In the rise and growth of Sāktism in Orissa the Age of the Bhauma-Karas marked a significant epoch. In the inception the Mother Goddess was worshipped in Orissa in the form of a post or a pillar. That form of worship took the shape of the cult of Stambhesvārī which continued to be popular in Orissa in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. The Gupta period also witnessed the development of the cult of the Mother Goddess in the anthropomorphic form in which the deity is shown in the act of killing the demon represented as buffalo. This destruction of Mahiṣāsura constituted the main theme of the Devī Mahātmya which forms a part of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa composed in the Gupta period. When the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa was composed the Sakti worship had been very popular and it had been accepted as a major religious faith with all its ramifications.

In the Gupta period, however, the Mother Goddess was mostly worshipped in her anthropomorphic form as Mahiṣamardini. When Kālidāsa composed his Raghuvamsa the Mother Goddess Pārvatī was considered to be inseparable from

1. Raghu Vaṁśa Canto.I Vr.I.
the word. This concept led to the rise of the cult of Uma-Mahesvara which has been depicted in Orissa in the sculptures of Krsnagiri, Bankada and Bhubanesvar and other parts of Konoda under the Sailodbhavas. The Saivite teachers of the line of Kadambaguhavasi² who had richly contributed to the cult of Uma-Mahesvara in different parts of India played significant roles in the gradual rise and development of Saivism and Saktism. Rudrasambhu or Rudrasiva³, the fourth pontiff in the line of Kadambaguhavasi who was closely associated with Amardakatirtha popularised the concept of Kala-Bhairava⁴.

The Bhairava cult gained wide popularity in Orissa in the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas and for a long time he was accepted as the tutelary deity of the Bhanjas of Khinjalimandala. This was the period when Tantricism exerted its influence over Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, Saktism, Buddhism, Jainism and other minor religious systems. The Āgamas, which constituted the literature of the Tantric system greatly influenced the socio-cultural life of Orissa

2. Vide Pithapur Copper plate grant; E.I., Vol. XIX, pp. 100-104.
in the 8th century A.D. We learn from the inscriptions\(^5\) of the Bhauma-Karas that Subhākara III was well-versed in the Āgamas. For the first time in the Orissan Inscription, in the Hindol copper plate grant\(^6\) there is mention of a monarch being deeply inspired by the Tāntric system as laid down in the Āgamas. In the Tāntric system that developed in the period under review the female counterpart of the principal male gods of the Brahmanical form of Hinduism came to be worshipped. In the epoch of the Sailodbhavas Umā, the Mother Goddess was worshipped along with Mahēsvara, but in the succeeding epoch under the Bhauma-Karas the Mother Goddess Umā also referred to as Kātyāyanī in the Dhenkanal plate of Tribhuvana Mahādevi\(^7\) was worshipped in her various aspects corresponding to the female counterparts of different major gods. This concept is imbedded in various Purāṇas which were composed in the Gupta and Post-Gupta period. When Amara Simha composed his lexicon in Gupta period the concept of different aspects of the Divine Mother were not popular. There is no mention of the names of the Divine Mothers in the "Nāmaliṅgāṇusāsana" in Amarakośa\(^8\). However Kālidāsa

\(^5\) Hindol Plate of Subhākara III, JBORS, Vol.XVI, pp.69-83.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) JBORS, Vol.II, pp.419-427.
\(^8\) Amarkośa edited by Dr.H.D.Sharma and Sardesai.
refers to the term "Matarah" which indicates that the cult of the worship of Divine Mother was known to the people in the time of the poet. In fact, the Gangadhara stone inscription of Visvavarman reveals that in the 5th century A.D. his subordinate Mayuraksaka built a temple for the Saptamatrkas. The sculptures in Udayagiri cave (M.P.) also reveal the popularity of the Divine Mothers who are considered to be either seven or eight in number. This cult of the Divine Mothers popularly known as Saptamatrkas influenced the socio-religious life of Orissa from the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas. The seven Divine Mothers namely Brahmāṇī, Vaishnavī, Māhesvarī, Kaumārī, Indrāṇī, Vārāhī, and Chāmūndā are sometimes represented as eight with the additional Divine Mother known as Sivadūttī or Yamī and this number eight was regarded as the basic number of the Divine Mothers who gradually began to be multiplied by eight, thereby contributing to the evolution of the cult of sixty-four Yoginis of the later period. The seven or eight Divine Mothers according to Purānic literature are to be represented and

worshipped in a group headed by Virabhadra at the beginning and followed by Ganesa at the end of the panel. Varaha\(^\text{13}\).

Purāṇa reveals that the Divine Mothers are eight in number and each of them represents one of the basic desires. Accordingly Yogesvari, Māhesvari, Vaiṣṇavi, Bṛāhmaṇi, Kaumārī, Indrāṇi, Chāmundā and Varāhi represent desire, anger, covetousness, pride, illusion, mātsyaya, tale-bearing and envy respectively.

However, the concept of Saptā-Mātrkās gained momentum in Orissa with the rise of the Bhauma-Karas. The temple of Parasuramesvara is, in fact, the earliest monument of Orissa which bears on its walls the sculptural representation of the seven Divine Mothers flanked by Virabhadra and Ganesa. Dr. K. C. Panigrahi\(^\text{14}\) assigns the temple to the 7th century A.D. But it is certainly later than that of the Satrughnesvara group of temples belonging to the 7th century A.D. A close study of the temple has led us to believe that it was constructed at the same time and probably by the same set of architects who constructed the temple of Simhanātha at Baramba. In fact, here, for the first time in the post-Sailodbhava period we notice the image of Ardhanārīśvara which

\[\begin{align*}
\text{13. Varāha Purāṇa, Ch.} & 27, \text{ Vrs.} 34-37. \\
\end{align*}\]
is a characteristic feature of the Orissan sculptures of 8th century A.D. On the walls of the temples of Simhanātha and Parasurāmesvara we notice the earliest representation of Sapta-Mātrkās flanked by Virabhadra and Gañesa as well as the figures of Ardhanārīśvara. On the western corner of the northern wall of the temple of Parasurāmesvara the panel of the seven Divine Mothers has been beautifully carved. According to Tantric convention the group of seven mothers has been headed by Gañesa (Fig.27) with four arms carrying Kuthāra, Modaka, Aksamālā and Radish. The usual vehicle mouse is conspicuous by its absence in the figure. The association of Gañesa without mouse with this seven Mothers at Parasurāmesvara indicates that Sapta-Mātrkās found its earliest representation in this temple among the monuments of Orissa.

Chāmunda (Fig.28) the most prominent among the Divine Mothers is represented next to Gañesa in her most terrific form. She is seated in Siddhāsana upon the owl. The sunken belly represents the Yogic posture of Uddiyāna Vandha. The drooping breasts and the emaciated body are also the manifestation of penance. In the upper right hand she holds a lily and in the lower right hand she holds a Vijapuraka. In the upper left hand she holds a long trident and in the lower left hand she holds a vase. The figure is undoubtedly one of the earliest which seems to have been carved.
before the compilation of *Amsūmādbhedagama*\(^{15}\), according to which the image of Chāmunda should have four arms, three eyes holding trident seated in Varada pose upon "padmapītha" or lotus petalled seat with the garland of skulls as her sacred thread. She wears the skin of a tiger and rests on the trunk of a banyan tree. In the present figure the deity has four arms but there is no representation of 3rd eye. But the garland of skulls is also conspicuous by its absence. In later images the deity is usually shown seated or standing on a corpse eaten by jackals. The plain halo round the head of the image also indicates that the present image of Chāmunda is one of the earliest in Orissa.

Vārāhi (Fig.29) is sculptured in the niche adjacent to that of Chāmunda. Here she is represented with a lotus in her upper right hand and a fish in the lower right hand, whereas she holds a kūthara in the upper left hand and a vase in the lower left. Here the deity is seated on a human figure flanked by tripods on either side. Here, too, the iconographic features do not correspond in all its details with those described in the *Amsūmādbhedagama*. Buffalo, the usual mount of the later Vārāhi images, does not feature in the icon.

In the next niche the figure of Indrāni (Fig.30) is sculptured. She is seated in Siddhāsana on her usual mount.

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\(^{15}\) Mishra, N. - Bhāṭṭiya Tantrasāstra, pp.122-130.
elephant. She holds a Vajra in her left hand and a vase in right. But according to Aṣṭumadbhedāgama the image of Indrāṇī should be four-armed, three-eyed, holding Sakti or Vajra with elephant as her mount. In the present image the deity is represented with two arms instead of four and two eyes instead of three. All these features indicate that the Sapta-Mātrkā figures were sculptured much earlier than the date of compilation of Aṣṭumadbhedāgama.

By the side of Indrāṇī is represented the figure of Vaiṣṇavī (Fig.31) with four arms seated on Siddhāsana. There is no indication of any particular mount of the Goddess. She holds a conch in her upper right hand and a vase in the lower right hand. In her upper left hand she holds the wheel and in her lower left hand she holds a Vijapuraka. She wears ornaments round her waist, breasts, arms and neck. Her eyes are closed and she seated in Yogic posture.

To the left of the niche of Vaiṣṇavī is to be noticed the figure of Kaumārī (Fig.32). She is two armed. In her right hand she holds a vase and in her left hand she holds a rod. The mount is conspicuous by its absence.

The figure of Brahmapāṇi (Fig.33) is carved by the side of Kaumārī. She had three heads and she is seated on her mount swan. She holds Aksamāla in the upper right hand and Vijapuraka in the lower right hand. She holds Kamandala in the lower left hand and flower in the upper left hand.
By the side of Brahmani we notice the figure of Māhesvarī (Fig. 34) without any mount. She holds Aksamālā in upper right hand and Vijapuraka in the lower right. She holds the trident in her lower left hand and a lotus in the upper left hand.

At last we notice the figure of Virabhadra, a manifestation of Siva with his vehicle bull. The deity is four armed. He holds Aksamālā in the lower right hand. The upper right hand is broken. The lower left hand is placed on the thigh while he holds a trident in the upper left hand. This earliest representation of Sapta-Mātrkās flanked by Gaṇesa and Virabhadra on the wall of the Jagamohana of Parasurāmesvara temple indicates that in the beginning of the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas when the great Sāivite monuments were built, the tantric form of Saktism had already began to exert its influence in the socio-religious life of the people.

Almost during the same period when the Sapta-Mātrkā cult was popular in Bhubaneswar as revealed from the sculptures of Parasurāmesvara, it was equally popular in the adjacent Mahānadi valley. In an island of the Mahānadi we notice the significant temple of Siṃhanātha which from the point of view of architectural affinity closely resembles the temple of Parasurāmesvara. On the
body of the temple of Siśhanātha we find sculptures pertaining to eclectic belief in Saivism, Vaisnism and Sāktism. Here, we find the images of Harihara, Ardhanārīśvara as well as Sapta-Mātrkā figures headed by Virabhadra.

Another earliest representation of the Sapta-Mātrkās in Orissa is to be noticed at Ghodar situated at a distance of 10 K.M. from Titilagarh in the Titilagarh sub-division of Bolangir district. The images are found carved in a projecting rock about 389 cm long and about 100 cm in height inside a paddy field. Beglar wrongly identified them as Navagrahas. In fact, here we notice the representation of a set of Sapta-Mātrkās flanked by Ganesā and Virabhadra. Of course due to the severe effect of scorching heat, shivering winter and heavy rainfall the Sapta-Mātrkā panel (Fig.35) of Ghodar is mutilated, blurred and disfigured to a great extent. Yet by minute study of that panel we can say that here the seven Divine Mothers are guarded by Ganesā on the one side and Virabhadra on the other. All Mātrkās as well as Ganesā and Virabhadra are associated with their usual vehicles. Moreover, they are in sitting posture and their respective āyudhas are visible. Of course, Virabhadra is in standing posture. The Ghodar representation of Sapta-Mātrkās reveals that the Tāntric form of Sāktism had

The tantric form of Saktism centering round the cult of Sapta-Matrkas, however, seems to have reached a definite shape when the temple of Vaitala was built in or about 9th century A.D. The Sapta-Matrka panel (Fig.36) of the Vaitala...
temple is to be noticed on its inner surface of the eastern wall and it continues to the central part of the western wall. Here all the Mātrkās have certain characteristics common to them all. They are all seated in *Padmāsana* with two flying Vidyādharas usually found at the top corner and a tripod with cup containing modakas or flowers. As usual the panel is headed by Virabhadra who is represented with four hands with *japamāla* a trident in the upper left hand and *Vijapuraka* in the lower left, the palm of the lower right being shown upturned. The figure of the bull is shown in the pedestal. The first figure of the Divine Mother of this panel is Brāhmaṇī, although the attributes of the Divine Mother are indistinct. However, the four heads of the figure and the emblem of duck in the pedestal enable us to identify the deity as Brāhmaṇī or Brahmanī. The next figure is that of Māhesvarī with a bull on the pedestal. She holds a *Japamāla* in the upper right hand and a trident in the upper left hand. In the next niche there is the figure of Kaumārī with the peacock mount. Other features of the image are indistinct as it is much mutilated. In the adjacent niche is enshrined the icon of Nārāyanī or Vaisnavī. Very strangely here Garuda is conspicuous by its absence on its pedestal. In place of Garuda there is a human figure with his left hand upraised. However, other characteristics of Vaisnavī namely Saṅkha, Chakra, Gada and Padma are associated with four hands of the figure. In the next niche
there is the figure of Varāhi with a fish in one hand and Kuthāra in another. The image of Indrāṇī which is enshrined in the next niche is seated in Padmāsana with closed eyes and closed lips. The hands of the image are broken. However, in one of her left hands she holds a thunderbolt. The elephant is remarkable in the pedestal. The next figure is that of Chāmunda depicted with sunken eyes, hood of a snake on her head and corpse under her feet with jackals dragging it. By the side of the figure of Chāmunda we notice the figure of Śivadūtī holding a trident and a lily in the right hand and left hand respectively. The pedestal is occupied by a tripod with modakas and flowers, flanked by jugs. The last figure of the panel is that of Gaṇeṣa with the usual attributes of Aksamālā, a radish, a battle axe and sweets in the hand and with a snake as sacred thread. The significant features of the panel of Divine Mothers is that for the first time we find the emergence of Aṣṭa-Mātrkās in place of Sapta-Mātrkās in Orissan iconography. K. C. Panigrahi thinks that during this time Śakti worship made its first appearance at Bhubaneswar, but the view is not tenable as we find the earliest representation of Sapta-Mātrkās at Parasurāmesvara. In fact, Śaktism mingled with tantricism seemed to have reached a definite stage of evolution when the eight Divine Mothers were enshrined on the walls of the temple of Vaitāla.
The epoch of the Bhauma-Karas and the BhafTjas had provided the foundation for the establishment of the tantric form of Saktism in Orissa through the cult of the seven Mothers which gradually culminated in the cult of eight Mothers. This was also the time when Śaṅkarāchārya in the 9th century A.D. popularised the concept of Tantricism by holding the view that even Śiva, the Supreme Being, is static and motionless without Sakti. We learn from Śaṅkara Digvijaya and other sources that during the period under review when the Tantric temple of Vaṭālā was built at Bhubanēswar Śaṅkara visited Puri and some of his disciples defeated a few Buddhist scholars of Orissa. That was also the time when the Buddhist teachers of the Vajrayana school adopted several tantric practices. The archaeological remains of Ratnagiri, Achyutarājapur and Bankada assigned to 8th and 9th centuries A.D. lend support to our view. Brāhmaṇical form of Hinduism was deeply influenced by the tantras of Buddhism during the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas who had also embraced Buddhism in the early part of their rule. The rise and spread of the Māttamāyūra School further augmented the development of tantric form of Saktism in the period under review. The seven Mothers who are the female counterparts of the Brāhmaṇical

"Sivah Saktya yukto yadi bhavati Saktah Prabhāvitum..." (Vr.1)

Gods like Brahma, Visnu, Mahesvara, Indra, etc. thus occupied special positions in the religious life of the people. Chāmundā and Varānī, however, emerged as the most prominent among them and they were specially worshipped by the votaries of the Tantric system.

The rise of the Somavamsis in the post Bhauma period is yet another significant landmark in the growth and development of Saktism in Orissa. Right from the time of Mahāsīvagupta Bālārjuna, they are deeply influenced by the teachers of the Amardaka and Mattamayura Schools of the line of Kadambaguhāvāsi. Senakpat Inscription reveals that Sadasivachārya and his followers of the Amardaka School initiated a considerable section of the people of South Kosala into Tantric Saivism. Lodhia plates further reveal that Mahāsīvagupta Bālārjuna was indoctrinated into the system of Tantric Saivism by Śūlapānī, a disciple of Pramathāchārya. It is also known to us from the Maraṇjumara charters that Pañchāmbarī Bhadrāmbikā was the tutelary deity of the Somavamsis and it is further known to us from "Bhakti Bhāgavata" of Kavi Dīṇḍima Jivadēva that a Sākta teacher.

called Bhavadeva happened to be the Guru of Udyota Kesari. Thus, it is evident that although the Somavamsis embraced Saivism, they were deeply influenced by the tantric form of Saktism. It may be said in this context that Ranipur Jharial and Belkhandi, the two great centers of tantric form of Saktism were located in South-Kosala under the Somavamsis. Ranipur, which is same as Ranipadra of the Ranod Stone Inscription was a Saktapitha under the guidance of the teachers of the Mattamayura School. Belkhandi was another tantric center in the epoch of the Somavamsis and it is located on the Tel valley, not far from Terasingā where the cult of Stambhesvarī was popular from very early times. K.N. Mahapatra who conducted the excavation of Belkhandi has given a brief report of the archaeological remains of the site. From the report we understand that there existed at Belkhandi a famous shrine dedicated to the seven Mothers. Chandi or Chāmūnda was the presiding deity of the shrine. It is striking to note here that another name of Mahāsivagupta Yayāti II was Chandihara. Under the patronage of the Somavamsis the cult of seven Mothers with the presiding deity of Chāmūnda became widely popular in South-Kosala. The Tel valley continued to be a

great centre of Tantric form of Saktism under the Somavamsis.

On the confluence of the Tel and the Mahanadi at Suvarnapura which was one of the headquarters of the Somavamsis there was development of the cult of Stambhesvari, subsequently identified with Panchambari Bhadrāmbika as the presiding deity of Suvarnapura.

In course of the expansion of their territories the Somavamsis occupied the Baud-Sonepur region and established their capital on the bank of the river Mahanadi named Yayatinagara which has been identified with modern Jagati near Baud. Gradually, they occupied the coastal tract of Orissa and constructed temples at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri, dedicated to different gods and goddesses. Purusottama Puri, Bhubaneswar and Jajpur had already been established as celebrated tantric centres of Orissa when the Somavamsis occupied Utkala during the reign of Yayati I. It is no wonder, therefore, that Yayati I after his conquest of Utkala richly contributed to the growth of Saktism in the coastal tract of Orissa and set up shrines dedicated to the seven Mothers. Sometimes, the cult of seven Mothers has been depicted in a very interesting and significant manner in the temples built under the patronage of the Somavamsis. A typical illustration (Fig. 37) of such representation is to be noticed on the ceiling of the Jagamohana of the temple of Muktesvara which is assigned
to the reign of Yayati I. Here the seven Mothers headed by Vireshvara have been depicted in a circle of eight-petalled lotus. This representation in a circle seems to be the tantric representation of Chakra in which the Mothers are depicted. The seven Mothers represented here are the prototypes of those noticed at Jajpur and Puri.

But in this group Vireshvara holds a sword in place of a trident. The so-called representation of Vireshvara might be the depiction of the king Yayati himself associated with the sword.

When the Somavaisis conquered the coastal tract of Utkala they patronised the cause of Saivism, Saktism and Vaisnavism at Bhubaneswar, Jajpur and Puri. Jajpur was well-known from ancient times as a celebrated Saka pitha. As we have discussed in Chapter Four the earliest form of two-armed Mahismardini Durga in Orissa has been noticed as Jajpur. In the post-Sailodbhava period the capital of the Bhauma-Karas was located at Guhesvarapataka, very close to the shrine of Viraja. Ganjam copper plate grant of Jayavarman of the time of the Bhauma king Unmatta Kesari has been issued from Viraja (Virajasi). In the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas this metropolis city was continued to be a great centre of the tantric form of Saktism. We know from

the Hindol plate that Subhakara III was well versed in various Agamic texts and the Bhauma Queen Tribhuvanamahadevi has been compared with Katyayani. The great Sakta temple of Kapalini or Vaitala at Bhubaneswar is a powerful representation of tantric Saktism of the Bhauma epoch. Tantricism developed in the Bhauma territory with its centres at Viraja, Ratnagiri and Puri. Ratnagiri was a centre of Vajrayana form of Buddhism and the early kings of the Bhauma-Kara line were deeply influenced by Buddhist faith, but subsequently the later Buddhist rulers under the spell of Saivism and Saktism with a strong tantric base patronized tantric form of Saktism. It was under their patronage that the cult of Sapta-Matrikas began to flourish at Jajpur. Two sets of Sapta-Matrika images have been noticed by scholars at Jajpur. In the first set only three images namely Indrani, Varahi and Chamunda have survived from the vandalism of the iconoclasts. These images are now preserved within the compound of the office of the local sub-divisional Officer. The second set which we shall discuss later belongs to a later period and we are inclined to assign them to the age of the Somavamsis. K.S. Behera in his paper entitled "The Evolution of Sakti Cult at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri" observes: "It can not be determined whether the popularity of

the Mātrkās at Jajpur was due to the patronage of the Bhauma-Karas and Somavāṁśis Kings. But a close study of the two sets of the Sapta-Mātrkā images have led us to hold the view that the first set of Sapta-Mātrkās of which three survived in the S.D.O's compound at Jajpur belonged to the Bhauma epoch, while the second set located at Dasāsvamedhaghaṭa at Jajpur is due to the patronage of the Somavāṁśis. The iconographic features of the two sets clearly suggest a gap of about a century. The image of Indrānī (Fig. 38) of the first group is a colossal one measuring 8'8" x 5'9". She is seated on a pedestal, her left foot touching the head of her vehicle. She is four-armed. Unfortunately, the arms are broken. Girdle, anklets, armlets, necklaces and ear-rings are the ornaments noticed on her body. The tiara on the head is conical. The baby on the lap is missing. The image of Vārāhi (Fig. 39) is equally large in size. It measures 8'10" x 6'. Anklets, armlets and necklace are clearly visible in the image. The image is four armed, but three of the arms are broken. Here, the deity holds the baby on her left lap in the lower left hand. The terrific image of Chāmundā (Fig. 40) is a prototype of the temple of Vaitāla. It measures 9'1" x 6'. It is four-armed. The skeleton feature

feature of the deity has been remarkably delineated in the image. The deity is seated on a prostrate body of a male figure with folded hands. This figure of Chāmunda seems to be a prototype of the image of a Chāmunda found in the vicinity of the temple of Someyara at Jajpur. The Chāmunda (Fig. 41) image near the temple of Someyara is also seated on a prostrate body. She wears a garland of skulls, she is four-armed. Her headdress is characterised by matted hair. She holds a trident, rosary and Kharpara. On the pedestal of the image there is an inscription which is read as "Om Sri Vatsādevyāyi Kirtti". The inscription on palaeographical ground is to be assigned to be 8th or 9th century A.D. The iconographic features and general tone of this inscribed image of Chāmunda agrees with those of the three Mātrkā images of the first group and, therefore, these four Mātrkā images are to be assigned to the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas.

Our view is well supported by the inscribed image of Chāmunda which tallies with the three Mātrkā images of the first group. K.C. Panigrahi, however, holds a different view. He thinks that the association of babies is


not the characteristic feature of the Matrkās of the Bhauma period and as such they are to be assigned to the age of the Somavāṃśīs. But the view is incorrect, as babies associated with the Matrka images in the temple of Vaitāla belong to the Bhauma epoch.

A second group of Sapta-Matrkaras has been noticed by some scholars at Dasāvamedhāghata (Jajpur) which is more developed in iconographic features from the first group. In this group of Matrkās the image of Brāhmī (fig.42) gives us a definite clue with regard to its chronology. The remarkable feature in the figure of Brāhmī is trifoliate halo, the borders of which has been decorated. It is a remarkable characteristic of the Somavāṃśī art. The tiara on the head of the deity is conical and richly decorated. At the top of the figures flying apsarās have been depicted. Kīrttimukha on the top of the halo is also noticed here. The face is blurred. Here the deity is seated on a double petalled lotus and her left leg is placed on the duck. We are inclined to believe that this Sapta-Matrka group was set up in the same period when the Sivastambha or the Garuda pillar was erected at Jajpur by the Somavāṃśīs. In this group of Sapta-Matrka Mahesvarī (Fig.43) is seated on a couch; her right leg being placed on the hunch of the bull. She is four-armed. In her upper
left hand she holds a trident; in lower left hand she holds a jug. In the upper right hand a japamala and lower right hand is in Varada pose. Her headress is characterised by an elevated tiara which resembles Jatamukuta. Anklets, gardele, wristlets, armlets, necklaces and ear-rings are conspicuous by its ornamentation. The figure of Kaumari (Fig.44) is also four armed. In her upper right hand she holds the Sakti (Vel) and her lower right hand is in Varada pose. In her upper left hand she holds a gada and she holds a baby in the lower left hand. Her left leg is placed on the peacock. The figure of Vaiśnavī or Narayanī (Fig.45) is four armed. Here also the tiara is conical and richly decorated and so also the ear-rings and the necklace. In her upper left hand she holds a Chakra and a baby in her lower left hand. She holds a Sankha in her upper and a lotus in her lower right hand respectively. Her right leg is placed on the Garuda. The Vārāhi (Fig.46) figure is a prototype of the first group, but more refined and ornamented. The image is intact. The mane on the head of the deity has been conspicuously represented. The ears are decorated by big circular rings in-laid with designs. The pedestal of the deity is also nicely decorated. Even the baby on the lap of the deity is ornamented. She holds a fish in her upper right hand. Her lower right is seemed to be in Varada pose. She holds a vase in her upper left and a baby in her lower left hand. Her right leg is placed on the buffalo. The image of
Indrāṇi (Fig. 47) is also seated on a decorated pedestal. Here also the head dress is conical and richly decorated. The ear-rings are also of a large size. Usual weapons are also associated with her hands. Her left leg is placed on the head of the elephant. The figure of Chāmunda (Fig. 48) is found seated on the prostrate body of a devotee with folded hands. Even this skeleton image is ornamented by a decorated girdle round the waist. The image is seated on a double petalled lotus. A close observation of this second group of Sapta-Mātrkās clearly reveals that it is more ornamented and advanced than the first group. We are, therefore, inclined to hold the view that Jajpur was a centre of Saktism both under the Bhauma-Karas and Somavāṃśis. While the first group was assigned in the Bhauma epoch, the second group belonged to the epoch of the Somavāṃśis.

While tāntric form of Saktism centering round the cult of Sapta-Mātrkās flourished at Viṣṇu, the patronage of the Somavāṃśis also contributed to the growth of Saktism at Puri which had already attained celebrity as one of the Sāktapithas where Jagannātha was deemed to be Bhairava and Vimalā was worshipped as Bhairavi. In Devī Bhāgavata

36. Ibid, p.21n.
Vimala has been described as Ksetra Sakti of Purusottama. During the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas when the cult of Sapta-Mātrkās emerged as a vibrant faith, Puri had been famous as a significant centre of Tantric Saktism. Subhadra, the central figure in the Jagannatha triad, and Vimala, the Sakti of Jagannatha in his form as Bhairava were considered to be identical with Kātyāyani, according to Brahma Purāṇa 37 which has been recognised in Orissa as an authoritative text in the medieval period. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Somavamsis who were deeply influenced by the Tantric form of Saktism and who are devout worshippers of Bhadrāmbika also extended their patronage to the development of Saktism at Puri. Yayati I is known to have conquered Utkala and donated land in Dakina Tosali. He is also credited to have built the temple of Muktesvara where he caused to have engraved the Sapta-Mātrkā figures on the ceiling of the shrine. Puri, being situated in Dakina Tosali, there is no doubt that Yayati I must have visited Puri and he seems to have built an earlier shrine for Purusottama Jagannatha. We further learn from the Maraṇjumurā charters 38 that Yayati II whose other name was Chaṇḍihara had conquered Kaliṅga, Koṅgoda and Utkala.

37. Vide Brahma Purāṇa, Ch.78, Vr.12.
This epigraphic evidence also associates him with Purusottama Puri. In the said inscription he has also been described as a devotee of Bhagavati Shadrambika, the presiding deity of Pattana Suvarnapura who confers boons and favours to all. It may be noted in this context that one of the predecessors of Yayati II namely, Mahabhavagupta Bhimaratha son and successor of Mahasivadatta Yayati I was also a devout worshipper of the Mother Goddess. His Cuttack plates reveal that there was a Visaya in his territory known as Devibhoga Visaya, an administrative unit named after the Mother Goddess. Madalapanjí refers to one Bhima Kesari as a devout worshipper of the Mother Goddess. He is further credited to have enshrined the images of seven goddesses described as seven sisters. Bhimaratha, son of Yayati I seems to have been confused in the late temple chronicle as Bhima Kesari, successor of Bhuvana Kesari. However, his devotion to the Mother Goddess and patronage of Saktism have been indicated by the same chronicle referring to the enshrinement of the Sapta-Mātrkās described as seven sisters, at Mārkaṇḍesvara. It is striking to note that

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39. See lines 9 and 10 of the Charters, I.O., Vol.IV, pp.219-221.
contemporary epigraphic evidences and late literary evidences are supported by the archaeological findings on the edge of the tank of Markandesvara. M.P.C.Srivastav has referred to these images as art production of the Gaṅgas of the 12th century A.D. But we have no doubt that these images have to be assigned to the last phase of the epoch of the Somavamsis. It is very probable that, Bhima Kesari of Madalapāṇji identified with Bhimaratha of the Cuttack plates who is traditionally said to have built the shrine of the seven sisters, was responsible to enshrine the seven Mātrkās discovered at Markandesvara. It is significant to note that the temple of Markandesvara contains an inscription of Ananta Varman Cholagaṅgadeva of 12th century A.D. Obviously, the temple of Markandesvara is much older than the time of Cholaganga and the Gaṅga monarch engraved his inscription on the temple after his visit of Puruṣottama Puri at the beginning of the 12th century A.D. The Sapta-Mātrkā images of Markandesvara tank at Puri (Fig. 49) are made of black chlorite stone and they resemble the second group of Sapta-Mātrkā images of Daśasvamedha ghāṭ of Jajpur. All the seven images are portrayed on the seating posture on the pedestal with their usual vehicles and all except Māhesvari (Sīvacūti) and Chāmundā are associated with babies. The tiaras on their headdress are conical and

42. Srivastav, M.P.C. - Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature, Agama Kalā Prakāsan, Delhi (1979), Fig. 27-33.
decorated like those of the second group of Jajpur. But they are more ornamented and sophisticated. The artist has most successfully represented their meditative and indrawn moods which marked the acme of the tantric art of the 10th century A.D.