Madtsoiid (Althinophidia) snake from the intertrappean beds associated with the oldest (>66 Ma) lava pile of the Deccan Traps in India

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The present study records the earliest occurrence of a madtsoiid snake from the intertrappean sediments associated with the chronostratigraphically constrained lava piles of the oldest Deccan Trap eruptions in India. The intertrappean sedimentary beds of the Malwa Group occur at multiple stratigraphic levels in the two lowermost formations between the lava flows that erupted during Maastrichtian C30n. The fossils described represent small-sized middle to posterior vertebrae assigned to *Madtsoia*. Preservation of these earliest late Cretaceous snakes in India has great significance due to their survival through the earliest Deccan volcanic eruptions. The overall faunal biodiversity of the Malwa Group is dominated by squamates and amphibians during the early stage of volcanism, indicating that volcanism has least affected the diversity of the snakes.

Keywords: *Faunal biodiversity, intertrappean beds, lava* flows, madtsoiid snake, volcanic eruptions.