monuments. The creeper, scroll, honeysuckle, flowers and garland were profusely utilized as decorations.

According to scholars, the creepers were regarded as symbol of the female. The *mādhavi* creeper in ancient India, the *wisteria* in Japan, and the ivy in England. The Greeks and Romans used to present ivy creepers etc. to the bride and the bridegroom at their wedding as a symbol of fidelity³⁵. According to Walter Spink, the creeper that rises upward from the mouth of a pot symbolizes the birth of the Buddha³⁶. This is found on a door jam of Cave I at Ajanta dated to the 6th century AD (Chart III, SN. 50). The floral scrolls and creeper canopy and their characteristics in art still persist and are found carved generally on the background of a sculpture to provide relief³⁷. It is interesting that the above type of motif travelled to **Srikakulam** in

the Andhra region. Here, on the door frame of one of the temples belonging to the 8th century (**Chart III, SN.84**) we also see a creeper coming out from the mouth of a pot. This motif look like the one found in Cave I at Ajanta.

Apart from the creepers, we find different forms of scroll. A scroll, twisted tenderly, dated to the 8th century AD is found in the Someśvara temple at Srikakulam (**Chart III, SN.74**) (**Plate LXII**) and another similar one dated to the 9th century AD is also found at Srikakulam (**Chart III, SN. 85**). In this form, the vine of the former comes out looking like a hand. The vine rise upward by filling the intervening space inside in which is seen a leaf intertwined. In the latter case the vine is seen rising upward creeping on to the border on which it appears like a beautiful decoration. The scroll that we found at Alampur is very different from that found in other places. The scroll at Alampur dated to the 8th century AD (**Chart III, SN. 72**) looks like a single hooded *naga*. Here, the vine comes out of its root and creeps up looking like a snake moving. At its end, the foliage and the vine are seen gathered to form the shape of snake hood (**Plate LXIII**). It is interesting to see the scroll on the surface of a door dated to the 8th century AD at Alampur (**Chart III, SN.73**). Here we see a stem with a flower at the edge. Two sides of the stem at the bottom branch out as two vines and are seen entwined to the central stem. The vine finally covered the flower blown on tip of central stem like a hood. This form looks like a life-giving snake. The flower at the tip of the stem resembles a Caduceus (**Plate LXIV**) and may be interpreted as a symbol of healing³⁸. Thus, such representations that look like a snake entwined to a stem were part of the creative endeavour of the artist to attribute the above meaning of peace personified.

It has to be reiterated that the artists of the Deccan appear to have keenly scrutinized Nature. The work of the artists who were responsible for making the honeysuckle is worthy of praise. The honeysuckle is a kind of bush entwined inside firmly and shaped in circular like a millipede. It also looks like a swarm of bees. Historically we find them in Gandhara art and on the early monuments of the Deccan region. This shrub grows on the riverbanks and at places at the bottom of mountains. According to the "Oxford Dictionary", it is climbing shrub with fragrant yellow or pink flowers¹⁹. According to S. P. Gupta, the honeysuckle motif was borrowed from Western Asia and it was made to resemble an Indian water-flower. Within a short time it became the lotus of *padma* variety. The Greeks and the Romans also **transformed** it to their respective contexts when they were passing through the formative phase, from about 300 BC to 100 AD⁴⁰. Though the honeysuckle was as popular as both flower and garland in the earlier period, it appears in decoration especially on the border of doors in the temples during the later period as well. We have two examples carved on the borders of the doors dated to the 8th century AD (Chart III, SN. 81) and (Chart III, SN. 89) belonging to the 9th century AD respectively at Srikakulam in the present-day Andhra Pradesh. Here, these floral motifs do not seem to have been parts of the border of the door of the temples (Plate LXV). Nor, does it appear to have any cult significance. It only occurs as a part of the larger scheme of decoration depicted here.

Flowers were well known from time immemorial. They have great value in both Buddhist and Hindu circles. Every Buddhist family offers flowers to the Buddha image like Hindus do to their respective Gods and Goddesses. In this study, five categories of the offering of flowers such as wreath, flowers with different buds,

flowers with leaves and flowers held by Mithunas are found depicted on different monuments of the Deccan region. On the center of a ceiling of a *vihara* dateable to the 1st century BC at Nadsur (**Chart III, SN. 10**) is seen a large rosette, composed of one large flower with smaller ones set equidistant round it on a wreath of leaves. The space between the large flower and the wreath was filled with flower buds disposed in various positions. This kind of wreath pattern was supposed to be hooked on the breast of the person who was responsible at the time of a ceremonial celebration (**Plate LXVI**). In this context, the large flower in the center of wreath may indicate the main person in the ceremony. The four small flowers on the four-quarters may indicate his assistants or his duties. On the 8th pillar of the *cailya* of Cave XII at Bhaja is seen a floral motif dated to the 1st century BC (**Chart III, SN. 11**). Here, in the center is seen a full-blown flower and between its petals come out stalks with more flowers and buds (**Plate LXVII**). There is another decorative mould, tapering at both ends showing a flower in the center and a foliated band on the sides dated to the 1st century BC at Paithan (**Chart III, SN. 15**). Intervening spaces between the petals of the central flower have been carved with buds (**Plate LXVIII**). The **flower in** the right hand of a Mithuna couple dated to the 2nd century AD on a pilaster at Kuda is different from the one depicted on an inscribed pillar dated to the 2nd century AD found at Sannati in Karnataka (**Chart III, SN. 31**). The former is posy in which is seen a full-blown flower in the center, a flower bud and a bud tapering at the rear of the central one, held as stalks in the right hand of a Mithunas. The latter is a full bloomed flower held by the stalk in right hand of a Mithuna.

All through the centuries, it can be observed that there appeared an order in the mode of the decorative themes that were sustained by the same enduring

inspiration from Nature, following certain basic emotional trends. Quite often, it has been noted that the motifs include geometric shapes no doubt inspired by the symmetry that is also found in Nature and representing the symbol of unity in diversity. In this context, we have an example dated to the 7th century AD from the Lad Khan temple at Aihole (Chart **III**, SN. 61). Here, the window frame of the temple has been geometrically designed carved with flower rosettes and flowers arranged to form squares (**Plate LXIX**). Those flowers used in this design look very much like jasmines. It is very interesting to see a flower, perhaps sunflower, depicted (**Chart III**, SN. 83) belonging to the 8th century AD from Alampur (**Plate LXX**). This sort of motif was also found on Buddhist monuments.

It is necessary to consider significant ornament, which has a very important bearing on another type of decoration commonly called the garland. According to O.C Gangoly,⁴¹ some European scholars have opined that Indian sculptors have borrowed classical models of the garland as a decoration. We see three types of garlands depicted on the monuments of the Deccan region. They are the *Kanthurad* (worn round the neck), the *Upa-griva* (an ornament having its place near the neck and another shaped like a bell. On the 8th pillar at Bhaja dated to the 1st century BC (Chart **III**, SN. 13) is seen a beautiful wave of a garland in which all representations of flowers are arranged on rhythmic curves (**Plate LXXI**). Both at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda these decorative motifs carried by *Yaksas* and *Devas* can be seen. A big garland is shown being carried by *Yaksas* and *Devas* dated to the 2nd century AD from Amaravati (**Chart III**, SN. 23). This is currently, exhibited at the National Museum, New Delhi. A garland shaped like a bell is seen on the pediment of a *maṇḍapa* of the Durga temple at Aihole dated to the 7th century AD borne by *vyālas*

(Plate LXXII) each on either end of the garland. In the other example it is held in the mouth of an ogre dated to the 8th century AD at Alampur (Chart III, SN. 82). On two sides of the garland at Alampur, a bird is shown on each side. The bird on right side simply rests on the garland the one on the left is seen removing some small object from the mouth of the ogre. We have seen how change took place in the depiction of *Yaksets* associated with the *makara*. In early art a *Yaksa* used to be shown apparently removing some object from the jaw of *makara*⁴². Later, a bird is depicted doing the same thing as seen in the above example from the Alampur relief as a part of the decoration of the pilaster.

The sculptors who worked in the Deccan region were thus well aware of nature. They profusely utilised nature in the embellishment of monuments. Here, they borrowed things like tree, fruit, flowers, creeper and honeysuckle *etc.* Relatively speaking the tree is most frequently used. Most of the trees described above come from the Buddhist monuments. We find trees highlighting religious symbols and trees related to different elements of horticulture as well. Shape and form of the tree indicate regional variations. The artists it seems were also in favour of depicting lotus in its varied symbolic meanings. The representation of creeper and honeysuckle are not much different. The depiction of fruit in the above descriptions is, however, rare. *Kalpavṛkṣa* for instance, appeared in both Maharashtra and Karnataka in a strikingly similar way, which shows that there was either exchange of art motif or the sculptors from same school worked in both regions.

III

We next turn to examine the depictions of fauna as part of decoration and its relation to every day life. The sculptors in India depicted animals and birds in different ways on the monuments. These descriptions can be divided into those that were used as decorative symbols and those that describe ordinary life. In the latter context, we will discuss the depiction of animals in transportation, carrying royal personages, traders and warriors and animals and birds in hunting scenes, as amusements for the public, in village scenes, in memorial scenes and so on.

We begin with a description of animals used as conveyances excluding those that have already been discussed in the religious context as the vehicles of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Facilities for transportation, the general means of communications, particularly the different types of carriages, for travelling in company or, singly on the back of animals were an integral part of the economic life in ancient India. Transportation seems to have been the life-blood of trade and industry in the country. To have an effective means of transport was thus the key to unlocking the country's wealth through trade. In ancient India animals such as elephants, horses, camels, mules (donkeys) and bulls played an important role for land transportation. Among the beasts of burden used as modes of transport, the horse was one the most important. The horse had undoubtedly revolutionized the ancient Indian transport system and also the mode of war-fare. As discussed earlier, the horse was considered the symbol of virility and fertility and a symbol of sun in the religious ethos of early times⁴³. Though the existence of the horse was known from time immemorial, its exact use was not known prior to the Vedic period. According to Pathy⁴⁴ the Vedic literature is replete with references regarding to the fast-moving

horse-drawn chariots employed in warfare. The sculptural representations of the horse on the monuments studied by us in the Deccan reveal that this animal was used both for riding and pulling in front of the carriages. But the usage of horses for pulling carriages was much less depicted as when compared to that showing its other utility.

Transport on the back of animals seems to have been very important in the western Deccan. On the abacus of the pillars of the monuments in the present-day Maharashtra, horses with riders are seen depicted frequently. The horses are seen sometimes with two riders though this is not shown very often (**Chart IV, SN. 5**). On a pillar at Karle dated to the 2nd century BC we see a horse with two riders while on a pillar at Bedsa dated to the 1st century BC can be seen a horse with only one rider (**Chart IV, SN. 9**). The scene in the small *vihāra* at Bhaja belongs to the 2nd century BC (**Chart IV, SN. 2**) and this depicts a well-caparisoned horse as part of a royal procession. Here, a prince wearing an ornament is seen riding on its back. This horse is shown with rich trappings. The saddle is trellised. The bridle consists of a thin strap and includes a forehead band, a check-piece, and a nose-band. The rein is simple and looks like two parallel ropes. Something that looks like a yak-tail is shown on the head of the horse. It is seen that the mane of the horse is not cut.

A clear representation of another caparisoned horse is depicted on a panel at Badami dateable to the 6th century AD (**Chart III, SN. 44**) that is illustrating a war scene. The horse here has trappings but these are not as rich as those described above. The saddle and bridle, including a forehead band, a check-piece, and a nose-band are depicted here are clearer than in the former examples. The sculptor had not depicted the breast-band in the former case. The horse-bit and breast-band are prominent in the

horse under discussion. At the back of it, we see that a band passes through from below its tail. The border of this band is bedecked with beads (**Plate LXXIII**). At Ellora the horse is depicted performing twin functions. This is dated to the 6th century AD and shows that the horse was used both for riding as well as for dragging the chariots. The twin functions of the horse, viz., carrying the royal personages and soldiers and pulling the carriages, remains constant whether it was a ceremonial procession or for warfare (**Chart IV**, SN. 42). Here, the horse riders could be either, royal personages or, soldiers and these horses were provided with elaborate trappings. According to Asis Sen⁴⁵ the Indo-European people introduced the horse to India. He has also mentioned that Aryans were breeders and tamers of horses. Pathy suggests that the horses used in wars and those used for ceremonial processions were imported from the Arabian countries⁴⁶.

The soldiers while on duty used the horse freely and commonly. This can be seen on a panel at Bhaja dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart IV**, SN. 1) and from another panel at Nagarjunakonda dated to the 3rd century AD illustrating the Sakya prince's and king Kappina's conversion, respectively (**Chart IV**, SN. 21). In all these cases, the horses were depicted with rich trappings. The breast-band and tail-band at Bhaja are absent while at Nagarjunakonda they are invisible. The horse hauling wagons or buggies are seen depicted on the caves of Bhaja dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart IV**, SN. 2), at Amaravati dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart IV**, SN. 3), at Nagarjunakonda dated to the 3rd century AD (**Chart IV**, SN. 21) and at Ajanta dated to the 5th century AD (**Chart IV**, SN. 40). Here, the animals look very active while dragging the wagons. They are well equipped with the saddle and bridle including the nose-band and reins. It is needless to say that horses were common

objects for depiction in this way because they were so commonly seen in the transport system in ancient India. A horse carrying a rich person or hero in terracotta, as household decoration dated to the 3rd century AD comes from Paithan (**Chart IV, SN. 24**). This horse has rich trappings but a plain rein. Except for a rein and check-piece and trappings other things are not shown on this animal (**Plate LXXIV**).

Apart from horse we find elephants carrying their respective burden in transportation. On the Deccan sculpture elephants appear in royal processions, carrying traders in-groups and as used by soldiers and princes in war. The elephants have been considered as symbols of royal sovereignty, of the sun, and of the four quarters⁴⁷. On one of the friezes dated to the 1st century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 10**) at Amaravati we see a number of elephants emerging from the palace inside which a varied **entertainment** is taking place. Here, a banquet and a ballet have been composed skilfully. The elephants are seen well embellished. Princes and princesses are shown holding treasure pots on the head of each animal. A teenage girl without holding anything is to be found behind a prince on the animal. In the palace the scene depicted shows a great entertainment, dancing and the playing of flute by both ladies and gents. Previously scholars accepted this representation as the relic procession but the presence of a teenage girl and entertainment suggest that it could be a royal ceremony for a young princess on the occasion of her wearing new earrings. This kind of function is frequent in rich and noble families in Buddhist society. This scene at Amaravati was probably the royal procession for the king's daughter's newly worn earrings⁴⁸.

A panel dated to the 3rd century AD at Nagarjunakonda (**Chart IV, SN. 20**) illustrates king **Kappina's** conversion and it shows three elephants in the royal procession. The king is shown riding an elephant. Behind him a *chhatradhara* is seated and is holding a *chhatra* as a royal insignia for the king. An *aiikusa* is distinctly seen in the hand of the king Kappina. Generally, a *tottra* (prod) or an *aiikusa* (hook) are seen. These things are used to urge and direct the elephant. In same panel, on the upper portion, king Kappina's elephant is again depicted. It is shown in a kneeling posture and king Kappina is trying to sit on it. The elephant is shown with rich trappings. The saddle of the animal is seen secured by means of a strong rope but the neck is lavishly ornamented. Around the neck is seen, what appears to be a row of crescent pendants. Near this, a number of bead-strings are also discernible. This may represent *Karnakulis* (long jewelled rolls) as identified by Sivaramamurti⁴⁹.

There are a couple of examples showing the elephant carrying traders in-group, depicted at Brahmapuri, Karle, Nasik and Kanheri. The elephant hauling a group of four traders at Brahmapuri that belongs to the 2nd century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 22**) is interesting. Here, it seems the elephant felt tired with a heavy burden on its back and is thus shown taking rest for a while on his journey. The animal is fixed with the saddle and bridles which are required for travelling on the animal towards its destination. The elephant is shown with two riders at Kanheri on a panel dated to the 5th century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 37**). It is shown strong enough to travel for perhaps a long journey. Like at Nagarjunakonda, the saddle of elephant is fastened with the help of a strong rope but the trappings here are absent. Similarly, the elephant as used by traders for travel have also been found depicted at Karle (**Chart III, SN. 8**). The difference in each case is the number of travellers on the back of each of these

elephants. Two travellers being carried by an elephant are common but, four riders on an elephant as found depicted at **Brahmapuri** are exceptional.

The representation of elephant in battle scenes appears at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Badami and Ellora. In an Amaravati sculpture dated to the 2nd AD (**Chart IV, SN. 19**) an elephant with great strength is shown fighting its opponent ferociously. It is common to see that the elephants in the army were well equipped with saddle and bridle. As the above sculpture is mutilated the equipment fixed on the animal is seen only slightly but he is seen fighting vigorously. His deadly fight injured trampled and tore all things before it. That the elephant formed an important part of the army even during the Ikṣvāku period is known from a sculptural depiction of the war scene on an *āyaka* cornice stone at Nagarjunakonda dated to the 3rd century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 33**). The elephant depicted in this sculpture is shown with rich trappings, a thick trellised padding and bells around its necks that are all clearly visible.

The four elephants depicted on the frieze of Badami Cave III dated to the 6th century AD also illustrates their activities in war (**Chart IV, SN.41**). Here the elephant is decorated with different forms of instruments. The *howdah* tied on their backs is a common feature. Out of them, one is seen having rich trappings while on the others it is absent. The neck of the animal with trappings is bedecked with a broad band while on the back is seen a band that passes from below its tail. What is interesting on this animal is the safety-belt that passes around its belly and the *kirtimakuta* tied on its head. Out of three necks of the other elephants, two in panel 3 and 4 are lavishly embellished. Around their necks are seen, what appears to be two

rows of beads or, they could also be iron chains. A bell tied with a chain beside the body of an elephant in panel 3, hangs downwards. As the elephant moved in a majestic way, the bell probably rang warning others of its arrival. This elephant too wears a headgear that looks like *kirtimakuta* as does the animal in panel 4.

The elephant also symbolised sovereignty in ancient India. The royal personages riding on an elephant's back in ceremonial processions and military expeditions displayed royal pomp and pageantry. In fact, the elephant corps is said to have existed in the Indian army much earlier than the cavalry⁵⁰. In the relief at Ellora dated to the 8th century AD (Chart IV, SN. 61) the elephants are shown in an elaborate manner. Their heads and necks are seen heavily bejewelled. Sometimes, a decorated saddle is placed on its back and is secured by means of a rope. At some places the elephants are shown with a *howdah* (Chart IV, SN. 52). The *Mahabharata* scene is seen depicted on the exterior wall of the Kailasa temple and this illustrates both types of elephants described above. The elephants are found on the relief with *mahouts* or drivers of the elephants. In such cases the prince or the royal dignitary is shown seated on a *howdah* with a bodyguard behind him. The frequent depiction of the elephants in war scenes suggests that the elephant corps played an important role in the royal conquest of ancient India.

Camel is another important animal that was used in transportation through the ages. Although the horse could run faster than camel but they were not as useful as camels for a long journey in the desert areas and rough terrain, as a camel could store water for a long time and could also carry burdens over long distances without hesitation. The representation of the camel in the sculptural art of the Deccan region

is very rare. In earlier sculpture the depiction of the camel in art is totally absent. In this study only one sculpture of a camel engaged in transportation appears. This is on a door recess of the **Madhūkeśwara** temple dated to the 8th century AD in the present-day **Srikakulam** district of Andhra Pradesh. It represents a camel in the activity of transport (**Chart IV**, SN. 55). As is nature the sculptor has depicted this animal with a long-legged ruminant with one hump. According to scholars there are two kinds of camels the Bactrian generation that has two humps and the Arabian one with one hump ¹. The hump of this animal is mounted as if on the horseback. In India usually single humped camels are visible in Great Indian Desert. The camel depicted in the example seems to be of local origin. The saddle of the animal is seen secured by means of a rope. The sculptor shows the animal with long neck and active in appearance.

The donkey as manual worker for washer-men in particular, in ancient India was considered useful in carrying light things and baggage here and there. This animal was also used to drag carts with arrows and bows. The archer used to ride in these carts during the time of war. In a frieze dateable to the 6th century AD (**Chart IV**, SN. 45) is found at **Badami** where a donkey is illustrated dragging a cart with a man carrying arrows. The animal looks like an ox with a long face and therefore. Looking like a donkey. Trappings are shown on its back. The saddle is secured with what looks like a thin rope, which is held by the driver on the cart.

It is not uncommon to see bullocks used for transportation. The bullock carts were perhaps the oldest and most useful wheeled vehicles. They were utilized to travel from place to place and for such things as shifting paddy from the thresher to

the granary or, to carry corpses to the cemetery. A panel dated to the 3rd century AD (**Chart IV, SN.25**) from Goli illustrating the *Vessantara Jataka* shows bulls dragging a cart. It seems the animal is recognizing its separation with its master **who had** donated them to Brahma. Innocence appears on their appearance in this sculpture. **The** sculpture of a bullock cart unlocked depicted on a register dated to the 2nd century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 23**) at Gulbarga in Karnataka shows the journey's end, i.e., the end of life. Perhaps, these bullocks brought the cart that carried a corpse up to the grave. To depict this episode related to the end of life, the sculptor has shown the animal reclining at the foot of wheel, which is locked with a horse. Philosophically speaking, according to the Buddhist concept, a coin has to be put in the mouth of the dead body, aiming to facilitate it in the transmigration journey (**Plate LXXV**). The horse with rich trappings probably indicates the dead person's good work and the person with a lamp before the horse may be the bounteous Sakya. A memorial slab dated to between the 2nd - 3rd centuries AD (**Chart IV, SN. 28**) from Jewargi in Maharashtra shows a pair of bullocks with a cart. Out of these one is reclining while the other is shown standing. On the neck and horns of the animal reclining are seen strings while the other is enclosed with a shoulder-yoke. According to Nagaraja Rao the cart belonged to a merchant called Vīra. He and his wife were going on a journey. According to Dayal⁵³ the Vedic literature prolifically referred to chariots and carts. Those drawn by ox and horse were most popular. This indicates that right from the beginning of the Vedic era people in India knew how to train animals to be used in transportation⁵⁴.

Knowledge of cultivation appears to have also been known . The sculptures in the Deccan region illustrate animals involved in agriculture, helping the people in

creating agricultural land and animal husbandry or, ground for the Buddhist ceremony. Agriculture and cattle-farming both were both practised in the society. A sculpture from **Amaravati** dated to the 2nd century AD shows a couple of bullocks (cattle) going towards the field. The animals are shown with broad faces indicating that they were strong enough to work (**Chart IV, SN. 15**). The person in front of them pursuing the animals by means of a rope while pulling their tail is the farmer. This clearly explains the fact these animals were the life-blood of agriculture (**Plate LXXVI**). The increase of population in rural areas led to the extension of cultivated land. For creation of new fields, as manual labour is not enough to clear big trees, strong animals like the elephants were needed. The representation of such animals helping the public in this kind of activity is rare but an excellent example of this function dated to the 2nd century BC is found at Bhaja (**Chart IV, SN. 6**). The elephant at work here is shown strong enough to uproot both trees and expose roots under the ground. An uprooted tree is shown on the trunk of the elephant. The belt tied in a cruciform on the body of animal corroborates the involvement of this animal in creation of new land (**Plate LXXVII**). In this scene, we see people from different walks of life doing their respective works on the field. Coomaraswamy opines that this was a panel showing animal sacrifice. His view may be partially true in that it was a ritual of some sort wherein the people working in the field were being fed for some ceremony. It was an ancient Buddhist custom to sacrifice animals and offer articles to the elders of the community or the monastery. Nevertheless, the coming of the elephant on to the scene indicates that he is a part of helpers cleaning the ground for this ceremony.

In ancient India⁵⁶ cattle played an important part in the daily life of the people and the progress of agriculture. In the Vedic age⁵⁷ many people followed the profession of rearing cattle. The *Mahabharata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*⁵⁸ are full of evidence on the profession of cattle breeding. The sculptors of the Deccan were aware of the importance of cattle as a source of wealth and function through the ages and depicted cattle on the *stupa* at Amaravati dated to the 1st century AD (**Chart IV**, SN. 11). In this depiction we can see different sizes of oxen, cows and buffaloes.

We cannot keep the problem of feeding of cattle aside because it was important for the maintenance and production of cattle. Cattle-fodder and well-maintained pastures are the secret of a successful cattle husbandry. Good pastureland served the purpose of cattle grazing. There is a reference on grazing grounds in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. This function is clearly seen in a representation at Amaravati dated to the 1st century AD (**Chart IV**, SN. 12). The slab illustrates an animal tied by a long rope on what seems to be a pasture ground. Being thus confined, the action of this animal in the sculpture looks as though it's making an effort to get free.

In addition to the participation of animals in productive activity described above, the representation of animals in pastime and recreation activity has also been depicted on reliefs. There were many kinds of recreations in ancient India as entertainment had great social value. Some animals like bulls, buffaloes and rams took part in fighting competitions, reptiles like the *snake* in dancing shows and the cock as seen in its proverbial fighting form appears on sculpture pertaining to the study. Bull fighting was a popular amusement of people in ancient India. The representation of this kind of scene in sculptural art of the Deccan can be seen on a

frieze of *vihara* at Bhaja dated to the 2nd century BC (**Chart IV, SN. 4**). Here, two bulls with sharp horns are depicted face to face in an attitude of fighting each other. The neck of one animal is seen bedecked with something that looks like a rope wrapped around it. Additionally, on the other's are seen bells wrapped in a row (**Plate LXXVIII**). This amusement is being watched by royal persons. Interestingly, in this scene a baby is shown lying between the bulls. This probably indicates that since the child symbolizes innocence the bulls were indeed innocent like children but who became victims of a conflict as an amusement for royal personages. Another amusement for the people of the Vakataka period was depicted on a frieze on the front of Cave I at Ajanta. This is a buffalo fight dated to the 6th century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 43**). Here, two buffaloes are seen face to face in the act of fighting each other. At the back of each animal is shown a person that holds its tail stimulating the animals that are deadlocked in conflict (Plate **LXXIX**). In all wealthy households and princely parks, a ram-fight was a common amusement. Such a fight by ram is seen depicted at Ajanta dated to the 5th century AD (Chart IV, SN. 39). The action of these animals is not seen as serious as that of the bulls and buffaloes in fighting mentioned above. At the back of each ram is seen a person stimulating the animals.

The cock, on the other hand, like the ram, is the very embodiment of the fighting spirit. Right or wrong, each bird would pounce on the other, and tear his opponent into pieces. A solitary example of a cockfight comes from a lotus medallion dateable to the 3rd century AD at Nagarjunakonda (**Chart IV, SN. 29**). Here, two cocks are shown face to face in the act of attacking each other. Evidently, the arena could have been a public place for amusements where cock fighting could be done. Another example of a cock-fighting scene dated to the 6th century AD is seen in the

sculpture depicted at Ajanta. Probably, **like the** Athenians, the people of both Nagarjunakonda and Ajanta had perfected this game and adopted it as one of **the** popular pastimes of the period⁶⁰.

Next, we describe some sculptures that illustrate hunting activity. Hunting was a source of livelihood as well as of entertainment in ancient India. Since prehistoric times it was a well-known activity for subsistence and livelihood. During the later period it became very popular among nobles and kings⁶¹. The *Visnu Purana* gives interesting references to hunting done by King Vikusi, son of Iksvaku, who went to a forest and killed many deer and wild animals for the celebration of the *śrāddha* ceremony⁶². The hunting in those days, done by king, was considered as praiseworthy. An excellent example of a hunting scene represented on the door recess of a *mandapa* of the Madhūkeśvara temple dateable to the 8th century AD is found in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh (**Chart IV**, SN. **56**). There are two tiers depicted in this scene. The upper sculpture illustrates an elephant hunter on the back of tamed elephants catching wild animals in the forest. If one sees the scene from the right to left, one first sees the elephant hunter on the back of a tame one trying to catch a wild one and then the elephants are being driven into the ground. On lower tier, we see wild animals running helter-skelter and a deer being killed by the hunters with the help of bows and arrows they were carrying. The representation of royal personages on horse back reveals that it was probably a story in relation to the episode described above in the *Visnu Purana* (**Plate LXXX**).

The sculptures in the Deccan region also illustrate various activities of animals in the forest. As the Deccan was sub-tropical, rainfall during the monsoon was

regular. This weather allowed both dense and sparse forest to grow where suitable animals could stay. A panel illustrating the forest scene dated to the 3rd century AD at Nagarjunakonda (**Chart IV, SN. 35**) depicts a scene with two monkeys and a lion. A monkey is seen running helter-skelter with the help of a crossbar linking a tree by which the monkey has chance to escape from the danger of the tiger that is shown at the bottom of another tree. On the trunk of this tree is shown yet another monkey climbing up in the fear of the tiger. The monkey on the trunk of the tree is seen turning its face towards a lion that is shown in an angry mood. Longhurst⁶³ opines that this was a scene of peaceful nature with its rich animal and tree surroundings being depicted. On the contrary, looking at the monkey on the crossbar running in fear of the lion and the appearance of the lion it seems that this was a terrible frightening situation for the monkey (**Plate LXXXI**). We see another forest scene depicted on a panel in red sandstone lintel dated to the 10th century AD at Alampur (**Chart IV, SN. 59**). The panel represents forest life wherein a lion, a jackal, and a tiger are seen co-existing together (**Plate LXXXII**).

Apart from the animals and birds described above in various kinds of activities familiar to the people of those days, there are some animals and birds, which come as a part of the scheme of decoration of the monuments. Snake or serpent is a symbol of fertility and prosperity. As artists were well aware of its concept it is depicted on the ceilings, slabs, walls *etc.* of the monuments. In a relief on the northern wall of a court on the Kondivita Cave IV that belongs to between the 1st to 3rd centuries AD there is a snake depicted in an active mood with its spread hood (**Chart IV, SN. 16**). The hood of this creature in the sculpture shows us the creature pouring the fertility as water leaks from water pump. The frieze of a Cave dated to between the 1st to 2nd centuries

AD (Chart IV, SN. 17) at Nasik is decorated with animals, such as the lion and **the** bull. The animals are shown as though running. The bull with pointed hump and the lion with a half-open mouth look strong and healthy in this depiction.

The *makara* often understood as a 'pure' Indian creature comes in the form of a decorative motif from Amaravati dated to between the 1st to 2nd centuries AD (**Chart IV, SN. 18**). This creature has not been in western art. The *makara* is symbol of virility and fertility. The *makara* of the early period at Amaravati is partly shown as a crocodile and partly as a fish. Horns and ears are absent in these examples. The *makara* under study has both ears and horns that are shown extending backwards. On its head is seen a fishy feeler mounting upwards from the end of the snout. Here, its teeth are shown like those of humans and not like that of a crocodile. Its legs are depicted as being similar to that of a dog. The tail spreads floridly into the decorative appendage (**Plate LXXXIII**).

The elephant, a symbol of royal sovereignty, as an embodiment of great strength, appears to have been a favourite subject of the Deccan sculptors. In this study, the elephants are shown free standing at the bottom of a wall, at the base of a temple exterior. On the bottom of a wall of a temple dated to the 1st century AD (Chart IV, SN. 13) at Karle appear three elephants (**Plate LXXXIV**). One elephant is on the northern wall of a cave temple and one at the base of the upper **Śivālaya** temple dated to the 6th century AD at **Badami (Chart IV, SN. 47)**. They are all represented as mighty and majestic animals symbolizing sovereignty. All the elephants under discussion are shown as strong and healthy.

Of all such depictions, an interesting example is of a fight between a lion and an elephant that is illustrated on the **facade** of the exterior wall of the **Sangameśwara** temple dated to the 7th century AD (Chart IV, SN. 50) at Pattadakal. On the extreme right of this scene, we see a deadly fight between a lion and an elephant while on the extreme left is seen a regular, less ferocious, fight between a lion and an elephant (Plate LXXXV). On the other hand, in an unusual case, we see a fight between a dog and a tiger on a stone dated to the 10th century AD from Mysore (Chart IV, SN. 58). The dog is a great and faithful creature, brave and loyal to his master. The brave dog never allows its master's enemy to come close to him till his life expires. Here, the tiger, fighting the dog, is probably the representation of the later protecting his master from its enemy. It seems the artist wanted to publicise the loyalty of the dog, create the story and depicted it as a sculpture in stone. The scene is undeniably the creation of the artist because this kind of incident is unbelievable in nature.

Gupta's statement telling that Indian lions are gentle⁶⁴ is disputable and that the Indian artists did not copy the lion from Western Asia⁶⁵. The lion was the symbol of water and the Mithraic symbol of the sun. In Christian art the lion is considered the symbol of Christ as the "Lion of Judah". In Buddhism, the Buddha was also considered to be a lion among the Sākyas, i.e., *Sākyasiṃha*. In decorative arts, the lion, typical of strength, was used by the ancient Greeks and Romans as a form of support (legs) for chairs, benches and tables. *Siṃhāsana*, i.e., throne with the legs of lion, was used for kings and saints in India for more than two thousand years. In this context, we will discuss two pairs of lion. A pair of lion is seen depicted on the ceiling of a *maṇḍapa* of the **Kailasa** temple dated to the 7th century AD at Ellora (Chart IV, SN. 51). These lions are shown terse. Their hind legs are thinner than their forelegs.

One of the forelegs of each animal is placed on their back. This kind of posture is not found anywhere. Their feet are planted firmly on the ground with sharp nails and raised bones of the fingers and their short body is shown with tense muscles. The back is seen in full and the tail end is invisible. On their bodies, we see circular marks like those found on the bodies of some horses at Nagarjunakonda. As these lions are in the act of roaring their mouths are open but their tongues are seen protruding inside. The animals remain ferocious in facial expression. These lions it seems were producing a thunderous roar like a lion if attacked in hunting or when an arrow pierces its body. The locks of hair cover their neck completely. Each lock on one lion is shaped like an ear of paddy while on the other lion it is arranged like the head of a nail. Their eyes are shown as wide open. We see another pair of lions on one of the pillars dated to the 2nd century AD (Chart IV, SN. 14) at Nasik. They have slightly opened mouths with their tongues largely inside. Their faces with flat noses are depicted as gentle as visible on a cat. They have a long body with broad cheeks and long tails. Their canine teeth are slightly longer than those found in the examples discussed above. What is interesting in this sculpture is a rider each on their back and their tame appearance (Plate LXXXVI). These examples are perhaps imitated from the Assyrian and Greek art where the lions are shown with riders.

Some birds have also been depicted on the monuments of the Deccan. Dove, as a pet bird is found frequently depicted. There were many varieties of doves known of which two types were popular; the pouter type that had a wheel-shaped tail and the other type called *treroninae*. A pigeon or dove occurs on the **facade** of a platform in **Badami** Cave I dated to the 6th century AD (Chart IV, SN. 46). This bird is shown with short legs, a small head, and a large breast. Its wings were depicted slightly

spread out (**Plate LXXXVII**). What is interesting in this depiction is a cluster of mangoes being carried by this bird in its beak. The other popular bird was **the parrot**. It is supposed to talk when trained, without understanding what it repeated in the talk. Rulers kept parrots and their relatives in ancient India. Alexander the Great **who** invaded India in the 4th century BC found these birds and soon they appeared in Greece and elsewhere in the West⁶⁶. Parrots remain to this day the most popular cage birds . According to an observation of **Bhadouria**,⁶⁸ there were three types of parrots. The data under study also shows three types of parrots. A panel at Ajanta dated to the 5th century AD shows a small parrot (**Chart IV, SN. 38**) pecking at the breast of a woman (**Plate LXXXVIII**). Another panel dated to the 3rd century AD found (**Chart IV, SN. 27**) at Nagarjunakonda illustrates the admission of six Sakya princes and a barber Upāḷi to the Buddhist order. Alongside this is also illustrated a parrot sitting on the hand of an amorous lady. In another instance dated to the 8th century AD, on the left jam of the main doorway of the Madhūkeśvara temple (**Chart IV, SN. 48**), the bird is shown eagerly looking at a bunch of three mangoes, held in the lady's the right hand (**Plate LXXXIX**).

A rare sculpture shows a crow. There is a peculiar belief that the cawing of a crow has a message and its appearance to draw attention by cawing, is supposed to suggest the arrival of a guest or the return of a beloved one after a long separated journey on account of a long absence. A panel dated to the 3rd century AD (**Chart IV, SN. 36**) illustrates a village scene at Nagarjunakonda and shows a crow perched on the roof of a hut. It seems that this bird announces the message from the guest who is supposed to visit to the area.

From the above survey, we can conclude that **the** artists **in the** Deccan **region** shed light the use of animals in transportation in ancient India. In this context, we **find** horses, elephants, mules or donkeys, camels that participated in this activity. They also carved sculptures of cattle engaged in agriculture and other every day activity of the people. The prolific depiction of elephants and horses in war scene reveals the importance of their value to the political and military elite. Further, we also observed attractive decorations made by artists using animals like elephant and lion and birds such as parrot and dove. The artists did not ignore the portrayal of animals like bull, ram, buffalo and birds like cock that were frequently involved in providing amusements for public and royal persons.

For the purpose of the above descriptions this chapter had been divided into three parts viz., (i) the importance of decoration in order to define its meaning from various dictionaries and texts, (ii) the depiction of animals and birds in decoration, nature and every day life and (iii) the depiction of trees, flowers and foliage in decoration, nature and every day life. For this, we referred to material arranged in two charts that is appended to this Chapter. A special emphasis was given to selecting special specimens for these descriptions so that for each theme, we described at least one example. A comparative method was employed in seeing the variations in each of these specimens. When we analyse these specimens in a region-wise way the data showed similarities and differences. We were thus able to identify common themes and those in which exchange of art motifs took place against the background of regional variations.

As seen in the above descriptions animals were engaged in various functions but flora like trees, lotuses, leaves, creepers, foliage and fruits played a major symbolic role in these depictions. The artists represented different sorts of trees. We observed trees conveying symbolic meanings in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Thus we could see how nature intervened in conveying religious ideas. Some trees, however, were represented as mere decorations. Relatively speaking, the banyan and the pipal tree in Andhra were more popular than in Maharashtra and Karnataka during the earlier period. But the trees in Amaravati depictions were found to be stylised, whereas trees in other regions were depicted more naturalistically. The Jambu trees under which the Buddha meditated was noticed at Amaravati and Gummadidurru, which is common but the flowering tree under the Buddha was shown lying depicted at Ajanta is not found in any other part of the Deccan region. During the later period mango trees with clusters of fruits are found equally depicted in both Karnataka and Maharashtra. Nevertheless, the fruits depicted in Maharashtra are bigger than that those represented at Karnataka.

Similarly, among the flowers depicted we find continuity and change in the depiction of the lotus. During the earlier period, various forms of lotus such as coming out from pot, as the seat of the Buddha and other deities are found prolifically depicted. The depiction of lotus coming out from the pot continued during the later period as well. A profound evolution is seen in the use of lotus as seat of Brahma and lotus issuing from the navel of Visnu, in the form of the creation of the Universe cannot be overlooked. The lotus floating on the water was difficult to depict and has been found only at Kesanapalli. Apart from lotus we found different varieties of garlands depicted that had symbolic meaning but were often depicted in a naturalistic

form. The garlands carried by *Vyalas* and *Yaksas* in zoomorphic form and anthropomorphic form were unusual but found in several specimen examples.

In ultimate analysis we can conclude that we can see different animals and birds in different roles depicted in the Deccan sculptural art. The artists represent most of animals, as they were actually found and working in their respective environment. In some scenes, however, we find that the artist depicts them using his imagination. For example, the activities of the cow, bull and ox are portrayed how they must have participated in the everyday life of the people. The artists were undoubtedly aware of the value of these animals for the farmers in the fields and for drawing and dragging carts. Before the invention of the vehicle fixed with engine, transport to travel from place to place was done on the back of the animals like elephants and horses. These animals also played an important role in wars and both have been prolifically depicted in the sculptural art. Hunting of animals through all the ages was a major activity of human beings and this activity has also been depicted. We see the role of animals and birds in amusement and pastimes of the people as well. Through these depictions we come to know about the interaction between animals and birds and human beings. For instance, the parrot rested on the shoulder and hand of people and doves were used for carrying message etc.

In the above depictions and descriptions of flora and fauna we thus found complex human needs and dependence on nature. Many of these depictions were artistically and beautifully represented indicating the close observations of nature by the artists. Though we are suggested above that nature in these depictions was primarily of utilitarian values- for decoration and use in every day life- it must also be

stressed that the symbolic meaning of the trees, creepers, flowers, fruits, animals and birds was never lost. In fact, it would be appropriate to conclude that the human interaction of nature was not merely materialistic but rather, it was rooted in an ethos that viewed and valued nature with respect.

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CHART III

FLORA AS DEPICTED IN DECORATION AND IN EVERYDAY LIFE

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Pipal tree	Decoration	Randhawa, <i>CTWBHS</i>	PL. 42
1	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Tree of Spirit	Decoration	Ludwing, <i>IS</i>	PL. 115
3	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Foliage	Decoration	Rea, <i>BASI</i>	PL. XXXIX, Fig. 2
4	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Banyan Tree	Decoration	Sivaramamurthi, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. XV, Fig. 1
	2nd BC	Kesanapalli	AP	Lotus	Decoration, Symbol of Primeval water	Khan, <i>MBSK</i>	PL. VI, X
	2nd BC	Bharhut	MP	Bodhi Tree	Decoration	Randhawa, <i>CTWBHS</i>	Fig. 4
	1st BC	Amaravati	AP	Lotus coming out from the mouth of <i>Makara</i>	Decoration	Burgess, <i>BAAJ</i>	PL. XLII, Fig. 1,2
8	1st BC	Amaravati	AP	Bodhi Tree	Decoration	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL. XV Fig. 1
9	1st BC	Amaravati	AP	Lotus coming out from the mouth of dwarf	Decoration Symbol of Fertility	Douglas, <i>ASBM</i>	PL. IX, Fig. c
10	1st BC	Nadsur	MR	Flower	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 699-34
	1st BC	Bhaja	MR	Flower	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 686-40
12	1st BC	Pailhan	MR	Flower	Decoration	F W data	WS. 1127-72
13	1st BC	Jaggayyapeta	AP	Coconut Tree	Decoration	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. LV, Fig. 2
14	1st BC	Bhaja	MR	Garland	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 686-37

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
16	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Lotus with pot	Decoration ,Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS. 248-43
17	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Lotus	Decoration	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XLV, Fig. 7
18	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Phase I urnaghata Lotus	Decoration, Symbol of Birth of Buddha	F W data	AIIS. 248-43
19	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Lotus	Decoration	Burgess, <i>BSAJ</i>	PL. XLV, Fig. 2
20	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Bodhi Tree	Decoration	Sastry & Sitapati, <i>NSS</i>	PL. XLVIII, Fig. 1
21	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Bodhi Tree	Decoration	Anamika, <i>ASi</i>	PL. 79
	2nd AD	Kanheri	MR	Bodhi Tree	Decoration	F W data	AAB.454-95
	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Garland	Decoration	F w data	Ph. 17
24	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Asoka Tree	Decoration	Douglas, <i>ASBM</i>	PL. XXV, Fig. 2
25	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Banyan Tree	Decoration	Burgess, <i>BAAJ</i>	Fig. 4
26	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Asoka Tree	Decoration	Douglas, <i>ASBM</i>	PL. VII
	2nd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Asoka Tree	Decoration	F W data	AC. No. 50. 17
28	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Lotus	Decoration	Fergusson, <i>STWSA</i>	PL. XXXVII, Fig. 9
29	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Lotus	Decoration	Douglas, <i>ASBM</i>	PL. IX, Fig. 4
30	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Bodhi Tree	Decoration	Anamika, <i>ASi</i>	PL S. 32-39
31	2nd AD	Sannathi	MR	Flower	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 273-49
32	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Mango Tree	Decoration	Burgess , <i>BTAJ</i>	PL. XXVI, Fig. 1

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
34	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Pomegranate (Fruit)	Symbol of Fecundity	Gangoly , <i>AnS</i>	PL. XXI
35	2nd AD	Kuda	MR	Flower	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 698-41
36	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Lotus	Decoration	Ramachandra Rao, <i>AS</i>	PL. XI, B
37	3rd AD	Gummadidurru	AP	Jambu Tree	Decoration	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	Fig. 241
38	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Creeper	Decoration	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXI, Fig. 1
39	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Roundel	Decoration	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	Fig. 139
40	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Asoka Tree	Decoration	Sinha, <i>TWAI</i>	PL. 31
41	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Sitaphal	Decoration	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXXV, Fig. 1
42	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Sitaphal	Decoration	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	XXVII, Fig. 1
43	6th AD	Badami	KN	Arjuna Tree	Forest scene	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	Fig. 7
44	6th AD	Badami	KN	Mango Tree	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 178-84
45	6th AD	Aurangabad	MR	Mango Tree	Decoration	Ray, Amita, <i>AnS</i>	PL. 11
46	6th AD	Kuda	MR	Lotus	Decoration, Symbol of supporting university	F W data	AIIS. 698-45
47	6th AD	Ajanta	MR	Pipal Tree	<i>Mahāparinirvāṇa</i>	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. L

S. NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
49	6th AD	Aihole	KN	Banana Tree	Symbol of completeness	Gupte., AAA	PL. 71
50	6th AD	Ajanta	MR	Lotus	Decoration	Spink, AE	PL. 1
51	6th AD	Badami	KN	Roundel	Decoration	F W data	A11S. 397-72
52	6th AD	Ajanta	MR	Roundel	Decoration	Burgess, RECT	PL. XVIII
53	6th AD	Ajanta	MR	Roundel	Decoration	Burgess, RECT	PL. XVII
54	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Mango Tree	Decoration	Zimmer, AIA	PL. 228
55	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Mango Tree	Decoration	F W data	Ph. 19
56	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Lotus	Decoration	F W data	Ph. 220
57	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Lotus	Decoration Seat of Brahma	Rao, EHI	PL. CXLVI
58	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Lotus	Decoration, support of Universe	Gupte, IHBJ	PL. V, b
59	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Lotus	Decoration, Contact with World	Burgess, RECT	PL. XIX, Fig. 5
60	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Lotus	Decoration, Contact with World	Burgess, RECT	PL. XXI
61	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Flower	Decoration	F W data	Ph. 22
62	7th AD	Aihole	KN	Lotus	Decoration	F W data	Ph. 23
63	7th AD	Badami	KN	Mango Tree	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 178-84

	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
65	th AD	Aihole	KN	Roundel	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 89
66	th AD	Aihole	KN	Roundel	Decoration	Gupte, AAA	PL. 73
67	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Roundel	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 169-18
68	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	3anana Tree	Symbol of completeness	Nigam, ASC	PL. XXV
69	8th AD	Aihole	KN	vlango Tree	Decoration	F W data	Ph. 25
70	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Scroll	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 558-12
71	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Vlango leaves	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 167-35
72	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Scroll	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 169-12
73	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Scroll	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 169-40
74	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Scroll	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 558-13
75	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Lotus	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 167-35
76	8th AD	Aihole	KN	Kalpavriksha Tree	Decoration	Meister EST A	Fig. 71
77	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Creepers	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 167-05
78	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Creepers	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 169-42
79	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Creepers	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 558-18
80	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Scroll	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 560-9
81	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Honeysuckle	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 558
82	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Garland	Decoration	F W data	AAB. 167.36
83	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Flower	Fertility	F W data	AIIS. 167-52
84	9th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Creepers	Decoration	F W data	560-36

S.No.	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
86	9th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Scroll	Decoration	F W data	559-18
87	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Lotus	Decoration	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XXXV, Fig. 1
	9th AD	Ellora	MR	Lotus	Decoration	Zimmer, <i>AIA</i>	PL. 216
89	9th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Honeysuckle	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 558-19
	10th AD	Cuddapah	AP	Lotus	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 647-64
90	10th AD	Ellora	MR	<i>Kalpavriksha</i> Tree	Decoration	Gupte & Mahajan, <i>AEAC</i>	PL. CXLI, Fig. 2
92	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Palm Tree	Symbol of Victory	F W data	AIIS. 169-33

CHART IV

FAUNA AS DEPICTED IN DECORATION AND IN EVERY DAY LIFE

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
1	2nd BC	Bhaja	MR	Horse	Transportation	Burgess, <i>RBCT</i>	Fig. 5
2	2nd BC	Bhaja	MR	Horse	Transportation	Burgess, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XL I a
3	2nd BC	Amaravati	AP	Horse	Transportation	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	PL X, Fig. 3
4	2nd BC	Bhaja	KN	Bull	Fighting	Burgess, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XCVI, Fig. 4
5	2nd BC	Karle	MR	Horse	Transportation	Burgess, <i>RBCT</i>	PL. VI
6	2nd BC	Bhaja	MR	Elephant	Helper with rider	F W data	AIIS. 655 -27
7	2nd BC	Bhaja	MR	Horse	Transportation	Burgess, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XCI, a
	1st BC	Amaravati	AP	Buffalo	Economy	Fergusson, <i>TSWSA</i>	PL. LXXXIV
9	1st BC	Bedsa	MR	Horse	Transportation	F W data	AIIS. 655. 54
10	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Transportation	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMGM</i>	Fig. 5
11	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Cattle	Agriculture	Fergusson, <i>TSWSA</i>	PL VII, Fig. a
12	1st AD	Amaravati	AP	Cattle	Transportation	Gangoly, <i>AnS</i>	PL. XXII
13	1st AD	Karle	MR	Elephant	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 654.88
14	2nd AD	Nasik	MR	Lion	Transportation	F W data	AIIS. 688.45
15	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Cattle	Economy	A. Ray, <i>LAEA</i>	Fig. 131
16	2nd AD	Kondivita	MR	<i>Nāga</i>	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 685-11
17	2nd AD	Nasik	MR	Lion ,Bull	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 688-27
18	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	<i>Makara</i>	Decoration	F W data	AIIS. 286-11
19	2nd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Transportation war purpose	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMM</i>	PL. LVII, Fig. 1
20	2nd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Elephant	Transportation	N. Ray, <i>MPMA</i>	Fig. 90
21	2nd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Horse	Transportation	<i>ASIAR</i>	PL. XLIV a

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
23	2nd AD	Gulbarga	KN	Bullock	Transportation	F W data	AIIS. 276 -72
24	3rd AD	Paithan	MR	Horse	Transportation	F W data	W. Spink . 789-23
25	3rd AD	Joli	AP	Bullock	Transportation	Rosen Stone, <i>BAN</i>	Fig. 251
26	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Horse	Transportation	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XIX b
27	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Parrot	Auspiciousness	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 61
28	3rd AD	Jewagiri	MR	Bullock	Transportation	<i>MADHU</i>	PL. XLII, Fig. d
29	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Hock	Amusement	<i>QJMS</i> , V.LIV	Fig. 2
30	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Elephant	Transportation	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. LIV, Fig. b
31	3rd AD	Amaravati	AP	Elephant	Transportation	Sivaramamurti, <i>ASMM</i>	PL. L, Fig. 1
32	3rd AD	Kanheri	MR	Camel	Decoration	Fergusson, <i>CTI</i>	Fig. 63
33	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Horse	Transportation	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XXXV a
34	3rd AD	Paithan	MR	Horse	Transportation	F W data	WS. 1146-72
35	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Monkey, Lion	Forest Scene	Longhurst, <i>MASI</i>	PL. XLV, Fig. b
36	3rd AD	Nagarjunakonda	AP	Crow	Decoration	Ramachandra Rao, <i>AS</i>	PL. XXX, Fig. a
37	5th AD	Kanheri	MR	Elephant	Transportation	Motichandra, <i>SSPWM</i>	PL 71
38	5th AD	Ajanta	MR	Parrot	Decoration	Bhadouria, <i>WIA</i>	PL. XXXII
39	5th AD	Ajanta	MR	Ram	Amusement	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	Fig. 37b
40	5th AD	Ajanta	MR	Horse	Transportation	Motichandra, <i>SSPWM</i>	Fig. 26
41	6th AD	Badami	KN	Elephant	Transportation	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. L 1, Figs. 2, 3, 4
42	6th AD	Ellora	MR	Horse	Transportation	Pathy, <i>EAC</i>	PL. 45
43	6th AD	Ajanta	MR	Buffalo	Fighting	Burgess, <i>CTI</i>	PL. XL I
44	6th AD	Badami	KN	Horse	Transportation	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLII, Fig. 3, 4
45	6th AD	Badami	KN	Donkey	Transportation	Burgess, <i>RECT</i>	PL. XLII, Fig. 1

S.NO	DATE	PLACE	STATE	SPECIMEN	CONTEXT	REFERENCE	PLATE
46	6th AD	3adami	KN	Dove	Decoration	F W data	Ph. 24
47	6th AD	3adami	KN	Elephant	Decoration	F W data	AIS.149 -15
48	7th AD	Mukhalingam	AP	Parrot	Decoration	F W data	AIS. 558-18
49	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Bull & Elephant	Fighting	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 197
50	7th AD	Pattadakal	KN	Lion, Elephant	Fighting	F W data	Ph. 57
51	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Lion	Guardian	Louis, <i>ITS</i>	PL. 47, 55
52	7th AD	Ellora	MR	Elephant	Elephant	Michell, <i>HT</i>	PL. 18
53	8th AD	Alampur	AP	Tortoise	Pañchatantra	Sarma, 7T	PL. 131
54	8th AD	Ellora	MR	Elephant	Transportation	Pathy, <i>EAC</i>	PL. XXXIII
55	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Camel	Transportation	F W data	AIS. 559 -3
56	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Elephant	Hunting	F W data	AIS. 560 -77
57	8th AD	Srikakulam	AP	Parrot	Decoration	F W data	AIS. 560 -20
58	10th AD	Mysore	KN	Dog, tiger	Enjoyment	Sivaramamurti, <i>ABIS</i>	PL. 49
59	10th AD	Alampur	AP	Lion	Forest Scene	Khan, <i>SSAM</i>	Fig. 101

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Deccan region has been rich in natural resources from time immemorial. A variety of natural rock and cave formations as well as the availability of different building materials has allowed its inhabitants to occupy and construct monuments relating to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. Our main concern has been to study nature as depicted on only the Buddhist and Hindu monuments built from roughly 3rd century BC to the 10th century AD. It is striking that the artists of ancient Deccan brought to the forefront nature, especially Fauna and Flora in decorating these monuments. Was this done because nature was central to these religious philosophies or, merely because as part of decoration they were instructed to do so by their patrons? Flora and Fauna on religious buildings did have an underlying philosophical and symbolism. Infact, even when not depicted as part of the divine beings, their decorative elements were also imbued with a rich meaning. In many ways therefore, depiction of nature in early art of the Deccan reflects not only the religious ethos but also a close relationship between human beings and their natural environment.

In the introductory Chapter we placed the study of depiction of nature in sculptural art of Deccan against the background of the various meanings of art and nature. This led us to explain the various views of scholars and the respective schools of art they represented. The relationship between art and nature was thus highlighted and the notion of Indian culture's attitude to nature pervading Indian art was highlighted. Towards the end of this chapter we described the region of our study and

also gave a description of source **materials and the methodology adopted** for analysis in this thesis.

In the second Chapter on **Historiography** we examined and described writings on Indian art by different scholars and the way they focused on nature. In this regard, we divided the various views discussed in this chapter chronologically beginning with the earliest concepts about it in the 13th -17th century writings of travellers followed by the scholars who wrote during the 17th -18th century. The tendency to write on Indian art changed considerably during the 19th century AD and this had an impact on the notions of various scholars during the 20th century AD. Additionally, we demarcated between scholars who wrote during the early 20th century from those who wrote after independence from the mid-20th century onwards. We found that during the 13th-17th centuries most of the writings on Indian art were mere descriptive accounts, often projecting Indian art as somewhat derogatory. We noted that writings of this period were marked by prejudice because these scholars were primarily amateur travellers with a lack of in depth knowledge about Indian culture and were further deep rooted in western ideology. Therefore, they vilified Indian Gods and Goddesses insulting them as monstrous and evil. Though writings of the 17th century increased in describing the depiction of nature in Indian art studies, those on the Deccan art were few. We observed that their main interest was on iconography and especially on providing details of decoration. In the following century, that is, from the 17th to the 18th century AD, we noted that the writings of scholars were relatively more sympathetic to Indian history and art, and they largely considered Indian art as sublime. However, many of **them** measured every thing from the in scientific point of view. The 18th century scholars focussed more on

documentation of Indian art. Further, they were trained in appreciating natural art and therefore, studied depiction of nature in art by comparing the Indian notions with the classical Greek and Roman traditions. The scholars of the 19th century were more concerned with the interpretation of art than its mere documentation. They were however, both critical and sympathetic to it. Their discussion on nature was less because most of them were administrators and surveyors. Thus, their main contribution was that they reproduced photographs of sculptural representations of nature like flora and fauna as found in the Deccan in their reports and books.

In contrast to the views of these scholars, we have we during the early twentieth century, the writings of certain scholars who in most of their writings viewed Indian art critically. Scholars like Percy Brown and Vincent Smith often compared early Indian art with the Greek and Roman art and found Indian art as less impressive compared to the former. Since these scholars were looking at Indian art through the foreign eye, using their own parameters, they naturally could not appreciate importance and particular relevance of the nature in Indian art. The historians and archaeologists of the early twentieth century questioned the colonial interpretations of the concept of nature and its depiction in Indian art by focusing on it as the central theme of understanding the entire world view of the early artistic and sculptural depictions.

The early twentieth century thus also saw writings that gave special emphasis to understanding the ethos of Indian art while writings of the post independent era brought about a study of art on the particular regions of the subcontinent. Scholars like Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch began a trend that was appreciative of the integral

view of Indian art that was built on the concept of nature. We noted that their influence on studies between the 1940's and 1980's was immense and therefore, works on the depiction of nature in Indian art increased. This included the depiction of nature in the art of the different regions of the Deccan. In fact, it is only now that some articles came to be written exclusively on nature emphasising on the depiction of flora and fauna in Indian art. Finally, studies on regional art began to proliferate during the mid-twentieth century. These were mainly dynastic or site studies and some of them discussed depiction of nature by giving examples. However, they are mainly descriptive and give iconographic details rather than making any attempt to analyze the depictions. Methodologically, too they did not change the earlier practices of how art studies had been moulded under the colonial period.

Having discussed the broad trends in which art history on the subcontinent developed, we have found that in each phase of its evolution the depiction of nature remained 'peripheral to the larger concerns on the writing about the sculptural art of early India. Though many regional studies began to be done right from the nineteenth century onwards, they remained mainly descriptive projecting the sculptural panels depicting flora and fauna as only something extra in their respective reports and books that were focussed on themes around different regions, dynasties or sites. As discussed above, only a few scholars have clearly articulated the centrality of nature in the experience and craft of the artists and have given due emphasis to it in appreciating the vitality of early Indian art. From the point of view of the Deccan fragmented studies on highlighting the depiction of nature in the art of the different states-- Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka- of the Deccan have been done, but only for specific time periods. It is this lacunae that the present study hopes to fill.

Next, in Chapter Three, we studied fauna depicted in Buddhist sculptural art. This chapter shows how and why animals and birds as a part of nature appeared on early Buddhist monuments of the Deccan. We discuss in this chapter three broad themes: (a) importance of animals in Buddhism (b) animals and birds that assumed the form of Bodhisattva and (c) animals and birds as they appeared during the major events the Buddha's life. On the first of these themes we discussed various descriptions from different texts that explained the close relationship of animals, to Buddhist ethics and the beliefs on the depiction of Bodhisattva as animals and birds during his various lives. Similarly, the association of animals and birds with the great events of the life of the Buddha were also closely analyzed in the context of the overall belief system.

In describing the importance of animals we came across the fact that traditionally animals had great symbolic meaning. Though animals often lived in painful and dangerous ways, and in the evolutionary process were considered at a lower ladder, the Buddhist treated them as equal as human beings. In fact, many Buddhist texts tell us of punishments imposed if animals were ill-treated. The animals were also considered important in the socio-economic life of the people and it was recognized that animals and humans had to live in close association. In this chapter we have given an account on how animals helped the Buddha during his lifetime and how in an animal or bird form looked after people in his previous life. Thus, the symbolic importance of animals and birds in Buddhism cannot be overlooked. It is perhaps for this reason that they were so frequently used as a medium of expression to convey important ideas about the Buddha and his preaching to the people at large.

On theme two we noted that the artistic representation of animals and birds in his former life and animals associated with Buddha on the monuments of the Deccan as depicted by the artists was both naturalistic and idealistic. For instance, the depictions of the elephants in the dream of Maya were naturalistic whereas the elephants in palanquins carried by dwarfs on the same theme were idealistic. In another example the Bodhisattva as snake in the Amaravati sculptural art is portrayed realistically, while the depictions of the *naga mucilinda* with multi-hoods protecting the Buddha closely followed the legend but was far removed from how snakes appear in their natural form. We noticed the fact that in some representations of animals and birds the artist used the synoptic method. Here, the animals were shown smaller than their normal size. The most common theme where this method was used, because of narrow space was available for elephants in Maya's dream. Often in telling a *Jataka* story like that of the *Mora Jataka* or in the depiction of the *Hasti Jataka* too this method was used.

The artists had mastered the technique of narrating stories through the art medium. In the descriptions of this chapter we observed that the representation of the *Hare Jataka* and the *Javasakana Jataka* were masterpieces. We can say that this was possible because the sculptors were well versed in the Buddhist tradition. However, the style and form of the animals and birds chiselled was most often naturalistic. They also used their imagination in a creative way. In a scene, when the elephants pour water over the mother, they are shown holding pitcher delicately on their trunks. This scene is usually depicted with elephants standing on either side of Maya as in the specimen from Junnar.

Similarly, on theme three in this chapter we noted that different forms of bull connected with the Master's birth were depicted. In the depiction of the Great Departure, we noticed the artists followed both the **Mahāyāna** and the Theravada traditions and further, we saw variations in embellishments on the royal animals from period to period. For instance, the horse from Pitalkhora was shown plainly whereas, the one at Nagarjunakonda was showed bedecked richly. The artists also kept in mind the mood of the theme being depicted. Therefore, the depiction of elephants in Mārā's assault on the Buddha is shown to look ugly and ferocious. On the other hand, on the same theme this animal while running away after the attack shows his movement as fearful due to the great triumph of the Master. The artists were at their best when they depicted various forms and mood of the *naga*. They are shown both in a stylized and natural form. Most importantly, their varied forms reveal the scope of their association with the human world. The artists took great care to show these different forms of the *naga* with great sensitivity indicating simultaneously, their significance to the religious thought of the Buddhists.

The depiction of fauna in early Buddhist art was not only varied and stylistically rich in form but also closely entwined with the ideological content as defined by the early Buddhist practitioners of the Deccan. When we examined in detail the animals in the great events of the life of the Buddha, we found that the largest number of animals depicted were elephants. In terms of numbers the deer was next as this signified the preaching of the *Dhamma* in the first place the Buddha did so after attaining *nirvana*. The representation of horse was equivalent to the number of times the *naga Mucilinda* was depicted in the examples we took up for study. The

depiction of the bull and the monkey was, however, rare. Therefore, we observed that representation of elephant in the great events of the life of the Buddha was outstanding and it had a special significance in Buddhist lore. It appears in the art at the auspicious moment of Buddha's birth, as his protector and worshipper but also as his attacker. Similarly, the horse and deer appear at critical moments of the decision Lord Buddha had to make about leaving his home and family and then returning to society to preach the Law of Dhamma, respectively. We concluded that there was also change in the way the animals were depicted in the Deccan art. The artists showed the animals as Bodhisattva in a rather natural form while some animals associated with his early life were portrayed with rich ornamentation. We also studied the creative skill of the artists. For instance, the *naga* was chiselled with several hoods, which cannot of course be observed in nature and was therefore, part of the artist's imagination to show how the *naga* ably protected the Buddha. In some of the depictions animals with bad character and intent co-existed with animals that went out of their way to help others in their miseries. We also noticed some influence of art motifs borrowed from Gandhara, and Bharut that indicate exchange of ideas in art between those regions and Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. This indicated that art work related to Buddhism had some common themes that artists, irrespective of region or site, had mastered in their sculptural depictions.

In Chapter Four we took up the discussion on how fauna was depicted in Hindu sculptural art of Deccan. In this chapter we categorized broadly two sorts of animals that were graphically described as demons attacking Gods and Goddesses, and those that were friendly often associated as helping the elements of truth and goodness. These animals associated with Hindu belief were described under three

broad themes. These **are those that explained the importance of animals in Hinduism**, animal depicted in various texts on **Hinduism** and animals performing as vehicles of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. As the first theme in this chapter in each case we first described the importance and symbolic meaning of the animals as given by scholars. It was important to discuss the respective nature of different animals and birds as it was due to this that their relationship with Hindu Gods and Goddesses could best be described and highlighted. The sculptors tried to follow this pattern in their artistic depictions. For this chapter one hundred and eighty nine specimens were studied. Out of them ninety seven appeared as vehicles of various deities, nine were considered divine, fourteen were described as demons, four of them were gods in zoomorphic form while two were in theriomorphic form and lastly, two were forms given to saints. The method employed for description was both comparative and interpretative through allegory. Undoubtedly, the popularity of a variety of fauna as vehicles of various deities stands out as their most visible representation.

As part of theme two in this chapter we tried to understand the depiction of Gods, Goddesses and saints in their animal and bird incarnations and animals and birds, while not denying that Gods and Goddesses also fought with them. In this regard, we noted that animals and birds were in zoomorphic form (i.e., animals and birds in the original form) and theriomorphic form (re., animals assuming half-human and half-animal or bird form). This emphasized on the fact that a clear-cut distinction between the animal and human forms was sometimes not maintained underlying an important conceptual basis of this world-view. Our data provided ample examples where the sculptor depicted these animals and birds in the sequence of the stories related in the *Purana* and other such texts **that** narrated the traditions where human and

animal association was extremely close and intimate. Apart from this, we have discussed the symbolic meanings of each of these animals in their different incarnations that further underscore this close linkage between the two. In some of the stories narrated particularly those revolving around the God Krishna which was popularly depicted in the sculptural art of the Deccan, we also noted that the human and divine elements as personified through animals also came into conflict. These depictions reflected the destructive aspects of nature, which the humans were continually being warned about. This study thus helped us to understand the importance of nature in Hindu religious art and how the sculptor visualized these animals and birds in their real form thus lending it the color of depicting nature as part of the interplay of the larger forces of the cosmic, divine and human life.

As part of theme there in this chapter we had to necessarily describe a number of animals as the vehicles of Gods and Goddesses. Seventy-five specimens were taken up of animals such as bull, lion, horse, lion, deer, elephant, goat, ram and rat. Fifteen of the examples were of aquatic animals like *makara*, crocodile and tortoise and twenty-five examples were of birds such as *garuda*, swan, peacock and owl. Of the animals the numbers of bulls discussed were greater than the horse, followed closely by the lion. The deer, elephant, buffalo and goat appeared in more or less the same number with a couple of examples of the rat and ram. The number of examples of the *garuda*, swan and peacock were the same while the owl occurred only once in the data collected by us.

In the depiction of animals and birds as vehicles of various Gods and Goddesses it was emphasized that they were projected as serving particular divine

Masters and Mistresses in **performing their duties**. Important depictions of swan as the mount of Brahma, Garuda, the vehicle of **Visnu** and the bull as vehicle of Siva are well known. We not only described these but also animals like the lion, the vehicle of Mahisasuramardini, the rat as vehicle of Ganesa, the elephant as vehicle of Indra, the goat and the deer (stag) as vehicle of Agni, the buffalo as vehicle of Yama (god of death) and the *makara* as mount of Vayu. Some birds like the peacock as vehicle of Subrahmanya and owl the mount of **Laksmi** were also described and detailed.

Comparatively speaking, the quantity of the bull specimens that were associated with Siva were found in large numbers on the Deccan monuments than the other animals. By and large their depiction was naturalistic. It was noticed that the bull with big body and broad face in the Maharashtra region looked healthier than those depicted in other parts of the Deccan region. Generally, with regard to most animals the later phase shows that the artists while chiselling the sculptures began to adorn the animals with different kinds of ornamentation. This emerged in different ways indicating that artists belonging to different schools or having got different guidance used their own artistic skills to make the animals and birds look pleasing and attractive to the worshippers. Though the embellishments seem to be reflection of the artist's mind we noticed an evolution of ornamentation from period-to-period and region-to-region that definitely indicates the existence of different schools specific to particular localities. Culturally, a large number of animals and birds associated with particular deities showed the prominence of that particular region. Apart from variation in style we also observed that emotions were well-depicted. The two types of lion that were associated with the Goddess Mahisasuramardini are a good example. The animal seated beside the deity usually looked tame while the one in action on the

battlefield was sculptured in a ferocious manner. The artist gave special emphasis on the appearance of the animal in each case especially in the latter case as he was narrating the most famous story of the destruction of evil. Though in a reality ferocious animals like the lion was never shown in close proximity to human beings, through the work of the artists it was indicated that even such a ferocious animal could help humankind by helping in the destruction of evil.

In the descriptions and discussion of Chapter Five, we emphasized that decoration was an important element of art and it played a vital role in producing the ideal form of beauty. For achieving a beautiful form and aesthetic response, a variety of decorative motifs were used in the Deccan sculpture. Nature in terms of flora like trees full of (lowers and foliage, fruits, lotuses, creepers, flowers, Honeysuckles and fauna like horses carrying royal personages and engaged in war, elephants both in war scenes and as helpers in public activities, elephants in hunting, camels in travel, oxen and bulls in everyday life, buffaloes, bulls, cocks in the role of amusements and birds such as doves carrying fruits and parrot breaking fruits all occupied an essential place in their compositions.

In this chapter, we first discussed the importance of decoration, followed by the depiction of flora in decoration as part of the symbolism of life and finally, the depiction of animals and birds in decoration on the religious monuments. We explained the hypothesis of this chapter in that the artists commonly used the things found in nature as decorative motifs and exchanged their ideas through art motifs from both within localities and from contiguous regions. The number of flora and fauna in each theme varied from region to region and over time. In this regard, there

was no uniform pattern or iconographic rules that were followed but rather, artistic convention was followed and the relevance of the subject matter for the viewer of these depictions.

For the purpose of the above descriptions this chapter had been divided into three parts viz. (i) the importance of decoration in order to define its meaning from various dictionaries and texts, (ii) the depiction of trees, flowers and foliage in decoration, nature and every day life (iii) the depiction of animals and birds in decoration, nature and every day life. A special emphasis was given to selecting special specimens for these descriptions so that for each theme, we described at least one example. A comparative method was employed in seeing the variations in each of these specimens. When we analysed these specimens in a region-wise the data showed similarities and differences. We were thus able to identify common themes and those in which exchange of art motifs took place against the background of regional variations.

As gleaned from above descriptions in this chapter animals were engaged in various functions but flora like trees, lotuses, leaves, creepers, foliage and fruits played a major symbolic role in these depictions. The artists represented different sorts of trees. We observed trees conveying symbolic meanings in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Thus, we could see how nature intervened in conveying religious ideas. Some trees, however, were represented as mere decorations. Relatively speaking, the banyan and the pipal tree in Andhra were more popular than in Maharashtra and Karnataka during the earlier period. But the trees in the **Amaravati** depictions were

found to be stylised, whereas trees in other regions were depicted more naturalistically. The **Jambu** trees under which the Buddha meditated was noticed at Amaravati and **Gummadidurru** that were similar but, the flowering tree under the Buddha was shown lying depicted at Ajanta was not found in any other part of the Deccan region. During the later period mango trees with clusters of fruits were found equally depicted in both Karnataka and Maharashtra. Nevertheless, the fruits depicted in Maharashtra were seen as being bigger than that those represented at Karnataka.

Similarly, among the flowers depicted we found continuity and change in the depiction of the lotus. During the earlier period, various forms of lotus such as coming out from the auspicious pot, as the seat of the Buddha and other deities were found prolifically depicted. The depiction of lotus coming out from the auspicious pot continued during the later period as well. A profound evolution was noticed in the use of lotus as seat of Brahma and lotus issuing from the navel of Visnu, in the form of the creation of the Universe that could not be overlooked. The lotus floating on the water was probably difficult to depict and so we found only one such example at Kessanapali. Apart from lotus we found different varieties of garlands depicted that had symbolic meaning but were often depicted in a naturalistic form. The garlands carried by *Vyalas* and *Yaksas* in zoomorphic form and anthropomorphic form were unusual but found in several specimen examples.

Under theme three of this chapter we described different animals and birds in various roles depicted in the Deccan sculptural art. The artists represent most of animals, as they were actually found and working in their respective environment. In some scenes, however, we found that the artist depicted them using his imagination.

For example, the activities of **the** cow, **bull** and ox **were portrayed how** they must have participated in the everyday life of **the** people. The artists were undoubtedly aware of the value of these animals for the farmers in the fields and for drawing and dragging carts. Before the invention of the vehicle fixed with engine, transport to travel from place to place was done on the back of the animals like elephants and horses. These animals also played an important role in wars and both have been prolifically depicted in the sculptural art. Hunting of animals through the ages was a major activity of human beings and this activity has also been depicted. We noticed the depiction of animals and birds in amusement and pastime of the people as well. Through these depictions we closely observed the interaction between animals and birds and human beings. For instance, the parrot rested on the shoulder and hand of people and doves were used for carrying message etc.

In the above depictions and descriptions of flora and fauna we thus found complex human needs and dependence on nature. Many of these depictions were artistically and beautifully represented indicating the close observations of nature by the artists. Though we suggested above that nature in these depictions was primarily of utilitarian values-- for decoration and use in every day life— it must also be stressed that the symbolic meaning of the trees, creepers, flowers, fruits, animals and birds was never lost. In fact, it would be appropriate to conclude that the human interaction of nature was not merely materialistic but rather, it was rooted in an ethos that viewed and valued nature with respect.

Finally, contributions of the present work can be highlighted. One of the major contributions of this study has been underscoring the importance of nature in the

study of sculptural art pertaining to all three sub-regions of the Deccan together, which has not been done so far by any art historians. Earlier studies as pointed out above are either on individual states with either present-day boundaries or, those defined by ancient dynasties or, still further only on particular sites. This study tries to give a more holistic picture of the region as a whole on a subject that has hitherto not been much importance in art history. The iconography of human figures or architectural forms of various religious structures have drawn the largest attention of scholarly world. However, the recognition that depiction of nature in terms of the depiction of fauna and flora should be seen as integral to iconographic as well as architectural studies has been our particular contribution in taking up this study for the present thesis.

Our second major contribution in this the study has been to give an emphasis on noticing similarities and differences found in the form and style of depicting nature in different contexts. We have done this by dividing our study into different phases of the evolution of art in the early historic that is primarily reflected on Buddhist monuments and the early medieval periods primarily reflected on Hindu monuments. For example, in our data we have noticed that when the elephant was depicted as Bodhisattva in the Buddhist context it appeared more naturalistic than the elephant as vehicle of Indra in the Hindu context, which appears stylistically more decorative and with little movement. On the other hand, when the elephant was depicted as a part of the royal scene, we noticed that in both Buddhist and Hindu contexts it appears identical with decorations and ornamentation. Further, we have also noticed similarities and differences in the depiction of nature in the sub-regional context. For instance, the data collected by us shows that the form and type of lotus depicted at

Amaravati and at **Alampur** of later period is similar. Similarly, the killing of the elephant by Krishna depicted at **Badami** and Pattadakal in Karnataka was found depicted in a similar way at Srikakulam, which is in present-day Andhra Pradesh. On the other hand, the depiction of trees too shows various differences in the Western and the Eastern Deccan. For example, the **Pipal** tree shaped like the sun depicted at Kanheri is not natural in style while a similar sort of tree at Amaravati is naturalistic as it is found in the nature. Therefore, our data indicates that there was exchange of art motifs in these regions through the ages. There are also similarities in ornamentation of animals from one region to another that suggests to us that the artists working in these regions might be from the same guild or got trained in the same school.

Though the emphasis in this thesis, in quantative terms, has been to describe the multitude of animals known in the world of the ancient and early medieval Deccan, it has been an important contribution of our study to treat the depiction of both flora and fauna in their essential ideological settings. Decorative art in particular has hitherto been depicted in art histories as though it was meant to only fill up space on the doorways or borders of monuments. In the present study we have specially emphasized that the decorative elements like creepers, auspicious pots, trees, mythical animals *etc.*, had a fundamental symbolism that could not be detached from them. Therefore, if the beauty of these decorative aspects was outstanding it could not be devoid of the essence and value of the meaning of life in nature that they conveyed. At the same time they also conveyed the symbiotic relationship between the human and natural environment. This aspect of course gets more explicitly illustrated in the descriptions we have included of the use of animals and birds in everyday life that were also vividly depicted on the Deccan monuments.

A final major contribution of our thesis is that some specimens depicting fauna and flora that had not been known to scholars on art history so far have been collected and described by us for the first time. For instance, scholars have suggested the tortoise and fish in relation to Visnu was not known for the early period but we have found one such examples from Deccan monuments. We also have found bull as Bodhisattva depicted in Nasik and *Kalpavrksha* tree in Aihole.

This chapter on **Conclusion** is followed by a list of all the sources consulted by us while writing this thesis in the form of a consolidated **Bibliography**. This thesis has four Charts (**Charts I- IV**) and about eighty nine specially selected plates (**Plates, I- LXXXIX**) that have been used extensively by us in making our descriptions in understanding the depiction of nature in the sculptural art beginning roughly from the 3rd century BC up to the 10th century AD.

The study thus made us realize that in quantitative terms animals, birds, trees, creepers, flower *etc.* were no less important than human beings. The ethos as reflected in this art was one that understood the human being as only one of the several elements that defined the natural environment of the times. Thus hopefully, this thesis on "**Depiction of Nature in the Sculptural Art of Early Deccan**" will provide the essential empirical basis for future studies to be based on, highlighting further, the non-human elements that went into the making of our cultural and natural environment in historical time. It will also provide data for further study on sculptural art of the Deccan region by comparing it with other parts of India. There is thus big scope for this type of art-historical study that does not treat the depiction of nature as

marginal to the ostensible central theme of the human endeavours in making artistic expressions possible.

At a philosophical level our descriptive endeavours of these artistic depictions of nature hope to drive home an important point, namely, that in early India aesthetics was not separated from the more functional and everyday aspects of life. Thus, the depiction of animals and birds, flowers, trees and creepers were not mere objects of observation, scrutiny and sculpting but were fundamentally essential for understanding a holistic view of life. The stories, emotions, work practices, amusements that these elements of nature, as put forth in the sculptural art, were equally part of an aesthetic world in as much as they were part of a functional or utilitarian world.

Thus, we hope that both at an empirical and conceptual level we have taken initial steps to bring the richness of this heritage before the scholarly world. It is now for future studies to explore the full potential of this theme at the micro-level for different sub-regions of the Indian sub-continent.

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PLATES



Plate I
Elephant, *Chhaddanta Jataka*, 2nd century AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

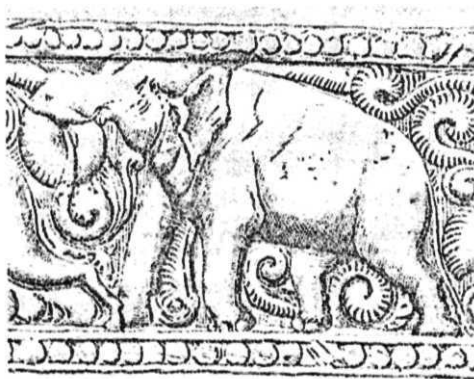


Plate II
Elephant, *Hasti Jataka*, 2nd century BC, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh



Plate III

Elephant, **Bodhisattva**, 2nd century AD, Sannati, Karnataka

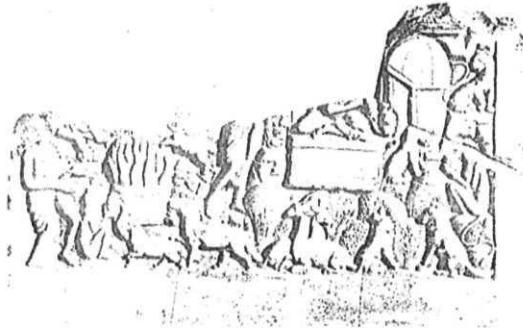


Plate IV

Hare, *Sasa Jataka*, 3rd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh



Plate V

Winged-Horse, *Valahassa Jataka*, 2nd century BC, Pitalkhora, Maharashtra

Deccan region distinctly mention stonecutters, masons and the chief artists, who supervised the construction work. The stonecutters were called *pāshanikas*, whereas the masons were known as the *selavaddhaki*. The names of stonecutters and other artisans are also known from Deccan region.⁴⁷ The Indian sculptor had a glorious tradition through the centuries, which resulted in several different schools of sculptural art developing in various parts of the country.⁴⁶

These sculptors must have worked very hard in presenting things from nature like lotus and other vegetative forms, born of the primeval waters, trees with abundant foliage and fruits, reptiles, animals from the hare to the lion, birds like cranes, swans, quail, *etc.* On the monuments of the Deccan region **till-date** there is no single comprehensive work that has studied this by combining together empirical data from the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. There are some scholars, namely, H. C. Raychaudari,⁴⁹ R. G. Bhandarkar,⁵⁰ Sumati Mulay,⁵¹ M. Dhavalikar,⁵² G. Yazdani,⁵³ V. V. Krishna Sastry,⁵⁴ B. Subba Rao," M. L. K. Murthy,⁵⁶ M. S. Nagaraja Rao,⁵⁷ O. C. Gangoly⁵⁸, R. N. Nandi,⁵⁹ A. S. Altekar,⁶⁰ who were interested in focusing on the Deccan at the macro and micro levels but they primarily studied pre and proto-historic period of the region or on general aspects of the history of the Deccan. Even for historical periods few studies have taken up the theme of nature as depicted by the sculptors on religious monuments. For **historical** periods the studies have in particular emphasized on the social, cultural and political conditions of the Deccan. Therefore, the present work is a humble endeavour in the direction of documenting the depiction of nature in the sculptural art of the Deccan.



Plate VI

Hamsa, Bodhisattva, 2nd century AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

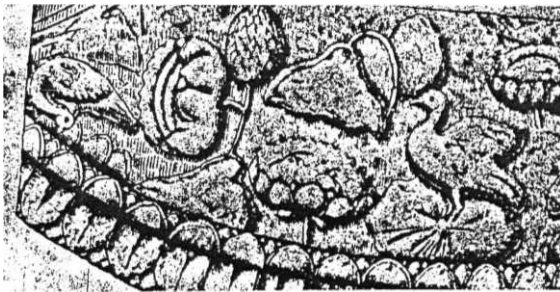


Plate VII

Quail, Bodhisattva, 2nd century AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh



Plate VIII

Snake, *Champeyya Jataka*, 3rd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh



Plate IX

Elephant, Birth of the Buddha, 2nd century BC, Nadsur, Maharashtra



Plate X

Bull, Birth of the Buddha, 2nd century AD, Nasik, Maharashtra

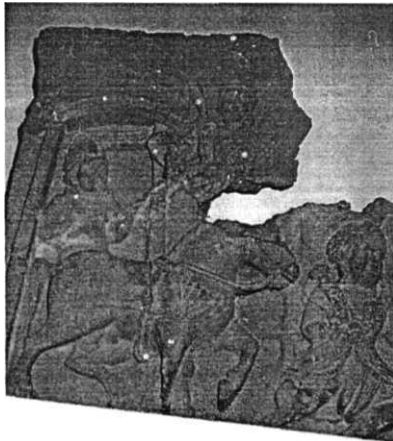


Plate .XI

Horse, Great Departure, 2nd century BC, Pitalkhora, Maharashtra



Plate XII

Horse, Great Departure, 3rd century AD, Nagarjiinakonda, Andhra Pradesh

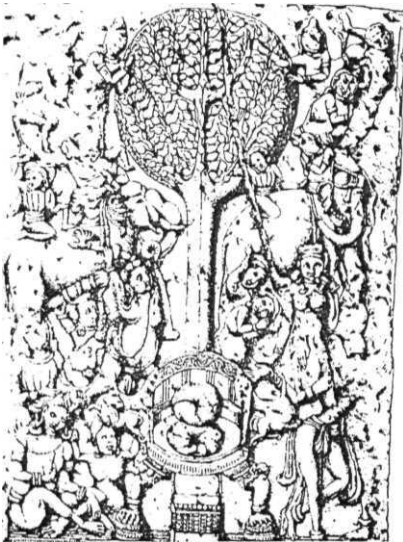


Plate XIII

Elephant, Assault of Mara, 2nd century BC, Ghantasala, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XIV

Elephant, Assault of Mara, 5th century AD, Ajanta, Maharashtra

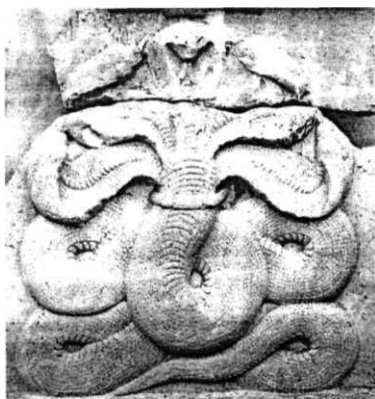


Plate XV

Nāga Mucilinda, Protection of the Buddha, 2nd century AD, Sannati, Karnataka

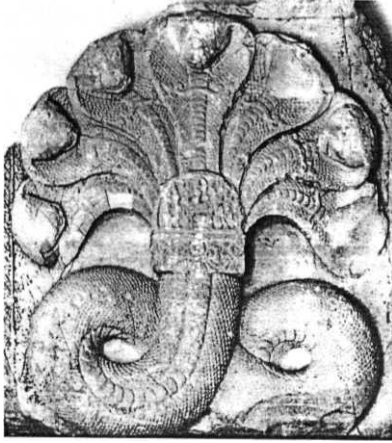


Plate XVI

Naga Mucilinda, 2nd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XVII

Deer, First Sermon, 3rd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XVIII
Deer, First Sermon, 5th century AD, Ajanta, Maharashtra



Plate XIX
Elephant, Niligiri, 3rd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XX
Elephant, Worshipping *Stūpa*, 2nd century AD, Kanheri, Maharashtra



Plate XXI
Fish, and bird, Incarnation of Vishnu, 10th century AD Alampur, Andhra Pradesh

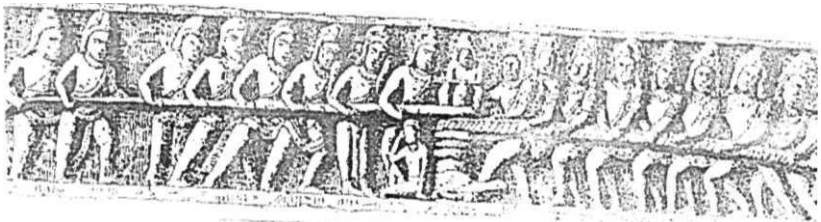


Plate XXII
Tortoise, Incarnation of Visnu, 6th century AD, Badami, Karnataka



Plate XXIII

Lion-Man, Incarnation of Visnu, 4th century AD, Kontomotu, Guntur District



Plate XXIV

Elephant and Tortoise, Gajendramoksha, 6th century AD, Pattadakal, Karnataka



Plate XXV

Boar-Man, Incarnation of Visnu, 8th century AD, Ellora, Maharashtra



Plate XXVI

Elephant-Man, Symbol of Luck, 8th century AD, Olumpatta, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XXVII

Calf, Krishna's Story, 6th century AD, Badami, Karnataka

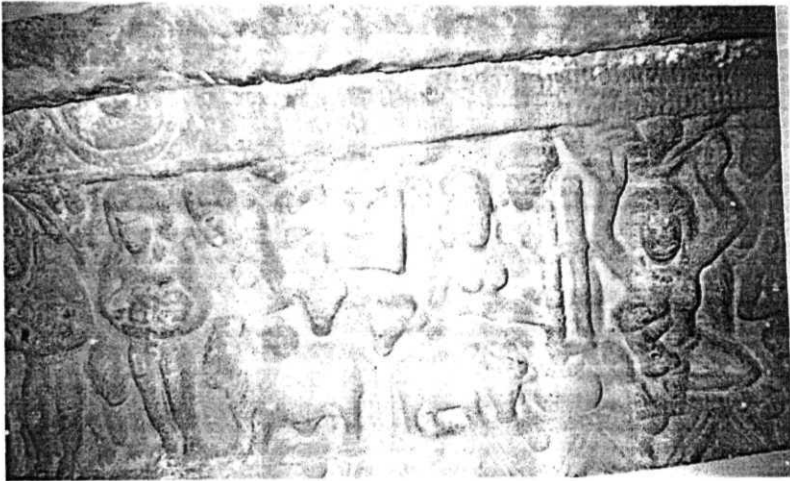


Plate XXVIII

Cow-mother, Krishna's Story, 6th century AD, Badami Museum, Karnataka



Plate XXIX

Sesasayi, Creation of Universe, 7th century AD, Aihole, Karnataka



Plate XXX

Sesasayi, Creation of Universe, 6th century AD, Badami, Karnataka



Plate XXXI

Snake, Emblem of Siva, 6th century AD, Aihole, Karnataka



Plate XXXII

Buffalo, Mahisasuramardini's Story, 8th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XXXIII

Boar, Ramayana Story, 10th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XXXIV

Garuda, Symbol of Auspiciousness, 6th century AD, Badami, Karnataka



Plate XXXV

Jatayu, Ramayana Story, 7th century AD, Pattadakal, Karnataka



Plate XXXVI

Bull, Vehicle of Siva, 7th century AD, Pattadakal, Karnataka



Plate XXXVII

Bull, Vehicle of Siva, 9th century AD, Bikkavolu, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XXXVIII

Bull, Vehicle of Siva, 10th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XXXIX

Horse, Vehicle of Surya, 1st century BC, Bhaja, Maharashtra



Plate XL

Animals, Vehicle of Adista, 10th century AD, Gadambahalli, Karnataka



Plate XLI

Lion, Vehicle of Mahisasuramardini, 8th century AD, Ellora, Maharashtra



Plate XLII

Goat, Vehicle of Agni, 5th century AD, Badami, Karnataka



Plate XLIII

Buffalo, Vehicle of Yama, 8th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate XLIV

Makara, Vehicle of Varuna, 8th century AD, Aihole, Karnataka



Plate XLV

Crocodile, Vehicle of Yamuna, 8th century AD, Ellora, Maharashtra



Plate XLVI

Swan, Vehicle of Brahma, 6th century AD, Aihole, Karnataka



Plate XLVII

Peacock, **Vehicle** of Subramanya, 8th century AD, **Dharwar** Museum, Karnataka



Plate XLVIII

Asoka Tree, 3rd century AD, **the Birth of the Buddha**, Nagarjunakonda, **Andhra Pradesh**



Plate XLIX

Bodhi Tree, 2nd century AD, Decoration, **Kanheri**, Maharashtra



Plate L

Pipal Tree, Symbol of *Mahaparinirvana*, 6th century AD, Ajanta, Maharashtra

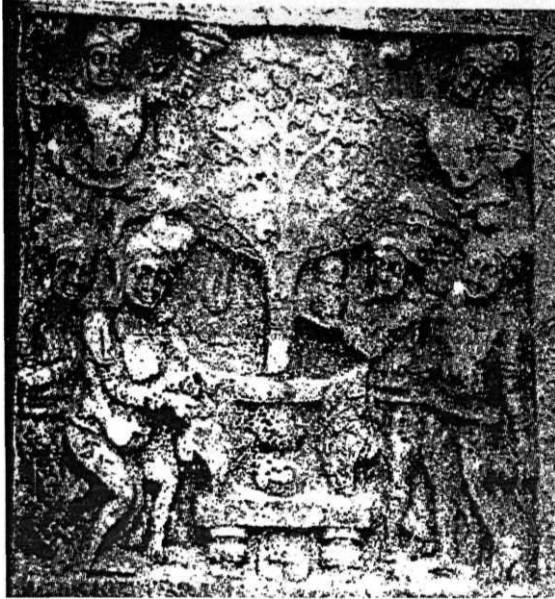


Plate LI

Banyan Tree, Decoration, 2nd century AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh



Palm Tree, Symbol of Victory, 10th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LIII

Sitaphal Tree, Decoration, 3rd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh



Mango Tree, 7th century AD, Symbol of immortality, Pattadakal, Karnataka



Plate LV

Kalpavriksha Tree, 8th century AD, Decoration, Aihole Museum, Karnataka



Plate LVI
Nāga, Roundel, 8th century AD, Decoration, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LVII
Lotus, Symbol of birth, 1st AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LVIII

Mango leaves, Birds and Ogre, Symbol of water, 8th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LIX

Lotus, Symbol of prosperity, 6th century AD, Kuda, Maharashtra



Plate LX

Lotus, 10th century AD, Symbol of fertility, Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh

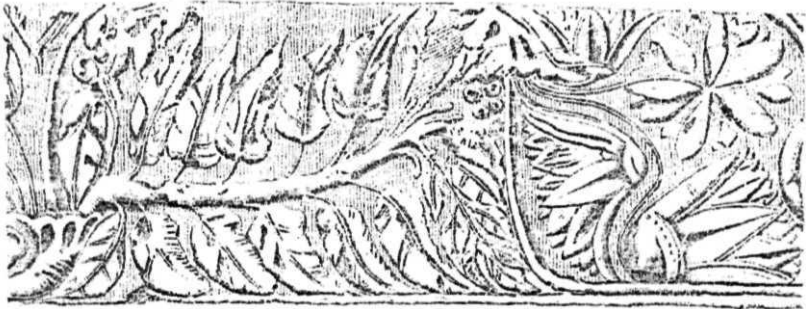


Plate LXI

Foliage, Decoration, 2nd century BC, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXII

Scroll, 8th century AD, Decoration, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXIII

Scroll, 8th century AD, Decoration, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXIV

Scroll, 8th century AD, Decoration, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXV

Honeysuckle, 9th century AD, Symbol of fecundity, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh

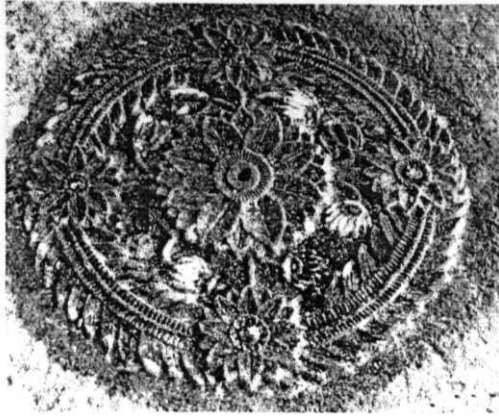


Plate LXVI

Rose-flower, Decoration, 2nd century BC, Nadsur, Maharashtra

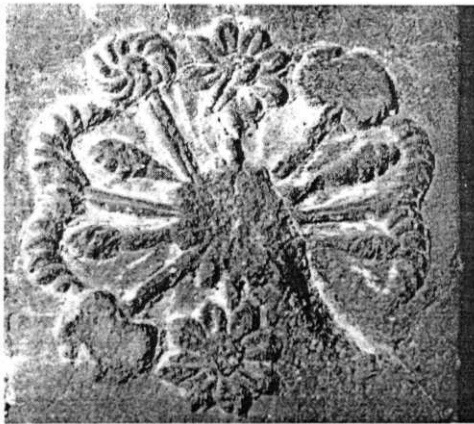


Plate LXVII

Lotus-flower, Decoration, 1st century BC, Bhaja, Maharashtra

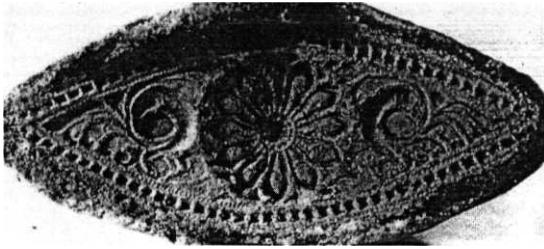


Plate LXVIII

Jasmine flower, Decoration, 1st century AD, Paithan, Maharashtra

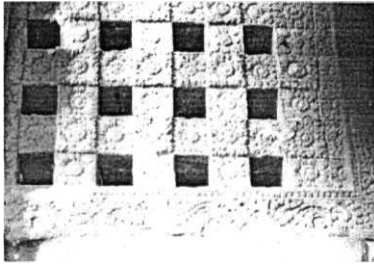


Plate LXIX

Flower, Decoration, 7th century AD, Aihole, Karnataka

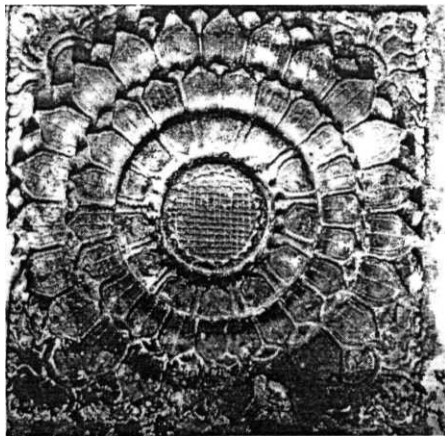


Plate LXX

Flower, Decoration, 8th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXXI

Garland, Decoration, 1st century BC, Bhaja, Maharashtra



Plate LXXII

Garland, Decoration, 7th century AD, Aihole, Karnataka



Plate LXXXIII

Horse, War Scene, 6th century AD, Badami, Karnataka



Plate LXXIV

Horse, Transportation, 3rd century AD, Paithan, Maharashtra



Plate LXXV

Bullock, Transportation, 2nd century AD, Gulbarga, Karnataka

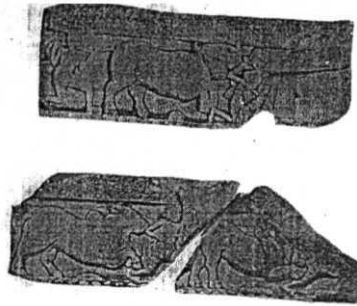


Plate LXXVI

Cattle, Agriculture, 1st century AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXXVII

Elephant, Helper with rider, 2nd century BC, Bhaja, Maharashtra

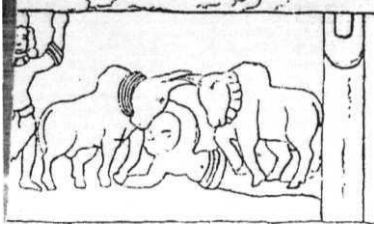


Plate LXXVIII

Bull, Amusement, 2nd century BC, Bhaja, Maharashtra

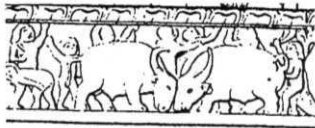


Plate LXXIX

Buffaloes, Amusement, 6th century AD, Ajanta, Maharashtra

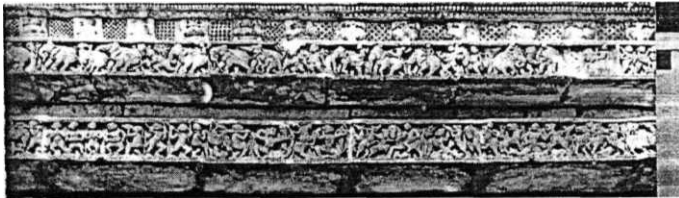


Plate LXXX

Elephant, Deer, Hunting, 8th century AD, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh



Plate LXXXI

Monkey, Lion, Forest Scene, 3rd century AD, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh

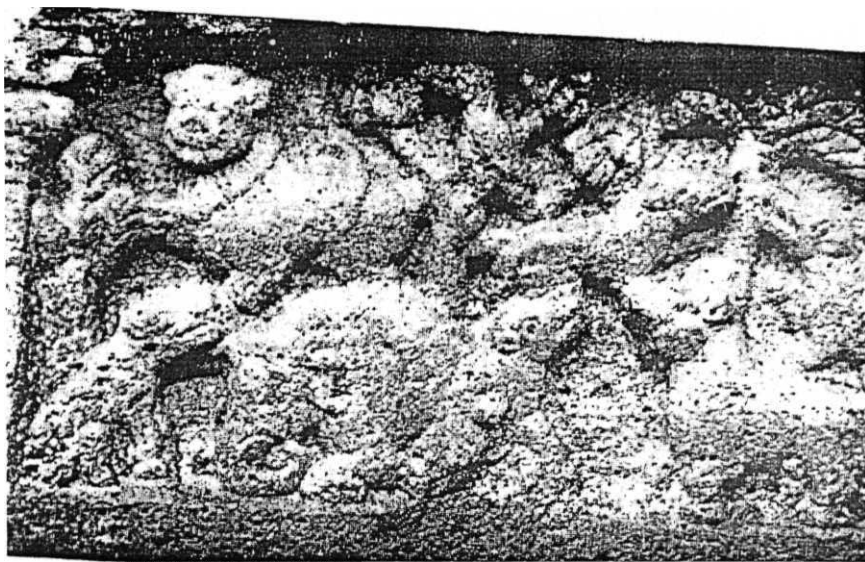


Plate LXXXII

Lion, Forest Scene, 10th century AD, Alampur, Andhra Pradesh

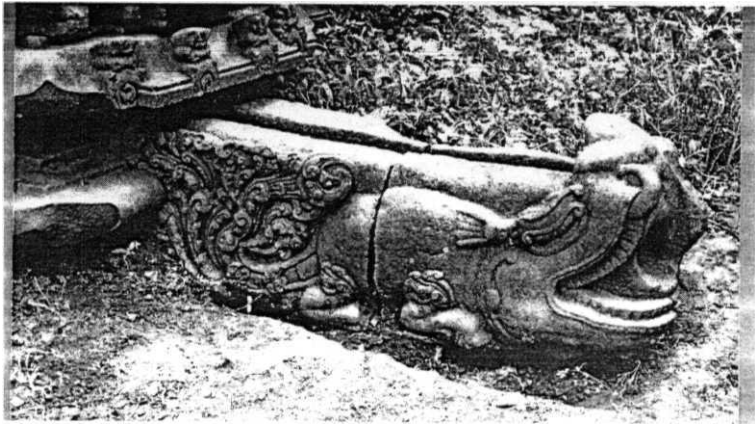


Plate LXXXIII

Makara, Decoration, 2nd century AD, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

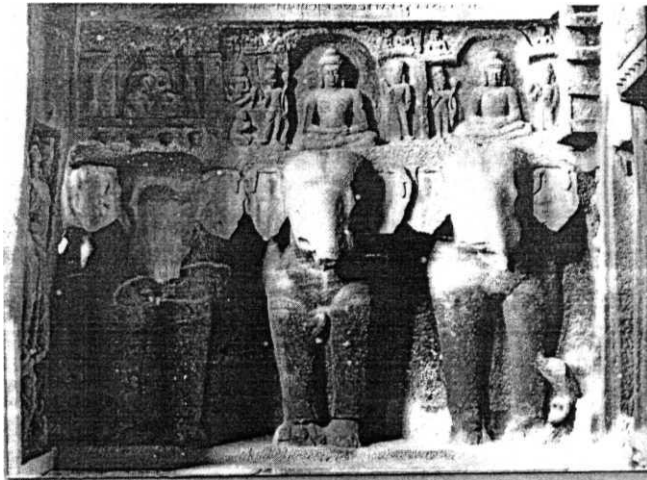


Plate LXXXIV

Elephant, Symbol of royal sovereignty, 1st century AD, **Karle**, Maharashtra



Plate LXXXV

Lion, Elephant, Fighting, 7th century AD, Pattadakal, Karnataka

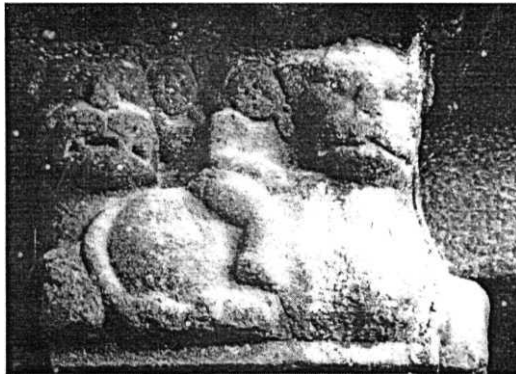


Plate LXXXVI

Lion, Transportation, 2nd century AD, Nasik, Maharashtra



Plate LXXXVII

Dove, Decoration, 6th century AD, Badami, Karnataka



Plate LXXXVIII

Parrot, Decoration, 5th century AD, Ajanta, Maharashtra



Plate LXXXIX

Parrot, Decoration, 8th century AD, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh