The religion, art, architecture and sculpture of a place basically depend upon the attitude of the political rulers. Because it is the rulers who provide encouragement and support for their progress. Thus, in order to discuss about the religion, art and architecture of the Somavamsis, it is essential to have a clear idea about the political history of the dynasty. The Somavamsis, also known as Pāṇḍuvamsis, belong to the family of the Moon. The Kalibhanga Plate and the Nagpur Museum Plate of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya–I mention the dynasty as “Somavaṃsa”. The Maranjāmūrā charter of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti–II refers the dynasty as “Sitamsuvaṃsa”. The Narasimharapur charter of Udyota Keśari uses the title “Somakulatilaka”. The same epithet is also used in the Ratnagiri charter of Karnadeva. Thus the above mentioned Copper Plate grants prove that the dynasty belonged to the family of the Moon.

In the history of Orissa we came across two branches of rulers who claimed their origin from the family of Moon. Thus, before discussing the political history of our period a brief reference is given below about the two branches of rulers of the family.

From Bāmhāni Plates of Bharatbāla we get reference to the rule of Pāṇḍuvamsa over Mekhala region. Mekhala has been identified with modern Maikal range that forms link between the Vindhyas and the Satputras and stretches from the Khairagarh to Rewah in Madhya Pradesh. Dr. B. Chhabra paleographically assigns Bamhāni Plates to 5th century A.D. It gives the genealogy of the dynasty as follows.

Jayabāla
  Vatsarāja
  Nāgabāla
  Bhāratatilaka

1
It is not known who were the ancestors of Jayabala. But Dr. Mirashi\textsuperscript{10} holds the view on the basis of an Inscription discovered at Bondogarh that Bhadrabala and his son Vaisravana were the ancestors of Jaibala. But no where in the said inscription it is mentioned that they hailed from the family of moon.

Next we come across Pāṇḍuvarṁśa, which ruled over Kosala during circa 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.\textsuperscript{11} with their capital at Sripura, identified with modern Sirpur in the Raipur district of Chhatisgarh\textsuperscript{12}. The chronology of this dynasty is a matter of controversy among the scholars. From the available epigraphic records\textsuperscript{13} the genealogy of the dynasty is presented below.

![Genealogy of Pāṇḍuvarṁśa dynasty]

A careful study of the epigraphic records indicates that the earlier grants refer this dynasty as Pāṇḍuvarṁśa and the later record indicate the
dynasty as Somavaṃśa. The Bonda Plates\textsuperscript{14}, the Rājim Plates\textsuperscript{15} and the Boloda Plates\textsuperscript{16} of king Tivaradeva mention the dynasty as ‘Pāṇḍuvaṃśa’, where as in the subsequent grants the dynasty is known as Saśīvamśa\textsuperscript{17}, Sitānsuvaṃśa\textsuperscript{18} Somavaṃśa Sambhava\textsuperscript{19} etc. This clearly shows that this dynasty ruling over Kosala belong to the family of the Moon\textsuperscript{20}.

From the above discussion it is clear that rulers of Mekhala and South Kosala belong to Pāṇḍuvaṃśa dynasty But it can not be definitely said that they belonged one dynasty. Dr. Mirashi tried to link rulers of both the places into one family of Pāṇḍu. He suggests that Indrabala son of Udayana of S. Kosala seems to have been named after his grand father Bharatbālā of Mekala region, whose other names were Indra and Indrabālā.

Further the Mālga Plates\textsuperscript{21} of Indrarāja or Indrabālā and the Bāmhāni Plate\textsuperscript{22} of Bharatabālā lead to draw a relationship between these two branches. In the Mālga Plate the swarnakāra or the engraver was one Dronaka, son of Īśvara and in the Bāmhāni Plate, the Swarnakar or engraver was one Mihiraka, son of Īśvara. From this one can infer that during the time of Bharatabālā, Mihiraka, the elder son of Īśvara was the engraver and also remained in the office during the time of Udayana, son of Bharatabālā. Then he was succeeded to the post by his younger brother Dronaka during the time of Indrarāja or Indrabālā\textsuperscript{23}. Further Rajguru\textsuperscript{24} opines that Indrarāja is a familiar name among the Pāṇḍuvaṃśi kings and both the inscriptions are discovered from the same locality. It is quite probable that Indrarāja and Bharatabālā belong to one and the same family.

Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna was the last ruler of the Pāṇḍuvaṃśas, whose reign most probably ended by C. 810 A.D.\textsuperscript{25} After Bālārjuna the
kingdom of Kosali witnessed a period of confusion due to the invasion of the Rāṣhtrakūta king Govinda-III\textsuperscript{26}. Being driven out from their exalted seat of Sripura a member of the family left Sripura and tried to search his fortune in western parts of Orissa. To distinguish himself from his predecessors of Sripura, he founded a new dynasty and called it Somavāṁśa\textsuperscript{27}. However, no where in the records it is mentioned that he is the successor of the Pāṇḍuvarāṇśi rulers. This member is no other than Mahābhātabagupta Janmejaya I who established the new kingdom in western Orissa towards the last part of 9\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D.\textsuperscript{28}.

Janmejaya-I refers to Śivagupta as his single predecessor\textsuperscript{29}. It may be mentioned here that Māhaśīvagupta and Mahābhātabaghupta were epithets used alternatively by the Pāṇḍuvarāṇśi and Somavāṁśi rulers. The two rulers who came in succession after Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna are known to us by their sobriquets—Mahābhātabagupta and Mahāśīvagupta respectively but their real names are not known to us.

Dr. K.C. Panigrahi’s view that only one ruler Mahāśīvagupta ruled in between Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna and Mahābhātabagupta Janmejaya-I can not be accepted as one Māhaśīvagupta (Bālārjuna) can not be succeeded by another Mahāśīvagupta. Dr. N.K. Sahoo\textsuperscript{30} and others, therefore, argue that two rulers bearing the epithets Mahābhātabagupta and Mahāśīvagupta ruled after Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna and before Mohābhātabagupta Janmejaya-I.

Mahābhātabagupta, the immediate successor of Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna, is known to us from the Keśerakela Copper Plate grant\textsuperscript{31} issued in his 11\textsuperscript{th} regnal year. In his Charter, he assumes imperial titles like ‘Mahārājadhirāja’, ‘Pareṃśvara’, ‘Paramavatāraka’ and
Trikalingâdhhipati'. Mahâbhâbagupta was succeeded by Mâhaśivagupta, who is known to us from the records of Mahâbhâvagupta, Janamejaya-I.

Till today no inscription of Mahâśivagupta has been discovered. Nothing is known about his activities. Further the Inscriptions of Mahâbhâvagupta Janamejaya-I do not reveal the relationship between him and his predecessor Mahâśivagupta. The absence of any reference to Mahâśivagupta in the records of the later members of this dynasty from Yayâti-I onwards indicates that Janamejaya-I and not Mahâśivagupta was the real founder of the dynasty in Orissa. Had Janamejaya been the son of Mahâśivagupta he must have mentioned the real name of Mahâśivagupta. A similar evidence is furnished in the Copper Plate grant of Yayâti-II Mahâśivagupta where he mentions Mahâbhâvagupta as his single predecessor. Hence it is considered by many scholars that Mahâbhâvagupta and Mahâśivagupta were the family Viruda or epithets of the Somavamśi rulers used as their coronation sobriquets (Abhiseknama) Scholars like Fleet and S.R. Nema have opined that Mahâśivagupta is the real founder of the Somavaṃśi rule in Orissa. But our opinion is that most probably Mahâśivagupta had prepared the ground for later Somavaṃśis for the establishment of their dynastic rule in Orissa.

**Mahâbhâvagupta Janamejaya-I : (Circa A.D. 882-922)**

Mohâbhâvagupta Janamejaya I succeeded Mahâśivagupta to the Somavaṃśi throne. Twelve Copper Plate grants of this king have been discovered so far. The political history of Janamejaya-I has been constructed on the basis of the interpretation of above Copper Plate grants.
As discussed above some scholars consider Mahāśivagupta as the founder of the dynasty. But the interpretation of the inscriptions of Janamejaya-I reveals that Janamejaya-I was the real founder of the Somavaraṇsi dynasty in Orissa. The relevant portion in the Inscription reads:

"Paramabhattāraka Mahārājā (or Mahārājādrīrāja) Parameśvara Sri Śivagupta- Pādanudhyāta,
Paramabhattāraka-Mahārājādrīrāja-Somakulatitaka-
Trikalingādhipati Parameśvara
Sri Mahābhavaguptarājādevah kuśali”.

(The king of kings Paramabhattāraka was the follower of footprints of Parameśvara Sri Śivagupta. The king of kings paramabhattaraka was the jewel crest) of Soma dynasty and was the lord of Trikalinga and he was paramaśaiva and designated as Mahābhāvagupta and was efficient among the kings.)

Thus, the epithet Somakulatilaka speaks that Janamejaya –I was the ornament of Somakula or Somavaraṇsi. Further in the Pāṭnā Museum Plates of Yayāti-I, issued in his 8th regnal year, it is described that Svabhavātūṅga, identified with Janamejaya-I became the king by his own efforts. This indicates that Janamejaya-I was the real founder of the dynasty in Orissa. The epithet Trikalingādhipati assumed by Janamejaya-I was not merely an honorific title as suggested by some scholars.
Janamejaya had issued land grants from Suvarṇapura and Murasima-Suvanapuru or modern Sonpur in the district of Suvarnapura was his capital. This Sonpur region including Baud-Phulbani was known as Khinjali-Manḍala and was under the Bhaṇja rule. The Bhaṇja contemporary of Janamejaya was Ranabhaṇḍajadeva, who had ruled for a pretty long period. It was during the last part of his reign that Soma-Bhaṇja struggle took place and Janamejaya occupied Suvanapur (Sonpur) in his 3rd regnal year and issued his earliest known Copper Plate charter the Vakrantentali grant from that victorious camp.

Janamejaya-I is also known as Svabhāvatunāga and during his reign, matrimonial relationship with the Bhaumakara dynasty of Utkala was established. The Boud Copper Plate of the Bhauma queen Prthvi Mahādevi, alias Tribhuvana Mahadevi-II, dated in the year 158 of the Bhaumakara era states that she is the daughter of the Somavamśi king Svabhāvatunāga. It is also stated that her accession to the throne was the result of the death of her husband Kusumahāra (Subhākaradeva-IV) and his brother Lalitāhāra (Śivakaradeva-II) without leaving any heir. The Brahmesvara temple inscription of Udyota-Keśari Mahābhavagupta reveals that Janamejaya, the founder of the Somavamśi dynasty, had killed the reigning king of Odra. This incident indicates that Janamejaya after killing the Odra king might have placed his daughter on the Bhauma throne sometimes before A.D. 894, which is the date of the Boud Copper Plate grant of his daughter. Thus, it is evident that Janamejaya-I successfully intervened in Bhauma political affair in placing his daughter on the Bhauma throne. This situation became favorable for his son Yayāti-I to occupy the Bhauma kingdom and annex it with Kosala.

Janamejaya’s conflict with the Kālachuris is known to us from the Copper Plate grants of his son Yayāti-I, issued in his eighth regnal year.
The said grant in the first verse of the short supplement at its end describes that Svabhavatunga (Janamejaya-I) by dint of the manliness became king and spread the fortune of the Kosala country by defeating the Kālachuris. Kālachuri king Sankaragana (AD 878-910) was the contemporary of Janamejaya. Janamejaya probably defeated Sankaragana in course of his territorial expansion in the western frontier of his kingdom. The conflict between Somavaṁśis and Kālachuris was a long one and continued for three generations. Janamejaya-I, however, was successful in bringing the entire eastern Kosala region under his control by his 31st regnal year as evident from the title Kosalendra attributed to him for the first time in the Chowdar Plates.

Janamejaya-I was a powerful ruler, because of the fact that he succeeded in establishing a kingdom, keeping it intact during this long reign of over forty years and finally in handing it down with increased territories and sphere of influence to his successors in the face of the opposition from the powerful neighboring kingdom of the Kālachuries. He made Suvarnapura or modern Sonpur his capital. His first and last Copper Plate grants were issued from this place. Further, records also reveal that a group of feudatory powers served their overlord Janamejaya-I. Thus, Janamejaya-I was the real founder of the Somavaṁśi dynasty and its greatness in Orissa. After a long period of reign for about years he was succeeded by his son and successor Mahāśīvagupta Yayāti-I (Circa A.D. 922-955).

Mahāśīvagupta Yayāti-I (Circa A.D. 922-955)

Yayāti-I ascended the Somavaṁśi throne after the death of his father in or about 922 A.D. Immediately after ascending the throne Yayāti-I followed the policy of wars and conquests like his father. Towards the end
The said grant in the first verse\textsuperscript{45} of the short supplement, at its end describes that Svabhāvatuṅga (Janamejaya-I) by dint of the manliness became king and spread the fortune of the Kosala country by defeating the Kālachuris. Kālachuri king Sankaragana (AD 878-910) was the contemporary of Janamejaya. Janamejaya probably defeated Sankaragana in course of his territorial expansion in the western frontier of his kingdom\textsuperscript{46}. The conflict between Somavāṁśis and Kālachuris was a long one and continued for three generations. Janamejaya-I, however, was successful in bringing the entire eastern Kosala region under his control by his 31\textsuperscript{st} regnal year as evident from the title Kosalendra attributed to him for the first time in the Chowdar Plates\textsuperscript{47}.

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**Mahāśivagupta Yayāti-I (Circa A.D. 922-955)**

Yayāti-I ascended the Somavāṁśi throne after the death of his father in or about 922 A.D. Immediately after ascending the throne Yayāti-I followed the policy of wars and conquests like his father. Towards the end
of the ninth century A.D. the Bhaumakara power of Utkala was declining gradually. The last four Bhaumakara rulers were all female members. In the 9th year of his reign, Yayati-I granted the village of Chāndagrāma in the Maradā-visaya of Daksina-Tosali. This is the first inscription of this dynasty which refers to a place in Orissa proper and establishes the fact that by A.D. 931 he had obtained possession of a portion of the coastal plains of Orissa. Before occupying the coastal tract, however, he must have subdued the Bhanjas and reduced them again to the feudatory status. This supposition is born out by the fact that Satrubhañjja-III has styled himself in his charters as Rānaka rather than Maharājā, which was used by his immediate predecessors. This is definitely an indication of his feudatory status. Further in one of the Copper Plate grant Yayati-I donates a village in the Mandala of Gandhatapati (Gandherādi) in his 15th regnal year which suggests that Bhañjas were ousted before the grant of this village in their territories. Dr. K.C. Panigrahi suggests that Satrubhañjja was ruling over an area at this time which lay in between Kosala and Utkala and Yayati-I would have defeated him before capturing Utkal.

The unification of Kosala with Kaṅgoda and Utkala must have taken place sometimes after the death of Vakula Mahādevi of Bhaumakara dynasty whose last recorded Inscription is dated Bahuma Samvat 204 (A.D. 940).

Yayati-I is credited with building another capital known as Abinavayātinagara, which is identified with modern Jajpur in coastal Orissa. Dr. K.C. Panigrahi views that after the occupation of the coastal area his empire become vast. Therefore for administrative convenience he divided his vast empire into two territorial units as Kosala and Utkala. Yayātinagara remained as his capital in the Kosalamaṇḍala and the second
capital was established at Jajpur with a new name as Abhinavayātīnagara. Further Mādalāpāṇīji, the temple chronicle of lord Jagannatha at Puri, speaks that Yayāti Keśari established the shrine of lord Jagannath at Puri, and performed a ten-fold horse sacrifice at Jajpur. This implies that Yayāti who had established Jagannath temple had also performed the horse sacrifice at Jajpur. There were two Yayātis, one Yayāti-I and another Yayāti-II and Mādalāpāṇīji and tradition mingled them as one in the name of Yayāti Keśari. It will be improper to ascribe Yayāti-I or Yayāti-II to Abhinava-Yayātinagara of Jajpur without any logic. The Tirumalāi inscription mentions Adinagar in Odra-Visaya where Indrarathā was defeated. This Ādinagara has been identified with Yayātinagara. Probably this place has been referred to as Abhinaba-Yayātinagara in Mādalāpāṇīji. For this reason Abhinaba-Yayātinagara can be linked with Yayāti-I and not with Yayāti-II, who came to Somavarmśi picture after Indrarathā of Tirumalāi Inscription. Donalson suggests that the Somavarmśi kings during the early period ruled their vast kingdom from Yayātinagar in upper Mahānadi valley while Abhinava-Yayātinagara in Utkal was their second headquarters.

About establishment of the shrine of lord Jagannath at Puri and performance of tenfold-horse sacrifice at Jajpur we know about Rāstrakuta invasion during the time of Subhakra-I. The Sangam Plates of Amoghavarsa states that Govinda-III conquered Odraka (Odra) along with Kosala, Kaliṅga, Vaṅga and Dāhala. Govinda-III was a very powerful general and under him the Rāstrakutas became invincible. He invaded these Countries before 802 or 806 A.D. Subhakaradeva-I was on the throne of Odraka by 790 A.D. and he fled from the city with the image of Jagannath and buried the image at a place known as Gopāli, in the western frontier of Sonipur. The Pāṇji further speaks that after 146 years Yayāti Keśari of Keśari (Somavarmśi) dynasty dug out the images, built a new
temple at Puri and enshrined them. Rāstrakuta invasion took place before 802 or 806 A.D. Thus, 146 years after i.e. 948 or 952 A.D. falls in the reign of Yayāti-I. Hence, Yayāti Keśari who established Jagannath at Puri and performed the ten horse sacrifice at Jajpur is no other than Yayāti-I.

Yayāti-I had no legality over the Bhauma throne. For this reason as well as the killing of Sāntikaradeva-III by his father in a Kunta might have resented the Bhauma subjects and in order to pacify them and to legalise his position he might have performed the horse sacrifice. Further there is also a Ghāṭ on the bank of the river Vaitaraṇi named as Dasāsvamedha Ghāṭ. There is a tradition at Jajpur that for the performance of Yajña, Yayāti Keśari had brought 10,000 Brāhmīns – from Kanyakubja, (modern Kanauj). Even today those Brāhmīns are remembered while performing Pīṇḍa by the present Bhrāhmīns in the following manner:

"Kauja desāt svayamabutaje
Dasāsva medhaya purabedhātrā
Martyastīta svargagatācha beprā
Stehvoi dewejebhaya, pradamichāṛgham"

(For both the Brāhmīns who had come from Kanauj for the purpose of ten-horse sacrifice and purohits (head of all Brāhmīn) living on earth or in heaven. I offer oblation.)

Thus, the tradition about Kanauja Brāhmīns brought by Yayāti Keśari should not be doubted as this tradition had certain practicability even in the present days religious life of the people of Jajpur. Further giving credit for the performance of ten horse sacrifice to Yayāti-I. Dr.
K.C. Panigrahi comments that as Orissa was shrouded with Tantrism during the rule of Yayati-I, he might have felt the absence of sacred Brahmins for the performance of Yajna and therefore brought Brähmins from Kanauj. Kedarnath Mohapatra also credits Yayati-I for the performance of ten fold horse sacrifice. It can be said that he is the first king of the Somavamši to bring Kosala and Utkala or western and eastern Orissa under a single rule. Therefore, Dr. K.C. Panigrahi is of the opinion that Yayati-I united Kosala and Utkala politically and culturally and he can just be regarded as the father of the modern Orissa. He was succeeded by Mahābhavagupta-II Bhimaratha who ascended the throne in Circa 955 A.D.

Mahābhavagupta-II : Bhimaratha (C.A.D. 955-980)

Mahābhābagupta-II Bhimaratha (A.D. 955-980) succeeded Yayati-I to the Somavamši throne. About the political activities of Bhimaratha nothing remarkable is available. Even the subsequent rulers of the Somavamši kingdom are silent in their inscriptions about the political activities of Bhimaratha. Only stray references and eulogies are available. The Brahmeśvara temple inscription describes him as “who was the Kalpa tree of the Kali age and the crown jewel of the princes, modest of boundless spirit, and whose steadiness, riches, gravity, depth of knowledge was well known and who was wise in producing prosperity and three sorts of power and success, a hero and destroyer of his enemies and who had qualities of a Mahārathī”. Lines 7 to 9 of the Narasimhapur Charter reveals that “He (Bhimaratha), through his frontier guards built the pillars of victory on all sides beyond his kingdom, which served as glittering weapons piercing the heart of the possessors of the regions”. According to Khaṇḍaparā Plates of his son Dharmaratha, Bhimaratha defeated a king named Ajāpāla from whom he received 32 war elephants and his
achievements were of such fame as to be appreciated by a king called Rudra of the East, the later most likely king Rudra from Boram (Mānbhum district). The latest known date of Bhimaratha is the Kudopali Copper Plate grant of his 13th regnal year which was issued by his feudatory Māthara chief Punja, who ruled over Bāmaḍāpati modern Bāmrāgarh in the Bāmrā subdivision of Deogarh district. It is probable that Bhimaratha, like his father and grandfather before him, came in to conflict with the Kalachuris and that the latter successfully checked the northwest expansion of the Somavamśi kingdom. Bhimaratha was succeeded to the throne by his eldest son and successor Dharmaratha. He, like his father, and grand father, was a follower of Śaivism as is known from his epithet Paramamāheśvara in this Inscription.

Mahāśivagupta-II Dharmaratha (circa A.D. 980-1000):

Dharmaratha was succeeded to the Somavaṃśi throne by his eldest son Bhimaratha in circa A.D. 980. The Khandapara Copper Plates were issued by the king in his 11th regnal year. The Plates record the grant of a village in the Antruda-visaya to a Brāhmin named Runaka Abhimanyu, son of Vasu and grandson of Dāmodara. We also get reference about Dharmaratha from the Narsimhapur Charter and the Brahmeśvara temple Inscription. In the Narsimhapur Charter he is described as the son of the glory of the Lunar race, the achiever of the desired object and the only friend of the sword, became the head jewel of all the kings, when hostile kings retreated to the extremity of the far-off country, being chased by his soldiers marching in digvijaya, in course of which the dusts swelled. In the next verse he is credited with leading an expedition from Himalaya to Setuvandha in course of which he defeated many insignificant kings (Itaraksmabhṛtaḥ). As a result of which he created panic in the hearts of the ladies of the enemies. The Brahmeśvara temple Inscription describes
him as second Parasurāma, as very powerful and Rājamalla or the best of kings. Further the Khaṇḍaparā Plates, which was first edited by S.C. Dey, writes - “In the present grant he (Dharmaratha) is described as a man of scholarly and virtuous disposition. He is said to have attacked and burnt the towns of Āndhra and Gauda. Dr. B.K. Ratha has pointed out that the Khaṇḍaparā Plates prove beyond doubt the conflict of Dharmaratha with the neighbouring Āndhra and Gauda countires and his subsequent success. Hence it is also expected that during this attack on Āndhra, Dharmaratha must have annexed at least a part of the Kaliṅga country. The Bānpur charter of Indraratha describes that Indraratha received the fortunes of the Kaliṅga country by the favours of his brother Dharmaratha. This implies that Dharmaratha had conquered Kaliṅga country before he placed Indraratha as ruler of Kaliṅga. Further in the Narasimhapur Charter, he is described to have conquered the territories from the Himālayas in the north to Setuvandha in this south. No doubt Dharmaratha controlled the entire territory from Gouda in the north to the Kaliṅga in the south along the sea coast and Kosala in the west. But since Gangas of Kaliṅgangara or eastern Gaṅgas were ruling continuously over Kaliṅga territory, which included the present Visakhapatnam and Srikākulam districts of Āndhra Pradesh and parts of Ganjam district in Orissa, it would be safe to assume that Dharmaratha annexed only a portion of Kaliṅga, possibly parts of Ganjam, after defeating his Gaṅga adversary.

Thus Dharmaratha, no doubt, was a powerful ruler of the Somavamśi dynasty, who extended his power of influence in north and south. He died without child in about A.D 1005 and after him there prevailed an uncertain condition in the Somavamśi empire as found from the Brahmeśvara temple Inscription. After him his younger brother Nahusa Mahābhāvagupta-III (C. A.D. 1005-1021) succeeded him.
Nahusa and Indraratha:

King Dharmaratha died without any issue and was succeeded by his brother Nahusa Mahābhāvagupta-III (C. A.D. 1005-1021). No Inscriptions of Nahusa has yet come to light, but subsequent Somavamśi rulers had referred in their epigraphs about him.

The Narasimhapur Charter and the Ratnagiri Charter reveal that Mahābhāvatupa-III Nahusa succeeded Dharmaratha in the Somavamśi throne. On the other hand, the Brahmeśvara temple inscription do not refer to the rule of Nahusa. It mentions that “When he, the Rājamalla (best of kings) departed and went to heaven without issue, and all his kingdom was laid waste by various warriors of different countries, there was a lapse of short and eventless time (verse-6). Then Chanḍiḥāra, son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Vichitravirya, a lineal descendent of the celebrated Janamejaya, was made king by the ministers” (verse-7). Thus this creates problem to know the real position of Nahusa and another contemporary Somavaṁśi Character Indraratha. Donaldson has mentioned that “On the other hand it was during the latter part of his rule that the kingdom was invaded by the Pāramāras, the Chola and the Kālachuries. There was in addition a subordinate ruler at Abhinava-Yayātinagara named Indraratha, probably another brother of Dhamaratha who was appointed as Viceroy to rule from this area of the Kingdom”. Indraratha, according to the Tirumalai inscription of the Chola king Rājendra, was defeated and captured by the generals of the Chola monarch at Abhinava-Yayātinagara, shortly before A.D. 1023 during the later’s victorious march up to the Ganges. That a calamity overtook the Somavaṁśi family after Dharmaratha is substantiated by the elimination of Nahusa and Indraratha in the Brahmeśvara Inscription of Udyota Keśari. Dr. K.C. Panigrahi suggests that the ‘Prasastikāra’ intended to pass over this period of distress
with only a casual reference and thought fit not to mention the names of the monarches who fell victim to outside aggression. Donaldson on observing the incident in post Dharmaratha period, opines that these invasions may have resulted in the death or dethronement of both Nahusa and Indraratha and apparently caused chaotic conditions in the Somavamshi kingdom. To save the kingdom from anarchical conditions the ministers of the state chose Chaṇḍihāra Yayāti Mahāśivagupta-III referred to as Yayāti-II as king.

Yayāti-II Mahāśivagupta (Circa 1025-1040 A.D.)

Mahābhāvagupta-III Yayāti-II is also known as Chandihāra. The country was then in urgent need of a superb leader to save it from the imminent collapse and build its fortune anew. Fortunately she got such a leadership in Chaṇḍihāra Yayāti-II. This Chaṇḍihāra, was the son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Vicitravira and a lineal descendent of the celebrated Janamejaya. He was made king by the ministers. He was powerful and spirited like his father. That Yayāti-II was a strong and efficient ruler is evident from the Brahmeśvara inscription of Udyota Keśari, where it is recorded that he freed both the Rāstras (i.e. Kosala and Utkala) from enemy chiefs. This fact is also confirmed by Udyota-Kēśari’s Bilijhari (Narsinghpur) Copper Plates, where it is stated that the two arms of Yayāti-II accomplished their objectives by completely rendering free of enemies the two kingdoms, Utkala and Kosala besieged by the combatant kings. After driving out the foreign enemies, Yayāti-II (A.D 1025-1040) restored internal peace and order in his vast territory, roughly comprising the whole of modern Orissa. In the Jatesinga and Dungri Plates of Yayāti-II, it is mentioned that he had already fought with Karnata, Lāta, Gurjara, Kančhi, Gauda and Rādha and maintained friendly relations with
Vanga. But all these campaigns are practically impossible within the two or three years of his reign after ascending the Somavarhaṇī throne. It may be suggested that Yayāti-II had military career before he was chosen for the throne. Dr. N.K. Sahoo and others opine that he might have joined the army of Rājendra Chola where he got an opportunity to display his military genius. He took part in the Chola campaigns against Indraratha, and avenged death of his father. He was chosen the king of the Somavarhaṇīs kingdom probably at the wishes of the Chola generals.

In the later part of his reign Yayāti-II suffered some reverses as a result of which his empire was considerably reduced. He faced the Kālachuri invasion of Gangeyadeva of Tripuri and his feudatory ally Kamalarāja of Tummāna who led their combined army against Utkala and plundered that country. Consequent upon this event he had to loose Utkal a part of his empire.

Mahāśīvagupta Yayāti-II is considered as one of the most outstanding monarchs in the history of Orissa. Dr. K.C. Panigrahi suggests that construction of the Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneswar was began by Yayāti-II and the capital was transferred to Abhinava-Yayātinagar with Viceroy being assigned to rule from the old capital. The Brahmeśvara temple inscription says that Yayāti-II married Kolavati, mother of Udyota Keśari, who had built the Brahmeśvara temple at Bhubaneswar. Yayāti-II was a devout worshipper of Śiva. From his second name ‘Chaṇḍihāra’, scholars suggest that he was also a devotee of Chaṇḍi or Śakti. His own charter credits him with the construction of many temples for various gods and royal pavilion, parks and garden for recreation. Most probably Yayāti-II died in or about A.D. 1040 and was succeeded by his son Mahābhāvagupta-IV Udyota Keśari to the throne of Orissa.
Mahābhāvagupta – Udyota Keśari (1040-1065 A.D.)

Yayati-II was succeeded by his son Udyota Keśari (C.A.D. 1040-1065) who was the last great monarch of the Somavāṁśi dynasty. About his reign period various Copper Plate grants give us information. The Narasinghapur Charter107, issued in his fourth regnal year, the Brahmesvara temple inscription108 of his 18th regnal year, the Khandagiri cave inscriptions109, the Govindpur Stone Inscription110 are very important records, which through lights on Udyota Keśari’s achievements.

The Brahmesvara temple inscription depicts him as one who was the crown jewel of the circle of the earth, defended by the four oceans and a conqueror of earth like, Māndhātā, Prthu and Bharata111. The above verse is mere eulogy. It was during his 5th and 18th regnal years that the Jaina images were carved in the Lalāteṇḍu Keśari and Navamuni caves of Khandagiri hill112. It was also in his 18th year that his mother Kolavati built the Brahmesvara temple at Bhubaneswar113. During his reign the Kālachuri rulers invaded western Orissa and to effectively resist their advance he apparently assigned the kingdom of Kosala to Abhimanyu, who belonged to the collateral branch of the family114. Abhimanyu ruled from his headquarters at Suvarnapura (Sonpur) with the surrounding territory referred to as Paschima-lankā as we know from the Kelgā Plates of his successor Kumāra Someśvara115.

K.C. Panigrahi and D.C. Sircar consider that the Kesarkela grant of Mahābhavagupta issued in his eleventh regnal year belong to the reign of Mahābhāvagupta IV Udyota Keśari on grounds of paleography and the pedigree of Dutta family, who were the hereditary Mahāsandhivigrahi’s of the Somavāṁśi kings. From the place names revealed in this record Panigrahi suggests that the Kosala territory was under the control of
Udyota Keśari. Further it is also clear that he was the master of both Kosala and Utkala. His period of rule was a comparatively peaceful one as a result of which he had given time for allround development of his kingdom and welfare of his subjects. This fact is proved by the existence of several monuments assigned to this period. It is also believed that the present Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneswar, the construction work of which was started during the rule of Yayāti-II was completed during Udyota Keśari's rule\textsuperscript{116}. Further from Bhakti Bhāgabata Mahākāvyam\textsuperscript{117} of Kavidindima Jivadeva we know that one Bhavadeva was the guru (preceptor) of Udyota Keśari and that he was devoted to Tāntric cult. It would thus appear that Udyota Keśari, though was a Śaivite, had a secular approach to other sects and religions. This is also proved from the inscriptions of Lalātendu Keśari cave and Navamuni cave, which prove his contribution for Jaina monks\textsuperscript{118}. Regarding Udyota Keśari's rule S.R. Nema\textsuperscript{119} writes that his reign was glorious and peaceful, which in its turn brought prosperity in the state. The Somavahṣi power reached its zenith during his time. But after him the gradual decline came to the life of Somavamśi rule. He most probably ruled for about twenty five years and was succeeded by his son Māhāśivagupta-IV Janamejaya-II about A.D. 1065. With the end of his rule a glorious chapter in Orissan History and Culture came to an end.

**Mahāśivagupta IV Janamejaya-II**

*(Circa A.D. 1065-1080)*

Mahāśivagupta Janamejaya-II ascended the Somavahṣi throne in Circa A.D. 1065 A.D. He is known to us from the Ratnagiri Charter\textsuperscript{120} of the last Somavahṣi king Karnadeva. This Charter informs us that Janamejaya-II came into conflict with a Nāga king. This Nāga king has been identified\textsuperscript{121} with Someśvara-I of the Chiḍḍaka–Nāga dynasty ruling
over the Bastar-Koraput region. He is also credited with having waged war against Udra or Orissa. Dr. K.C. Panigrahi views that in this conflict between the Nāga kings and the Somavāṃśī king, the Nāga king Someśvara-I became victorious. As a result of this the Sambalpur – Sonpur region was lost by Janamejaya-II. Further from the Inscription of a Telgu-Choda family it is evident that they had helped the Nāga king Someśvara-I in wresting the Kosala territory from the Somavāṃśī control. Yośorāja-I of the Telugu – Choda family was the lieutenant of Nāga king who conquered Kosala about A.D. 1070.

Donaldson comments: “It appears that the Telgu – Chodas eventually won out, however, as in the Mahada Copper Plate grant of the Telugu- Choda ruler Someśvara-II, issued in his 2nd regnal year (C.A.D. 1090), he declares himself as the king of western Lankā ruling from the capital of Suvarnapur. Someśvara-III, ruling at the close of the eleventh and beginning of the 12th centuries, was the last Telugu- Choda king of Suvarnapura. Thus, the disintegration of the Somavāṃśī Kingdom started from the time of Janamejaya-II and during this period the sphere of influence of Somavāṃśīs were diminished on western and southern borders. Janamejaya – II was succeeded to the Somavāṃśī throne by his elder son Puranjaya.

Mahābhāvagupta – V Puranjaya (Circa A.D. 1080-1095) –

Till to day no record of Puranjaya is discovered. The Ratnagiri Charter describes him as the best of men and the conqueror of the cities of enemies, whose lotus feet were worshipped by bowing kings and whose prowess was equal to that of resplendent Sunāśira (Indra). Further it is described that even the kings of Gauda, Dāhala, Vaṅga and Kaliṅga were
afraid of his prowess (Verse 15). However there is no other reference to substantiate this version of Ratnagiri Charter. This can only be considered as eulogy. K.C. Panigrahi suggests that the process of disintegration of the Somavamsi kingdom must have continued during the reign of Puranjaya. Further he also believes that Dapḍabhukti or the Midnapore region, which was a part of the Bhaumakara kingdom which was most likely under the Somavamsi dominion, was probably wrested from the Somavamsi king Janamejaya-II or Puranjaya as Rāmcharita reveals that this region was under a feudatory of the Pāla king Rāmapāla. Puranjaya probably died childless and was succeeded by his brother Mahāśīvagupta-V Karnadeva.

Mahaśīvagupta V Karnadeva (Circa 1095-110 A.D.)

Mahāśīvagupta Karnadeva, the younger brother of Puranjaya, was the last known Somavamsi ruler. He issued the Ratnagiri Copper Plate Charter from Yayātinagar in his 6th regnal year donating a village of Uttra Tosali to a lady Rāni Karpuraśri, daughter of Mahirima Hunadevi and grand daughter of Udyamati who hailed from Solampur Mahavihāra of Utkala Desa. This Solampur may be identified with modern Solampur on the other side of the Vaitarani river which was once a Buddhist centre. At present Buddhist remnants are found in this place and this place is now included in the district of Bhadrak. Further the Gandibedha Sun image Inscription and Kamalpur Plates of his reign give reference to Karnadeva’s rule in Orissa. The Gandibedha Inscription gives information about his 3rd or 13 regnal year. The Kamalpur Plate was issued by a subordinate ruler Jayarnava, who belonged to the Mahārāstrakula and ruled from Koledāpata, the place of issued, which can be identified with Kulada near Bhanjanagar in Ganjam district. The plate was issued in the
seventh regnal year of Karnadeva. Thus this would indicate that a portion of present Ganjam district to its south-west and north was included in the Somavarṇāśi kingdom at least up to the seventh regnal year of the king i.e. up to 1102 A.D.¹³⁵.

However, the Somavarṇāśi kingdom under him was confined only to the coastal tract comprising of present Cuttack, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Puri, Khurda, Balasore, Bhadrak districts. The vast Somavarṇāśi empire was sandwiched between two powerful kingdoms- the Pālas in the north and the Gaṅgas in the south. Karnadeva was defeated by Jayasimha, a subordinate ruler of Rāmapāla as has been described in the Rāmācharita¹³⁶. In the Korni Plates of Chodagaṅgadeva it is stated that he had reinstalled the fallen lord of Utkala¹³⁷. It is said in the Mādalāpānji¹³⁸ that Vāsudeva Ratha, the Commander-in-Chief (Vahinipati) of Somavamśi army, invited Chodagaṅga to invade Orissa. In this regard K.C. Panigrahi opines “Beyond the frontiers the Gaṅga king was watching the development in Orissa and also an opportunity to invade. After receiving the invitation, as the chronicle describes in a picturesque language, one day he came in disguise, pronounce upon Cuttack and made himself king.” This happened in or about A.D. 1110 and the Somavamśi ruling family passing through the vicissitudes of the time for many centuries, ultimately became extinct¹³⁹.

Thus, after reaching the zenith of power, the Somavarṇāśi empire of more than two centuries crumbled to pieces and the Gaṅgas established their authority over the whole Somavarṇāśi kingdom. A new and glorious chapter in the history and culture of Orissa began.
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