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 I (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 nature. 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 world. 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, 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 nature.

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

4
nature\textsuperscript{6} that continued during the later period as well. On the other hand, \textit{Ars} in ancient Latin, like \textit{Tekv} in Greek meant something quite different. It meant a craft or specialized form of book learning\textsuperscript{7}. 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 ar\textsuperscript{i} itself remains, insufficiently understood because it is primarily enjoyed.\textsuperscript{9} In fact it is suggested that folk-art is the product of mass culture\textsuperscript{10} 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\textsuperscript{11}. 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 environment\textsuperscript{12}. 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 time\textsuperscript{13}. 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\textsuperscript{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 vision\textsuperscript{17}.

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 enliven\textsuperscript{18}. 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 itself\textsuperscript{19}. 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\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{24}. Those who were not so enamoured of Indian art saw this indigenous art being strong in conventionalism and decoration\textsuperscript{25}. In a more appropriate understanding Indian art was seen as neither religious nor secular for the consistent fabric of Indian life was never rented 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.\textsuperscript{26}

In the classical Indian tradition, Art has been distinguished as \textit{Śilpa} and \textit{Kāla}. Literary references to \textit{Śilpa} allude to it as a work of art that represented a work of divine art.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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.\textsuperscript{28} References to various types or categories of artisans like \textit{rañjkara}, \textit{takśaska}, and \textit{hamhara} have been dealt with in the \textit{Vājasaneyi Śāmhitā} and the \textit{Taittirīya Brahmana}. The \textit{Mahāvastu} referred to artists like \textit{Kōśavika} (box makers), \textit{Chitrakāra} (painter) and so on\textsuperscript{30}. \textit{Śilpa} has been referred to as professional art and \textit{Kāla} as vocational art. Indian literature also informs us that there are eighteen or more professional arts (\textit{Śilpa}) and the sixty-four are a vocational art (\textit{Kāla})\textsuperscript{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 nature\textsuperscript{12}. 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. Havel. 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 Nature. 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 it. 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, transcend it. When applied to India, Coomaraswamy felt that nature was transcendental and it existed on a metaphysical plan or in the mind of the artists. 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 on.40

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 Vindhyas and extending as far as the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers marked the geographical entity called the Deccan.
Plateau. 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 subtropical forests \( ^{42} \).

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, Brahanical 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 āsilpi 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 Visnupardhana, 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 Paji 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 Purina 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 sites 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 Institutes 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 III: 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 pur 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 vyālus 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.
REFERENCES:


21. A. K. *Coomaraswamy*, *Art and Swadeshi*, Madras 1911, p. 21

22. Goetz Hermann, *5000 Years of Indian Art*, Bombay 1958, p. 145

23. Shanti *Swarup*, *5000 Years of Indian Art and Crafts in Ancient India and Pakistan* Bombay 1969, p. 1
30 *ibid.* p. 11
31 *ibid.* p. 13
33 *ibid.* p. 304
34 E. B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, London 1908, p. 23
35 E. B. Havell, *op. cit.*, 1911, p. 24
40 *ibid.* p. 136
41 Shanti Swarup, *op. cit.*, 1969, p. 1
43 *ibid.* p. 3
44 O. P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, 1985, p. 25
45 *ibid.* p. 30
48 O. P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp. 30-31

52 M. Dhavalikar, Early Farming Cultures of the Deccan*, in D. P Agrawala and Dilip K. Chakrabarti (eds.) *Essays in Indian Proto History*, Delhi 1979, p. 256


54 V.V. Krishna Sastry, *The Proto and Early Historical Cultures of Andhra Pradesh*, Hyderabad 1983


60 A. S. Altekar, *Society in the Deccan during 200 BC to 500 AD*, *Journal of Indian History, XXX*, 1952

61 For Field work I have visited sites like Badami, Aihole and Pattadakal in Karnataka and Nagarjunasagar in Andhra Pradesh

62 Large majority of the data has been collected from the Libraries such as the National Museum, Delhi, the Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi and Indira Gandhi National Library for Fine Arts, Delhi, the American Institute of Indian Studies for Art and Architecture Gurgaon, Haryana, the Archaeological Museum of Kannada University, Dharwar, Badami and Aihole Museums in Karnataka, Nagarjunakonda Museum in Andhra Pradesh and the State Department of Archaeology and Museum, Hyderabad.