CHAPTER - V

SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE TEMPLE ART OF ĀNDHRADEŚA
(Chola to Vijayanagara - A.D. 10th to 17th Century)
1. SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE CHOLA ART
(A.D. 9th to 13th Century)

Historical Background:

The Cholas of Taṇjāvūr (A.D. 9th to 13th century) were great conquerors, who were not only paramount in South India but for some time extended their sway as far as the river Ganga in the North and brought Ceylon, a part of Burma, the Malayan peninsula and some islands of south-east Asia under their influence. They were also mighty builders, who erected a large number of temples in their empire, some of them constituting the finest specimens of South Indian architecture. Inheritors of the Pallava tradition, their edifices also reflect the power and genius of the Cholas.

Karikala, the early Chola emperor of the Sangam age, is lost in legendary grandeur. It was several centuries later that Vijayālaya (A.D. 850-871) in circa A.D. 850 established a small Kingdom around Taṇjāvūr, which developed into a gigantic empire under his successors. In the last quarter of 9th century (A.D. 890) the early Chola King Āditya-I (A.D. 871-907), son of Vijayālaya invaded Tondaimandalam, the Kingdom of the Pallavas, defeated the later Pallava King Aparājīta (A.D. 885-903) and put an end to the Pallava power by annexing their Kingdom and extended his power to Tondamanād (i.e., the present Tondamanādu near Śrīkālahasti) into the modern district of Chittoor, the southern most district of Andhra Pradesh. Thenceforth, the boundaries of the Chola empire gradually extended and the newly conquered areas became part of the Chola empire and they remained so till about the middle of 13th century. Āditya-I died in Tondaimāṇād at the northern end of Tondainādu, where later on his son Parāntaka-I erected a
memorial temple (Pallippadai) in his name in or before his 34th regnal year (A.D. 940-941). Aditya-I was succeeded by his son Parântaka-I (A.D.907-955). In his reign, the boundaries of the Chola empire extended from Kanyakumari in the south to the present Nellore district in the north of Andhra Pradesh. However, the Râṣṭrakûta ruler Krishna-III led a campaign against Parântaka-I in A.D.949 and defeated him at Takkõlâm in the North Arcot district. The fact that no inscription of Parântaka-I dated in his regnal years 42 to 44 (A.D.949-951) has been discovered anywhere in the kingdom is perhaps indicative of the magnitude of the disaster. The recovery of Chola territory lost to the Râṣṭrakûta king Krishna-III in the Takkõlâm battle, began under Parântaka-II (A.D.957-973/75) and his son Aditya-II (A.D. 960-965) and Toṇḍaimâṇḍalam of which the Chittoor region formed a part, was partially regained. By the time of accession of Uttama Chola in A.D.970, the re-establishment of a settled and prosperous social and economic life seems to have been complete.

Uttama Chola was succeeded by Râjarâja-I (A.D.985-1014). The reign of Râjarâja-I marks the imperial apogee of the Cholas. During his reign, the Chola empire was further extended up to the river Tuṅgabhadra, well beyond the frontiers reached by Parântaka-I. In the north, the whole of Toṇḍaimâṇḍalam was secured and the areas (Gaṅgavādi, Bānavādi, Noḷâmbavādi) of the northern subordinates were annexed. The Nīlakaṇṭhēśvara temple at Laḍḍigam, Punganur taluk, Chittoor district, was erected early in the reign of Râjarâja-I.

He was followed by Râjendra-I (A.D.1012-1044), Râjâdhirâja-I (A.D.1018-1054), Râjêndra-II (A.D.1052-1063), Vîrarâjêndra (A.D.1063-1069) and Adhirâjêndra (A.D.1068-1070), the last Chola prince in the line of Vijayâlaya. Then the Chola throne passed on to Kulôttunga-I.
(A.D. 1070-1120), an eastern Chālukya prince, married to the daughter of Chola king Rājendra-II. Kulottunga-I defeated the western Chālukyas in A.D. 1076 and re-established his sway over this area and the adjoining Mysore region. One striking feature of Kulottunga-I's reign was that of the growth in the number of subordinates and the extent of their influence. The presence of subordinate chiefs under Kulottunga-I and his successors in Andhra region is attested by the inscriptions of each reign. Kulottunga-I was followed by Vikramachola (A.D. 1118-1135), Kulottunga-II (A.D. 1133-1150), Rājarāja-II (A.D. 1146-1172) and Rajādhūraja-II (A.D. 1163-1179).

During the reign of Rājādhūraja-II the Chola subordinates started asserting themselves and gradually worked up to a state when they could shake off the Chola yoke. Kulottunga-III (A.D. 1178-1218) succeeded Rājādhūraja-II in the midst of many troubles to maintain the integrity of the Chola kingdom. He was the last great Chola king to enjoy the benefits of an extensive empire. His reign witnessed continued war with his neighbouring powers like the Pāṇḍyās and the northern Telugu Cholas. The inscriptions and the bronze images of Kulottunga-III and his Queen Cholamādevi in the Śrīkālahastiśwara temple at Śrīkālahasti, Chittoor district, confirm his sway over this region. It was during his reign that the Telugu Cholas who were till then the subordinates of the Cholas, rose to prominence in this as well as in the neighbouring districts. The Yādavāryās were one of the powerful subordinates in the eastern part of Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. The inscriptions of Rājarāja-III, (A.D. 1216-1246) successor of Kulottunga-III, dated up to his 28th regnal year have been noticed and they show how the hegemony of the Chola power continued to be recognised over the whole of this area in the reign of Rājarāja-III.

Rājendra-III (A.D. 1246-1279) was the last of the imperial Cholas. His reign marks the end of the Chola power in South India as a whole. In the early years of his reign Jāta-varman Sundara
Pāṇḍya-I (A.D.1251-1275) invaded Chola country and defeated Rājendra-III and extended his power up to Nellore. In A.D.1279 which marks the death of Rājendra-III, the Pāṇḍyas invaded again under Mārvavaman Kulasēkhara and with this the Chola empire ceased to exist and came under the control of the Pāṇḍyas who held sway over the entire territory from Kanyakumari to the river Krishna. The Chola empire was completely assimilated into the Pāṇḍyan Kingdom.

The Chola emperors were the devotees of Saivism, which was the most important sect of Hinduism. Saivism became very popular in South India under the protection of the Cholas. Vaishnavism was considerably less important; Jainism at a few centres and Buddhism at Nāgapaṭṭanam had both barely managed to survive. During this period, temples were constructed in large numbers and they became the predominant feature of Hinduism. The temples satisfied not only the religious urge of the people but also served the purpose of social welfare and progress. The Chola emperors helped in the progress of Hindu society and religion by constructing a large number of temples in their empire of which Āndhradeśa formed a part. In Āndhradeśa, the Chola temples are found at places like Toṇḍamanāḍu, Jōgimallavaram, Kalavaguṇṭa, Kaṭṭamaṇḍchi, Kāṇipākam, Mogili, Kapilaṭīrtam, Laḍḍigam, Vābiltōta, Yātavākili, Śrīkālahasti, Nāndalūr, etc.

A few Chola inscriptions refer to the worship of the Saptamātrikas. An inscription from Ālambākkam, Lālgudi taluk, Tiruchirāpalli district, dated in the thirty-first year of Chola Rājādhirāja (A.D.1049-50) mentions endowments to the temple of Saptamātrikas for the conduct of their worship. It may be stated here that this Mātrika temple was in existence during the reign of the late Pallava King Daṇṭivarma. Apart from this temple, inscriptive references also
point to the fact that there were **Svayampradhāna** (Independent) temples for the Mātrikas during the Pallava times. Separate temples dedicated to the Saptamātrikas are to be seen at Ālambākkam and Naṅgavaram (Tiruchirāpalli district) Sidhalingamaḍam (South Arcot district), Tekkūru and Vēlachchēri (Chingleput district), all in Tamil Nadu. One may perhaps hazard the suggestion that during the Pallava period there were **Svayampradhāna** temples for the Mātrikas and that under the Cholas the Mātrikas were included as one of the **Parivāra dēvatas** in the temple complex. However, even as late as the middle of the tenth century we hear of a separate temple for the Mātrikas. An inscription from Vēlachchēri, Chingleput district, dated in the tenth year of Pārthivēndravarman refers to the temple of the Saptamātrikas in the village and lands for the gift of offerings\(^{14}\). During the Chola period the temple architecture and the disposition of sculptures in the architectural fabric underwent various changes. One of the changes is that the **Svayampradhāna** temples of the Saptamātrikas which appear to have existed in the Pallava period, slowly gave place to smaller subshrines for them which were built in the **Prākāras** of the temples. The building of such sub-shrines is an architectural development of the period of transition from Pallava to Chola hegemony. The **parivāra** shrines are usually eight in number and they are called **astaparivāras**, the **parivāra-dēvatas** in a Śiva temple are Gaṇēša, Subramanya, Caṇḍikēśa, Saptamātrikas, Sūrya, Candra (or Yama), Jyēṣṭha and Naṇḍi\(^ {15}\). There are many inscriptions of the tenth and eleventh centuries recording grants for the worship of **Parivāra** deities including the Saptamātrikas. The Ennāyiram inscription of Rājēndra-I refers to a **Vyavasthai** regarding incomes from the lands of a number of shrines including those of the Saptamātrikas\(^ {16}\). The extant **Parivāra** shrines either in full or in part are found in the temples at Tirukkaṭṭalai, Mēlappaluvūr, Kilappaluvūr, Kūṁbhakōṇam, Tirukkarugavūr, Panangudi, Vīsalūr, Tiruvarangulam, Narttamalai etc\(^ {17}\). Vāviltōṭa (Agastyēśwara temple), Yātavākili (Chandramouli-
swara temple) etc., in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. It is possible to state that during the Chola period the cult of the Mātrikas became amalgamated with that of the Parivāra divinities and lost their individuality. There are a very large number of temples built in the Chola empire during the Chola period and in a large number of them Mātrika sculptures are still extant either separately or in a group.

**ICONOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE CHOLA ART:**

The temples and places having the sculptural panels and loose stone images of Saptamātrikas of the chola period are found at places like Jōgimallavaram, Guḍimallam, Śrikālahasti, Tirupati, Tirumala, Vāviltōta, Kalakaḍa, Yātavākili, Mogili, Madanapalli, all in Chittoor district and Kanaparti in the Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. The iconographical features of Mātrikas found in these places can be studied under the following two categories:

1. The Saptamātrika panels.
2. Loose stone sculptures of Mātrikas.

1. **The Saptamātrika panels**

Two rectangular stone slabs, one from the Parāsareśwara temple at Jōgimallavaram (plate 57) and the other from the Mogiliśwara temple of Mogili of the early and middle Chola periods respectively, contain a row of Saptamātrikas viz., Brāhmaṇi, Maheśwari, Kaumāri, Vaishṇavi, Vārāhi, Indraṇi and Chāmunda. Each figure is seated in ardhaparyāṅkāśana (Fig.I.4) and has four arms carrying the appropriate weapons. The carvings in these two slabs are some what crude and the iconographical features of the mātrikas are indistinct due to the regular application of oil on the deities. In these panels Brāhmaṇi has a single face and Vārāhi has the face of a boar. Chāmunda has dishevelled hair and all the other Mātrikas wear makutas and other usual
ornaments. The animal mounts of the goddesses are not indicated. These panels may be dated on stylistic grounds to about the 10th century A.D.

The Agastyeśwara temple at Vāviltōṭa, Chittoor taluk, Chittoor district, datable to the middle Chola period contains a sub-shrine for Saptamātrikas which is in dilapidated condition. This shrine contains a slab (plate 58) which represents Brāhmaṇi, Mahēśwari, Kaumāri, Vaishnavi, Varāhi, Indrāṇi and Chāmuṇḍa. All the mātrikas are four armed and shown seated in ardha-prabhāṅkāsana (Fig.I.3). Brāhmaṇi has only one head instead of four as required in the Aṃśumadbhēdagama. Her upper right arm holds akṣamāla (Fig.IV.2a) and the upper left arm holds kamandalu (Fig.IV.3a). Mahēśwari carries ankuśa (Fig.V.17a) in the upper right arm and mriga (Fig.IV.9) in the upper left arm. Kaumāri holds trisūla in the upper right arm, kukkuṭa in the upper left arm. Vaishnavi holds cakra in the upper right arm, śaṅka in the upper left arm. Boar faced Varāhi holds cakra in the upper right arm and śaṅka in the upper left arm. Indrāṇi carries vajra in the upper right arm and an indistinct weapon in the upper left arm. Chāmuṇḍa carries damaru in the upper right arm and an indistinct weapon in the upper left arm. She holds trisūla in the lower right arm and the lower left carries a human skull. She has jvālakēṣa (Fig.II.11), kūndalas, necklace and kucabaṅdha. Excepting Chāmuṇḍa, all the mātrikas are keeping their lower right arms in abhaya (Fig.I.8) and the lower left arms in varada (Fig.I.9) pose and wear karṇādamakūṭa(Fig.II.9), kūndalas, necklace (Fig.III.3), kucabaṅdha and anklets. Carvings of animal mounts of the Goddesses are found on the pedestal. Stylistically this panel may be dated to 11th century A.D. The convention of carving of Mātrikas between Virabhadra and Gaṇeśa as found in the Early Chālukya and Rāṣṭraṅgīta arts and as required in the Mayamata is absent in the Saptamātrika panels of the Chola period under discussion. However, in the Chola panels of Tamilnadu, at Tanjore and Tiruttani, the Mātrikas are shown flanked on either side by Virabhadra and Gaṇeśa. This will dispel the theory that there was uniformity in the depiction of Mātrikas throughout the Chola empire during the Chola period.
2. Loose stone sculptures of Maṭrikas

A slab (63 x 38 cms) of 10th century A.D. from the S.V.Museum on Temple art, Tirupati, has the figure of Vaishṇavi (plate 59). Standing in samabhāṅga (Fig.I.1), this deity has four arms and holds cakra and śanka in the upper arms and keeps the lower right in abhaya (Fig.I.8) and the lower left in kāṭiḥasta (Fig.I.6) instead of in varada as required in the Vishnudharmottara. There is still another slab of 10th century in the 'Hall of Antiquities' at Tirumala representing Vaishṇavi in standing posture. This image resembles in all respects the image of Vaishṇavi of the S.V.Museum of Tirupati.

The Śiddēśwara temple at Kalakaḍa in Vāyalpāḍ taluk, Chittoor district, has two loose stone sculptures out of the seven divine mothers, others being lost. They are Mahēśwari and Indrāṇi. Mahēśwari (plate 60) is seated in padmāsana (Fig.I.2) and has a bull's head. The bull is again shown as a vāhana on the pedestal below. She has four arms and carries mriga (Fig.IV.9) in the upper right arm, paraśu in the upper left and keeps the lower right arm in abhaya and lower left arm rests on the left thigh. She wears karaṇḍamakuṭa (Fig.II.7) with a halo behind her head, hāra, kucabaṇḍha, girdle and kaṅkānas. Indrāṇi (plate 61) is also seated in padmāsana (Fig.I.2). She has four arms and holds vajra in the upper right arm, aṅkuṣa (Fig.V.17b) in the upper left arm. She keeps the lower right arm in abhaya and the lower left arm on the bent left leg. Her vāhana elephant is shown on the pedestal below. She is decorated with karaṇḍamakuṭa (Fig.II.7), kuṇḍalas, hāra, kēyūras, yajñōpavītā, kaṅkānas and armlets. There is a prabhāmaṇḍala behind her head. These two sculptures are assignable to 11th century A.D.
The Chandramouliśwara temple at Yaḥavākili, Punganur taluk, Chittoor district, built in the 22nd regnal year (1033-34 A.D.) of Rājendra Chola-I (1012-44 A.D.) also contains in its courtyard beautiful loose stone figures of Saptamātrikas. All the mātrikas have four arms. Excepting Indrāṇī and Chāmuṇḍa the other five mātrikas are shown seated in padmāsana (Fig.I.2). The three faced Brāhmaṇī (plate 62) holds kamaṇḍalu (Fig.IV.3a) in the upper right arm and akṣamāla (Fig.IV.2b) in the upper left arm. She is decorated with jatāmakuṭa (Fig.II.1) with prabhāmanḍala behind her three heads, kuṇḍalas, necklace (Fig.III.4), yajñopavīta, kaṇkanas, armlets and two stranded girdle. The swan is shown on the pedestal. Mahēśwari (plate 63) holds paraśu in the upper right arm and mṛiga (Fig.IV.9) in the upper left arm. She wears karaṇḍamakuṭa (Fig.II.8), makarakuṇḍalas (Fig.III.8), hāras (Fig.III.4), graivēyakas, yajñopavīta, armlets and kaṇkanas. Her vāhana bull is carved on the seat. Kaumārī (plate 64) holds asāmala(?) in the upper right arm and kukkuṭa in the upper left arm. The curly hair are well delineated and shown flowing on either side of the ear lobes reaching upto the shoulders. She is decorated with karaṇḍamakuṭa, makarakuṇḍalas, necklace, yajñopavīta, armlets, kaṇkanas, udarabaṅḍha and girdle. The peahen is shown on the pedestal. Vaishṇavi (plate 65) carries cakra in the upper right arm and sānka in the upper left arm. She is adorned with karaṇḍamakuṭa, makarakuṇḍalas, hāras, yajñopavīta, udarabaṅḍha, girdle, kēyūras and armlets The boar faced Vārāhi (plate 66) is holding a khaḍga (Fig.V.14b) in the upper right and khēṭaka (Fig.V.15) in the upper left arm. On the pedestal of this image is a lion. She is decked with karaṇḍamakuṭa, necklace, kucabaṅḍha, kēyūras, bāhuvalayas, yajñopavīta, kaṇkanas and girdle. Indrāṇi (plate 67) is seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsana (Fig.I.3). She holds sakti in the upper right arm and vajra (Fig.IV.7a) in the upper left arm. She wears kīrtamakuṭa
(Fig.II 6), cakrakundals (Fig.III.11), graivēyakas, kēyuras, yajñopavīta, udarabandha and kaṅkaṇas An elephant, her vehicle appears on the pedestal. All the mātrikas keep their lower right arms in abhaya and the lower left arms on the left thigh. Chāmuṇḍa (plate 68) is standing with the right foot placed on the back of an āśura and the left leg resting on the pedestal. She holds a damaru in the upper right arm, serpent (Fig.V.23) in the upper left and thrusts sūla into the body of the demon with her lower right arm and holds skull-cup in the lower left arm. She has erected hair and wears patrakundalas (Fig.III.10), hāras, kucabandha, kēyūras, girdle and pūrnoruka. An interesting iconographic feature of this specimen is that Chamunda is represented in the act of killing an āśura. These loose stone sculptures of Mātrikas are datable to 11th century A.D.

There is another group of loose stone sculptures of Saptamātrikas lying in the field to the north-west of the Agastyēśwara temple at Vāviltōta. Their respective vāhanas are carved on the pedestal. Stylistically, these mātrikas belong to the later Chola period, about A.D. 11th/12th century. The main difference of this group from the Mātrika slab of Vāviltōta described above is that (i) the left leg of each of these goddesses is pendant and right leg is folded and (ii) Chāmuṇḍa keeps the lower right arm in abhaya and the lower left on the left thigh.

The Besant Theosophical College at Madanapalle is in possession of two stone slabs representing Vaishṇavi and Chāmuṇḍa. Of these goddesses, Vaishṇavi is four armed, while Chāmuṇḍa is eight-armed. However, both the Mātrikas are shown seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsana (Fig.I.3 & 4). Vaishṇavi (plate 69) carries cakra and śāṅka in the upper arms and keeps the lower right in abhaya and the lower left on the thigh instead of in varada. She wears

94
kritamukta, a necklace, kanka纳斯 and anklets Her round bulging eyes depict a fierce expression Chamanḍa (plate 70) carries a long trisula, knife, sword (Fig.V.14a) and damaru in the right arms and kapala, vessel, pasa and agni (Fig.V.28) in the left arms. Contrary to the usual representation of Chamanḍa, she is depicted here as engaged in the act of killing an asura as found at Yatavākili. Her head is full of hair which are shown in a well spread out fan like fashion. She wears a necklace of human skulls, yajnopavita, naga-kanka纳斯, purnoruka and manjiras Below her seat is a male figure (an asura) holding a sword in the right arm and shield in the left arm. An owl, an inauspicious and breadful bird, the vehicle of the Goddess as required by the Purvakaraṇaγama is found to the left of her left foot. The figure of Chamanḍa in the Saptamātrika panel at Ramēsvaram near Proddatūr, Cuddapah, which is stylistically assignable to the Bādāmi Chāluṣkyan style, also has an owl as her vehicle. The presence of an owl in this sculpture of Chamanḍa at Madanapalle enables us to believe that the Chola artists probably drew inspiration from the Bādāmi representation and showed their keen interest in carving Chamanḍa with an owl as her vehicle. These sculptures as their features indicate can be dated to belong to the 11th - 12th century A.D.

In the Tanguṭuri Prakāsam Archaeological museum at Kanaparti, Prakāsam district, there are two beautiful loose stone sculptures of mātrikas i.e., Vaishnavi and vārāhi, representing the characteristics of the Chola style. Vaishnavi (plate 71) stands in samabhanga (Fig.I.1) with four arms. She holds in the upper right cakra and in the upper left arm sanka. She keeps her lower right in kaṭihasta and the lower left in abhaya pose. She is decked with kritamukta (Fig.II.15) with prabhamaṇḍala behind, kuṇḍalas, necklace (Fig.III.3), yajnopavīta, armlets, kanka纳斯 (Fig.III.12), ardhoruka and anklets (Fig.III.14). Vārāhi (plate 72) is shown as seated
in ardhaparyāṅkāśana (Fig I 3) with the face of a boar and with four arms. She holds akṣamāla in her upper right arm, śanka (Fig.IV.10a) in the upper left arm and keeps her lower right in kaṭihasta pose and the lower left in abhaya pose. She is decked with kīrītamakuṭa (Fig II.6) which is partly broken, kuṇḍalas, necklace, kucabaṇḍha, yajñopavīta, armlets, nāga-kaṇkaṇas, girdle and ardhōruka. Her vāhana, a buffalo is found below her seat. These two sculptures may be dated to belong to 12th century A.D.

A beautiful black coloured stone image of Vaishṇavi (plate 73) from Guḍimallam20, is now preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Chandragiri. Much similar to the one found in the Tirumala Museum, she has four arms, holding cakra in the upper right arm and śanka in the upper left and keeping the lower right in abhaya and lower left in kaṭihasta (Fig.I.6) instead of in varada. She is decorated with karandamakuṭa, cakrakunḍalas (Fig.III.7), necklace (Fig.III.3), bāhuvalayas, kucabaṇḍha, girdle and maṇjiras. This image is datable to the later Chola period, about A.D. 12th/13th century.
REFERENCES


5. Naidu, P.N., Chola and Vijayanagara Art: A Comparative Study of Temples of Chittoor District. (Madras, 1994) p.4


8. Ibid.,


10. Ibid., Pp.4-6


12. The architectural, sculptural and Iconographical features of these temples are found in Dr. P.N. Naidu's book entitled "Chola and Vijayanagara Art - A Comparative Study of Temples of Chittoor District" (Madras, 1994)

13. Mani., V.R., Saptamātrikas in Indian Religion and Art (New Delhi, 1995) p.77
14. Ibid., Pp.72-73

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p.77

17. Ibid., Pp.74-75


19. A.R.E. 1906, No.575

20. The adhisṭhāna of the Parasurāmēśvara temple at Guḍimallam contains on the west an inscription of the later chola king Vikrama Chola. The inscription is dated in the 9th regnal year which corresponds to A.D. 1126-27 of the Chola king and refers to the construction of the temple in stone by one Yādavārya chief Nāraṇadēvaṇ Pudōliarasaṇ, a subordinate of the Chola king. (S.I.I. Vol.VIII, No.511)

***
2. SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE KĀKATĪYA ART
(A.D. 11th to 14th Century)

Historical Background:

The Kākatiyas were minor chiefs and their activity in 9th - 10th centuries centred in Kurraṇḍa region, the present Mahabubabād taluk of Warangal district. With the fall of the Raṣṭakūtas, the entire Telangana region came under the hegemony of the Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇi and the Kākatiyas served the latter as loyal suborinate chiefs. The Kākatiyas were originally the feudatories of the Eastern Chāḷukyas of Vēṅgi. Taking advantage of the confusion that followed after the death of the Eastern Chāḷukya king Ammarāja-II, Bēta-I (A.D.995-1052) a feudatory of the Eastern Chāḷukyas declared his independence by establishing a new dynasty in the year A.D.1000. Bēta-I was succeeded by his son Prola-I (A.D.1053-75). The Kākatiya rulers like Bēta-I and Prola-I emerged powerful and the latter obtained Anumakonda-Viṣaya as a permanent fief from Trailōkyamalladeva. It was during Bēta-II rule (A.D.1075-1108) the Kākatiyas acquired Sabbimandala. It was probably during this period that Anumakonda became the capital of the Kākatiyas. Bēta -I's son Durgarāja (A.D.1108-1117) was succeeded by Prola-II (A.D.1117-1157) the most famous among the Early Kākatiya rulers. He remained loyal to Chāḷukya Jagadekamalla, by quelling the revolt of Kumāra Tailaya, the Chāḷukyan prince of Kandūr aided by many other local chiefs Prola, thus emerged as a powerful chieftain.

The emergence of Kākatiyas as independent sovereign kings from the rule of Rudradēva (A.D.1156-1195) (eldest son and successor of Prola-II) is indicated in the inscription of 1163 A.D. at Thousand pillared temple, Hanumakonda, a document of great historical importance. His military exploits according to Anmakoṇḍa inscription, brought the entire Telangana region, extending from the neighbourhood of Kalyāṇi to the sea in the east and from Godavari in the
north to the Srisailam and Tripurāntakam in the south under the Kākatiya rule. A significant event during his rule is the foundation of the new capital Orugallu-Warangal. His younger brother and successor Mahādēva (A.D. 1195-1198/9) had a short rule and met his end in an invasion over the Seunas (Yādavas) of Dēvagiri. Though his son Gaṇapati was taken captive, he was set free by the Seuna king Jaitugi or Jaitrapāla-I. Gaṇapati’s (A.D. 1199-1262) regnal period was notable for many achievements. The conquest of costal Andhra comprising Velanāḍu and Karmarāstra by A.D. 1209 and the campaigns into the Chola country and Kalinga firmly established the Kākatiyas as supreme masters. His expeditions in Rayalaseema over the Telugu Chola Kings of Nellore and the Vaiḍūṁbas were successful and Gangaya-Sahini, the commander of Gaṇapati was conferred the region of Mārjavādi, i.e., parts of Cuddapah and Chittoor districts. Seuna princes and commanders were given service in the Kākatiya polity and there existed friendly relations between the Seunas and the Kākatiyas. It was during his reign that the change of capital from Anmakonda to Warangal was effected and the mud and stone fortifications of Warangal were built. Rudramadēvi (A.D. 1262-1289), the eldest daughter and successor of Gaṇapatidēva, could not wield authority effectively and as a result there was no trace of Kākatiya authority over Vēngi-māṇḍala between A.D. 1262-1278/79. The revolts of Ambadēva and the Pāṇḍyan invasions led to the instability of the Kākatiya power which ultimately caused the death of Rudramadēvi in A.D 1289 in the battle against Ambadēva. Pratāparudra’s (A.D. 1289-1323) rule witnessed a series of expeditions to consolidate the Kākatiya power. And this cause remained incomplete for the Muslim invasion under Ala-ud-din in A.D. 1303 had threatened the very existence of the Kakatiya capital. Later, in another Muslim expedition under Uļūgh Khan, Pratāparudra unable to defend, surrendered and he died as a captive while being taken to Delhi. Thus ended the Kākatiya rule over entire Ṇ Andhra dēśa.
The Kakatiyas were well known for their policy of religious toleration. Among the Bhakti cults which replaced Buddhism and Jainism, though Vaishnavism also flourished, it was the heyday for Saivism. The Kakatiyas were devotees of Śiva, at least from the time of Tribhuvanamalla Bētarāja, father of Prōlarāja-II and Rudradēva took the title Paramamahēswara. Gaṇapatidēva was indeed a Saivite and took to Sivādiksha from Visvēswara Śivadēva, the head of Goḷakimāṭha. According to the Prātāparudra Yaśobhūṣanam of Vidyanātha, the dynasty received the name Kākatiya because they worshipped goddess Durga in the name of Kākati. At Warangal (Ekāsilānagara) there was a temple dedicated to Goddess Kākati. Many local cults came into prominence during this age. Village and family deities such as Ekavira, Mahuramma, Gangamma, Irukalamma, Ellamma and Kāmeśvari were very popular and their worship was general throughout this period. Many Saivite sects flourished under the patronage of the Kākatiyas, Bēta and his two sons Durga and Prōla-II appear to be the disciples of Rāmēswarapanḍita, a great Kālamukha teacher. In the time of Gaṇapatidēva, the Goḷakimāṭha established its branches at many places in Andhra and its pontiff Viswēswara Śivadēva became the Dīkṣāguru of Gaṇapati. In such a congenial atmosphere the Viśāśaiva movement appears to have made considerable progress in the land.

The Kākatiyas were men of cultural tastes. They patronised men of arts and letters. They were fond of architecture. As they had sprung from the Chāḷukyas and were also allied by marriage with the Cholas of South India, it is natural that their temples show a happy blending of these two styles of temple architecture. The excellance of the Kākatiya architecture and sculpture is revealed in the temples of a later age. The important temples of the Kākatiya period dedicated to Śiva are the thousand pillared temple at Hanumakonḍa, Rāmappa temple, Pālampēṭ.
and those at Ghanpūr, Rāmanujapuram, Jangon, Manthani, Kālēswaram, Jakaram, Bejjeñki, Kuśumañchi, Warangal, Pillalamarri, Nāgulapādu, Mācherla, Gurajāla, Kaṭakshapur, Nāgnūr, Pānagal, etc. The Kākatiya rulers and their generals and ministers built or enlarged and richly endowed temples all over the empire. In comparison with the Eastern Chālukyan temples, the Kākatiya temples are much larger in size and magnificent in architectural and sculptural wealth. The thousand pillared temple at Hanumakoṇḍa and the temples of Pillalamarri and Pālampēta, though in dilapidated condition, are living monuments to the artistic skill of the sculptors of the age and to the aesthetic sense of their patrons. The thousand pillar temple known as the Rudrāsvara temple at Hanumakoṇḍa was constructed by Rudradēva in 1163 A.D. and it stands as a testimony for the great architectural triumph of the age of the Kākatiyas. The great Rāmappa temple at Pālampēta is said to have been built in 1213 A.D. by Rēcherla Rudra, one of the generals of Gaṇapatidēva. Some of these temples and in several places of the Kākatiya region, the Saptamāтриka panels are found in abundance. This shows that the Saptamāтриka cult along with Saivism flourished well and continued to receive worship from the kings and the people of the Kākatiya period. Some important panels and loose stone sculptures of Māтриkas are described below.

**ICONOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE KĀKATĪYA ART:**

The depiction of Saptamāтриkas in the Kākatiya Art can be studied under the following three categories:

1. Saptamāтриkas with the attendant deities, Virabhadra and Gaṇēśa.
2. Saptamāтриkas without the attendant deities.
3. Loose stone sculptures of Māтриkas.
I. Saptamātrikas with the attendant deities, Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeṣa

A fragmentary Saptamātrika panel (plate 74) from Paṭānccheru, Medak district, is now preserved in the State Museum at Hyderabad. It represents Vārāhi, Indrāṇi, Chāmuṇḍa, and an attendant deity Gaṇeṣa. The Mātrikas are shown seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsana (Fig.1.3) with four arms and their respective vāhanas buffalo, elephant, fox and rat are carved on the pedestal. Boar faced Vārāhi holds in her upper arms a hāla (Fig.IV.4) and vajra (Fig.IV.7a). Indrāṇi holds in her upper arms ankuśa (Fig.V.17b) and pāsa (?) (Fig.V.30b). The lower right arms of Vārāhi and Indrāṇi are in abhayamudra and the lower left arms are holding a round object (vijapūraka) They wear karaṇḍamakuṭa (Fig.II.8), kuṇḍalas, hāra, udarabāṇḍha, kaṅkaṇas and pūrnoruka. The face of Chāmuṇḍa is defaced and she carries ādamaru and trisūla in her upper arms and keeps the lower right in abhaya and holds a skull-cup (Fig.V.24) in the lower left arm. She is decked with kuṇḍalas, hāra, kaṅkaṇas, kapāla - yajñopavīta, pūrnoruka and anklets. This panel may be dated to 11th century A.D.

Another interesting Saptamātrika panel (plate 75) from Warangal is also found preserved in the State Museum at Hyderabad. The seven mothers are flanked on either side by the attendant deities Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeṣa. The divine mothers are seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsana (Fig.I.3) with four arms and their respective vāhanas carved on the pedestal, below the right foot. Brāhmaṇi has three heads and holds in her upper arms danda (Fig.V.16) and sakti (?) (Fig.V.19). Mahēswari carries nāga (Fig.V.23) and khaṭvanga in the upper right and the upper left arms. Kaumāri holds sūla, dhvaja in the upper right and upper left arms respectively. Vaishṇavi holds śanka in upper right and cakra in upper left arm. Boar faced Vārāhi holds in her upper arms khēṭaka and pāsa(?). Indrani holds vajra in upper right and sakti in the upper left arm. The
lower right arms of all the matrikas are in abhayamudra and the lower left arms are placed on the left thigh. Chāmuṇḍā holds in her upper arms dāmaru and danda. Her lower right arm holds khāḍga and the lower left skull-cup. All the goddesses are decked with karaṇḍamakūṭa (Fig.II.8) with prabhāmaṇḍala behind their heads, kuṇḍalas, hāra (Fig.III.3), udarabāṅḍha and kaṅkaṇas. On the proper right side of the Mātrikas is the figure of Virabhadra wearing jatāmakūṭa and playing on veena with his two lower arms. His upper arms hold dāmaru and trisūla. His vāhana is bull. At the other end, the pot bellied and elephant headed Gaṇeṣa holds pāsa and aṅkuśa in the upper arms and broken tusk and mūḍaka in the lower arms. He has a mouse as his vāhana. This panel belongs to 12th century A.D.

A very big Saptamātrika panel with a row of nine figures with the two associates Virabhadra and Gaṇeṣa is to be found in the Site Museum at Kolanupāka in Nalgonda district10. All the figures are four armed. Brāhmaṇi holds kalaśa and noose in upper arms. Mahēśwari holds trisūla and dāmaru in her upper arms. Kaumāri holds vajra, śakti in her upper right and upper left arms. Vaishnāvi carries disc and śānka in upper right and left arms. Vārāhi holds a small stick in upper right and a vessel in the upper left arm. Indrani holds goad, vajra in upper right and left arms respectively. Chāmuṇḍā carries trisūla in upper right and dāmaru in upper left arm. As in the Mātrika panel from Warangal found in the State Museum, Hyderabad, the Mātrakas in this panel are also decked with karaṇḍamakūṭa with prabhāmaṇḍala behind, kuṇḍalas, long hāra, necklace, bracelets, kaṭībaṅḍha, armlets and anklets. Only Chāmuṇḍā wears kapāla-yajñopavīta. The goddesses keep their lower right arm in abhayamudra and hold a fruit (vījapurāka) in the lower left arm. Vāhanas are all shown on the pedestal.
Still there is another fragmentary (97 x 28.5 cms) stone slab (plate 76) of the Kākatiya period in the Victoria Jubilee Museum at Vijayawada which shows the Mātrikas in a somewhat developed form. It represents four out of seven mothers with an associate deity Vīrabhadra seated on the left with a vīṇa (Fig.IV.1a) in his lower arms and holding dāmaru (Fig.V.22a) and trisūla in the upper arms. Beneath his seat is a bull. The four divine mothers represented are Brahmāni, Mahēswari, Kaumāri and Vaishṇavi, all of them four armed, seated side by side on a pedestal in ardhaparyāṅkāṣana (Fig.I.3). Three faced Brahmāni, carries in her upper right arm aṅkuśa (Fig.V.17a) and pāsa (Fig.V.30d) in the upper left arm. Her vehicle swan is carved on the pedestal. Mahēswari holds dāmaru in upper right and trisūla in the upper left arm. Beneath her seat is a bull. Kaumāri has three faces and holds a knife in upper right and sakti in the upper left arm. There is a peacock beneath her seat. Vaishṇavi carries cakra in her upper right. Her upper left and lower left arms and her vāhana garuda are broken. The lower right arms of Brahmāni, Mahēswari, Kaumāri and Vaishṇavi are in abhaya and the lower left arms carry a round object (vījapūraka) The Goddesses are decked with karaṇḍamakūta (Fig.II.5), necklace (Fig.III.4), a garland (Fig.III.6), yajnopavīta and anklets. This fragmentary slab is a beautiful specimen of Kākatiya art, showing details of divine expression, makūtas and ornaments of the divine mothers and their vāhanas. Artistically, this relief belongs to the late Kākatiya period and may be dated to 13th century A.D.

2. Saptamātrikas without the attendant deities

There is a Saptamātrika panel (plate 77) in the Rudrēśwara temple at Pālampēś, Warangal district. Near the entrance is an inscription dated 1163 A.D. on a pillar which states that the Kakatiya king Rudradēva set up images of Rudrēśwara, Vāsudēva and Śūrya. In this
panel, all the mātrikas are represented as seated in ardha-paryāṅkāsana posture (Fig I.4) with four arms and with their respective vāhanas and an oval shaped prabhāmaṇḍala behind their heads. The three-headed Brāhmaṇi, the first figure of the panel carries rosary (Fig.IV.2a) and kalaśa (Fig.IV.3a) in the upper arms and keeps her lower right in abhaya and the lower left in varada pose. Her vehicle swan is carved on the pedestal. Mahēśwari is holding trisūla (Fig.IV 5a) in upper right and đamaru (Fig.V.22a) in upper left arm. She keeps her lower right arm in abhaya and carries a round object (vijapūraka) in lower left arm. Beneath her seat is a bull. Kaumāri holds sūla (Fig.IV.6a) in upper right and kalaśa in upper left arm. She keeps her lower right in abhaya and the lower left in varada. There is a peacock beneath her seat. Vaishnavi holds cakra in upper right and śaṅkha in the upper left arm. She keeps her lower right in abhaya and the lower left in varada. Her vehicle garuḍa is carved on the pedestal. Boar headed Vārāhi holds gada (Fig.IV.12a) in upper right and akṣamāla in upper left arm. She keeps her lower right in abhaya and a round object (vijapūraka) in lower left arm. There is a buffalo below her seat. Indrani has sakti (Fig.IV.7b) in her upper right and akṣamāla in upper left arm. She keeps her lower right in abhaya and the lower left on the left thigh. An elephant, her vehicle, appears on the pedestal. Chāmuṇḍa carries trisūla (Fig.IV.5a) and đamaru in the upper arms and holds a sword (Fig.V.14a) in the lower right and resting the lower left on the left thigh. Her hair is finely combed and she is adorned with kuṇḍalas and a necklace. Her vehicle fox is carved under the feet of the goddess. All the Mātrikas are shown with karaṇḍamakuṭa (Fig.II.9) with a halo behind their heads and wear usual ornaments. This panel is of 12th century A.D.
3. Loose stone sculptures of Mātrikas

The Site Museum at Kolanupāka, Nalgoṇḍa district, contains a loose stone sculpture of Chāmuṇḍa (plate 78) of the Kākatiya period. The goddess is in seated posture and has no emaciated form. She is holding dāmaru and trisūla (Fig.IV.5b) in her upper right and upper left arms and sword (Fig.V.14a) and skull-cup in the lower right and lower left arms respectively. She is adorned with karandamakuta with dishevelled hair, a necklace, anklets etc. Artistically, this may be dated to late Kākatiya style, about A.D.13th century.
**REFERENCES**


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 168


6. Ibid.


8. Descriptions of these temples are found in Dr. M. Radhakrishna Sarma's book *Temples of Telangana* (Hyderabad, 1972)


Historical Background:

The history of the Vijayanagara empire is the brightest chapter in the history of Andhradāśa. It was founded by the Sangama brothers - Harihara and Bukka in A.D.1336, and it lasted for about three and a half centuries. Four dynasties ruled over this kingdom in succession. They were: (1) the Sangama Dynasty, (2) the Sāluva Dynasty, (3) the Tuluva Dynasty and (4) the Āravīdu Dynasty. The Rayalaseema area had remained under the Vijayanagara rule since the foundation of the empire. The Telangana region more often witnessed continuous wars between the Bahamanis and the Vijayanagara rulers. Likewise the coastal region was also formed the area for the struggle between the Gajapatis of Orissa and Vijayanagara Kings.

The rulers of Sangama dynasty (A.D.1336 - 1485) included Harihara-I (A.D.1336-1356), Bukka-I (A.D 1356-1377), Harihara-II (A.D.1377-1406), Dēvarāya-I (A.D.1406-1422), Dēvaraya-II (A D 1422-1446), Mallikārjuna (A.D.1446-1465) and Virūpāksha (A.D.1465-1485). The inscriptions attesting the rule of these rulers are found in the districts of Kurnool¹, Anantapur², Chittoor, Cuddapah etc., in Andhradāśa. In the days of Harihara-I, the empire was divided into many provinces generally known as Rājyas and Māndalas. In the east was the Udayagiri-rājya which included the present Nellore and Cuddapah districts. A little to its west was the Penugonda-rājya. To the south of it were the Chandragiri-rājya and the Muluvāyirājya³. All these territorial divisions were in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Bukka-I was governing the western districts of Telugu country during the early years of the reign of Harihara-
I. His inscriptions are found in Tirumala and Tirupati. Haripura-II was a great devotee of God Mallikārjuna of Srisailam. He built the mukhamandapa in the Mallikārjuna temple at Srisailam. Devaraya-II, the greatest ruler of Sangama dynasty, made several benefactions to Tirumala temple. An inscription of Devaraya-II dated in Saka 1347 (A.D.1425), records the building of a gopura to the Bhairaveshwara temple at Mōpur (Cuddapah district) by Tirumalaraya, a servant of the king. Mallikārjuna, the last of the Sangama family, is represented in the inscriptions from both Tirumala and Tirupati. During the rule of Virupaksha, the Bahmani kingdom, which was ably administered by the Prime Minister, Mohammad Gawan, invaded Vijayanagara. Virupaksha was unable to meet the challenge of the Bahmani kingdom. The king was assassinated by his son, who however, renounced the throne as an act of repentence in favour of his younger brother Prouta Devaraya. But Sāluva Narasimha, eldest son of Sāluva Guṇḍa, the chief of Chandragiri near Tirupati, usurped the throne and founded the Sāluva dynasty.

The second dynasty was the Sāluva dynasty (A.D.1485-1505). There were only two kings of this dynasty, viz., Sāluva Narasimha and Immaḍi Narasimha. A branch of the Sāluva family ruled over the Chandragiri-rājya with headquarters at Chandragiri during the reign of Mallikārjuna of the Sangama dynasty. Sāluva Narasimha succeeded to the family estate of Chandragiri in A.D. 1456. The Sāluvābhyudayam written by Rājanātha Diṇḍima, states that he made Chandragiri his residence for the purpose of worshipping Vishnu at Tirumala. An inscription mentions Sāluva Narasimha as the ruler of Chandragiri in A.D.1466. He usurped the throne of the Vijayanagara Empire in A.D.1486 and the Kingdom thereafter came to be called after him. There are several inscriptions of this ruler in Tirumala and Tirupati temples.
The third dynasty was the Tuluva dynasty which ruled from A.D.1505 to 1570. Immaḍi Narasimha was murdered by Vīra Narasimha (A.D.1505-1509) who ascended the throne in A.D. 1505 and established a new dynasty called the Tuluva dynasty. Vīra Narasimha was a great devotee of God Mallikārjuna of Srisailam. He once visited that temple and paid homage to the God. He was succeeded by his famous half-brother Srikrishnadēvarāya, who ruled from A.D.1509-1529. He was the greatest among the Vijayanagara rulers and his reign marked the zenith of the empire. Entire Āndhradēsa was under his control besides the region down to the Kanyākumāri. He restored order throughout the empire and improved the finances of the State. He was the ablest and the most celebrated of the Rāyas of Vijayanagara. Āndhradēsa reached the acme of its glory in the reign of the illustrious emperor, Krishnadēvarāya. He was a great benefactor of the temples of Srisailam, Kālahasti, Tirumala, Nāgalāpuram etc. While returning after the capture of the fortress of Koṇḍavīdu from the Gajapatis, Krishnadēvarāya visited Srisailam in the company of his two Queens, Chinnādevi and Tirumalādevi and made valuable gifts to God Mallikārjuna. Śri Vēṅkaṭēswara of Tirumala was the patron deity of this monarch. On every important occasion he visited Tirumala temple and obtained the blessings of the God. Inscriptions register seven visits of this monarch to the Tirumala temple which resulted in substantial and valuable gifts being made to Śri Vēṅkaṭēswara. The metal images of Krishnarāya and his two Queens, Chinnādevi and Tirumalādevi are found in the Pratima-maṇḍapa of the Tirumala temple. The forts at Penugonda (Anantapur district) and Chandragiri (Chittoor district) were improved in the time of Krishnarāya. The erection of king's palace (Rāja Mahal) in the Chandragiri fort is also attributed to Krishnarāya. Srikrishnadēvarāya was succeeded by his brother Achyutarāya who ruled from A.D. 1529-1542. He was a man of violent
He could not govern the empire and the real power was wielded by his minister Āravīḍu Rāmarāju (Son-in-Law of Srikrishṇadēvarāya). Like his brother Srikrishṇarāya, Achyutarāya also was a great benefactor of the temples of Tirumala and Śrīkālahasti. As emperor, he visited Chandragiri several times and stayed for some time in its fortress in the year A.D.1532. Achyutarāya visited Srisailam in A.D.1542-1543, and made valuable gifts to the temple. The emperor is credited with the construction of the Queen's palace (Rāni Mahal) in the Chandragiri fort. The rule of Achyutarāya came to an end in A.D.1542. He was followed on the throne by his son Vēnkaṭa in A.D.1542 who was assassinated by his maternal uncle Sālakarāju Tirumala. He seized the throne was slain by Aliya Rāmarāja. Subsequently Achyutarāya's nephew Sadāśivarāya (A.D.1542-1576) with the assistance of Aliya Rāmarāja, ascended the throne. He was a weak king and the one dominating personality who controlled the destinies of the empire during his time was Aliya Rāmarāja (A.D.1542-1565).

After the battle of Tālikota (A.D.1565) the Muslim confederacy was dissolved and once again they began to fight each other. This gave an opportunity for the Vijayanagara empire to recoup under Rāmarāja's brother Tirumalarāya. He shifted the capital from Hampi (Vijayanagara) to Penukoṇḍa in Anantapur district. In 1570 Tirumalarāya set aside the nominal rule of Sadāśivarāya and became the dejure ruler. Thus, began the rule of the Āravīḍu dynasty, the fourth and last dynasty of the Vijayanagara. Tirumalarāya was the first ruler of the Āravīḍu line of Kings. He ascended the throne in A.D.1570 and ruled till A.D.1572. Vēnkaṭa-I, the youngest son of Tirumalarāya assumed the governorship of Tamil country with Chandragiri as his capital. His records are found at Madanapalle and Tirumala. Tirumalarāya was succeeded in order by his sons Śrīraṅga-I (A.D.1572-1585) and Vēnkaṭa-II (A.D.1585-1614). Vēnkaṭa-II was the greatest
prince of the Āravīḍu line. In A.D. 1585, he transferred his capital from Penugonda to Chandragiri in chittoor district and ruled the empire from that place. He restored the prestige and power of the Vijayanagara empire. In 1597-1598 he suppressed a rebellion of the Kshatriya feudatories of Rayalaseema, captured their leader, Krishnamarāju and imprisoned him at Chandragiri. After Vēṇkaṭa-II's death in A.D. 1614, the empire passed into the hands of Śrīraṅga-II (A.D.1614), Rāmadēva (A.D.1614-1630), Peda Vēṇkaṭa-II (A.D.1630-1642) and Śrīraṅga-III (A.D.1642-1672) whose reigns were uneventful. Śrīraṅga-III, the last ruler of the Āravīḍu family is represented by a solitary record from Vēlkūru, Chittoor taluk, dated in A.D.1644. After Śrīraṅga-III, The empire became smaller in size and lost its importance as well as its influence. By 1786 when Tippu Sultan set fire to Anegoṇḍi, the empire of Vijayanagara had disappeared.

The kings of Vijayanagara behaved with utmost impartiality in religious matters. They gave a great impetus and protection to Hinduism during the Vijayanagara period. During this period, Saivism continued to enjoy the popular support as it had in the proceeding ages. The early kings of Sangama dynasty were ardent Saivas. They ruled the kingdom as vice regents of their patron deity Virūpāksha. In the course of the fifteenth century a gradual change took place in the religious convictions of Vijayanagara house. The rulers developed a partiality for Vaishnavism and came to be influenced more and more by the Vaishnava doctrine. As a result Vaishnavism attained a preeminent position. Tirupati, Ahōbalam, Simhachalam, Śrīkūrmmma, Bāpatla, Vontimitta, Pushpagiri have enjoyed royal patronage. The Śāluvas were Vaishnāvas, devoted to Narasimha of Ahōbalam and Vēṅkaṭēśvara of Tirumala. Under the Tuluva rulers, Vaishnavism gained further strength and there was a enormous increase in its influence. However, they were only personal preferences of the monarchs. Along with the worship of Saivite and Vaishnavite deities, the worship of Seven divine mothers was also popular during the Vijayanagara period.
Vijayanagara period is rightly considered a golden age in the history of the iconography of Andhradeśa as well as the rest of South India. The Vijayanagara emperors ushered in a new phase of Art which mostly followed the southern traditions. The Rāyas of Vijayanagara, who held sway over Andhradeśa, were great builders. During this period were constructed many fortresses, big palaces and temples. Temples built in Vijayanagara period are well known for their size, details of decoration, sculpture and painting that they contain. Pure Vijayanagara temples are found in Rayalaseema area at places like Tādipatri, Penugonda, Kadiri, Gōrantla, Lēpākshi (Anantapur district), Pushpagiri, Rāyachōti, (Cuddapah district), Mārkapuram, Śrisāilam (Kurnool district), Nārāyaṇavanam, Nāgalāpuram, Chandragiri, Tirupati, Kālahasti, Maṅgāpuram, Sōmapālem (Chittoor district) etc. The Chennakesava temple at Markapur, Prakasam district and the Rangaṇāyaka and Krishna temples at Udayagiri in Nellore district belong to 16th century A.D. In the Telangana region, the Madana Gopalaswami temple at Jāṭprōlu, the Madhavaswami temple at Manchalakaṭṭa, Mahabubnagar district also belong to the Vijayanayara period34. The sculptural art of the Vijayanagara period shows the popularity of relief sculptures. The art is influenced by the Chola and Kalinga traditions in the respective regions like the Rayalaseema, Nellore, Prakasam, Guntur, Krishna, West and East Godavari, Viśakhapāṭnam and Srikakulam districts. The temples of Vijayanagara are famous for the sculptures of Saivite and Vaishnavite gods and goddesses which include the sculptural panels and loose stone images of Saptamātrikas. The temples having Saptamātrikas are found at Lēpākshi (Anantapur district), Munnēli, Pottapi (Cuddapah district) Rāmagiri, Samudāyam, Surūṭupalli (Chittoor district) etc. The presence of the Saptamātrika panels in the Vijayanagara temples enable us to state that in addition to Śaivism and Vaishnavism, the cult of Saptamātrikas was prevalent during the Vijayanagara period and the Saptamātrikas continued to be worshipped in this period as in the pre-Vijayanagara period.
CONOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE VIJAYANAGARA ART:

The Vijayanagara artists also showed keen interest in the representation of Saptamātrikas in the temples erected by them. The best examples of Saptamātrikas illustrating the Vijayanagara Art are found at Lepakshi, Munnēli, Pottapi, Ramagiri, Suruṭupalli and Samudāyam. The representation of Saptamātrikas in the Vijayanagara Art can be studied under the following two categories:

1) Sculptural panels of Saptamātrikas.
2) Separate images of Saptamātrikas.

Sculptural panels of Saptamātrikas

The Vīrabhadra temple at Lepakshi, Anantapur district, built in A.D.1530 by Virūpaṇa, the treasurer of Achyutarāya, contains in its inner enclosure, to the left of the Nāgalīṅga, an interesting granite panel with the figures of the Saptamātrikas. P.N. Naidu has studied the conographic features of this panel in detail. The panel (plate 79) measures 161 x 46 x 16 Cms and represents from left to right Brāhmaṇi, Indrāni, Kaumārī, Mahēśwari, Vārāhi, Chāmuṇḍa and Vaiśṇavi. They are shown seated on a pedestal in ardhaṇārkāsana (Fig.I.4) with four arms. The lower arms of each goddess, excepting Chāmuṇḍa are held in abhaya and varadamudra. Brāhmaṇi has three heads and the weapons in the upper arms are very indistinct. Indrāni holds a trisūla in the upper right arm and the content in the upper left is indistinct. Kaumārī also has three heads. The contents in her upper arms are chopped off. Mahēśwari holds mriga (Fig.IV.9) in upper right arm and parāśu in the upper left arm. Vārāhi has the face of an ordinary female figure instead of the face of a boar. In the upper arms, she holds damaru and trisūla. Chāmuṇḍa carries in the upper right and the upper left arms damaru and trisūla respectively. The lower
CONOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF SAPTAMĀTRIKAS IN THE VIJAYANAGARA ART:

The Vijayanagara artists also showed keen interest in the representation of Saptamātrikas in the temples erected by them. The best examples of Saptamātrikas illustrating the Vijayanagara art are found at Lēpākshi, Munnēli, Pottapi, Rāmagiri, Suruṭupalli and Samudāyam. The representation of Saptamātrikas in the Vijayanagara Art can be studied under the following two categories:

1) Sculptural panels of Saptamātrikas.
2) Separate images of Saptamātrikas.

Sculptural panels of Saptamātrikas

The Virabhadrā temple at Lēpākshi, Anantapur district, built in A.D. 1530 by Virūpaṇa, the treasurer of Achyutarāya, contains in its inner enclosure, to the left of the Nāgaliṅga, an interesting granite panel with the figures of the Saptamātrikas. P.N.Naidu has studied the iconographic features of this panel in detail. The panel (plate 79) measures 161 x 46 x 16 Cms and represents from left to right Brāhmaṇī, Indrāni, Kaumāri, Mahēśwari, Vārāhi, Chāmuṇḍa and Āishnāvi. They are shown seated on a pedestal in ardhaṃkāsana (Fig.I.4) with four arms. The lower arms of each goddess, excepting Chāmuṇḍa are held in abhaya and varadamudra. Brāhmaṇī has three heads and the weapons in the upper arms are very indistinct. Indrāni holds trisūla in the upper right arm and the content in the upper left is indistinct. Kaumāri also has three heads. The contents in her upper arms are chopped off. Mahēśwari holds mriga (Fig.IV.9) in upper right arm and parasu in the upper left arm. Vārāhi has the face of an ordinary female figure instead of the face of a boar. In the upper arms, she holds damaru and trisūla. Chāmuṇḍa carries in the upper right and the upper left arms damaru and trisūla respectively. The lower
ight and the lower left arms carry khadga and skull-cup. She is decked with jvalakesa.
graiveyakas, ear ornaments and anklets. Vaishnawi carries cakra in the upper right arm and
aṅka in the upper left arm. All the mātrikas, except Chāmuṇḍa, wear karanda-makuta (Fig.II.8),
cuṇḍalas, kēyuras, graiveyakas, girdle, kātiṣūtra and anklets. Kucabandha is to be seen only
in the figures of Indrāni and Vaishnawi. As a piece of sculpture this panel has no importance. Its
iconographic significance however, must be noted. Iconographic texts require that the mātrikas
should be flanked by Virabhadra and Gaṇesa on the two sides. Here, both of them are absent.
The order of the mātrikas has also been changed as found in some panels of Early Chālukya Art.
They are normally carved in this order: Brāhmaṇi, Mahēswari, Kaumārī, Vaishnawi, Vārāhi,
ndrāni and Chāmuṇḍa. Another striking feature of this panel is the absence vāhanas of the
goddesses on the pedestal. These departures from iconographic requirements would suggest the
vijayanagara artists did not strictly adhere to the requirements of the Iconographic texts. This
panel is a specimen of Vijayanagara sculptural art of 16th century A.D.37

The Saptamātrika panel (123 x 73 cms) in the Rāmalingēswara temple at Munnēli (plate
30), Cuddapah district, shows the divine mothers as seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsana (Fig.I.3) with
four arms. Except Vārāhi, Indrāni and Chāmuṇḍa, the faces of Brāhmaṇi, Mahēswari, Kaumārī
and Vaishnawi and the vāhanas of Kaumārī and Vaishnawi are damaged. The mātrikas are
distinguished from each other by their weapons held in the upper arms and the vāhanas or
lāñchanas carved below the pedestal. This panel is datable to A.D.16th century.

The Saptamātrika panel in the Mūlasthānēswara temple at Pottapi, Cuddapah district,
closely resembles the panel of Munnēli and shows similar features and identical vehicles. All the
mātrikas are carved alike and have certain common characteristic features. They are all seated in
ardhaparyāṅkāsana with four arms, holding their appropriate weapons. This panel may be dated to 16th century A.D.

2. Separate Images of Saptamātrikas

There is a group of loose stone sculptures of Saptamātrikas lying in the courtyard of the Valīswara temple at Rāmagiri, Chittoor district. All the mātrikas are four armed and shown seated in ardhaparyāṅkāsana (Fig.I.3) with their respective vāhanas carved on the pedestal. Brāhmaṇī (plate 81) has three heads with jatāmakuta (Fig.II.1). She carries akṣamāla in the upper right arm and kamaṇḍalu (Fig.IV.3a) in the upper left arm. Mahēswari (plate 82.Fig.1) carries paraśu (Fig.V 13) in the upper right arm, deer(?) in the upper left arm. Kaumāri (plate 82.Fig.2) holds vajra (Fig.IV.7b) in the upper right arm, śakti in the upper left arm. Vaishṇavi (plate 83) carries cakra (Fig.IV.11b) in the upper right arm, śaṅka (Fig.IV.10c) in the upper left arm. Boar faced Vārāhi (plate 84.Fig.1) has paraśu (?) in the upper right arm, a rod (?) in the upper left arm. Indrāṇi (plate 84.Fig.2) carries vajra (Fig.IV.7b) in the upper right and upper left arms. The lower arms of the goddesses are held in abhaya and varadamudra as required in Amśumadbhēdāgama. Mahēswari, Kaumāri wear karandamakuta (Fig.II.9) while Vaishṇavi, Vārāhi and Indrāṇi wear kiritamakuta (Fig.II.6). Cakrakuṇḍalas (Fig.III.11), graivēyakas, kēyūras, kucabandha, girdle, ardhōruka, kaṅkaṇas and anklets are the common ornaments found in these mātrikas. Chāmuṇḍa (plate 85) carries đamaru in the upper right arm, pāsa (Fig.V.30c) in the upper left, trisūla (Fig.IV.5a) in the lower left and keeps the lower right in abhaya. She wears graivēyakas, kucabanda and ardhōruka. Stylistically, these māтриka images belong to the Vijayanagara period, about A.D.16th century.

The Pallikoṇḍēśwara temple at Surutupalle, Chittoor district, contains a group of five loose stone images of Saptamātrikas. They are Brāhmaṇī (59 x 38 cms), Mahēswari (51 x 26 cms), Kaumāri (70 x 36 cms), Vaishṇavi (57 x 34 cms) and Chāmuṇḍa (55 x 33 cms). The mātrikas
as usual are shown seated in ardhaparyānkāsana (Fig.I.3) with their respective vāhanas depicted on the pādapīṭha. Of these Goddesses, Chāmuṇḍa is eight armed deity, while the other deities are four armed. Brāhmaṇī (plate 86. Fig.1) carries akṣamāla in her right arm and vessel in the upper left arm. Mahēśwari (plate 86. Fig.2) holds parāśu (Fig.V.13) in her upper right arm and deer (Fig.IV.9) in the upper left arm. Kaumāri (plate 86. Fig.3) holds vajra (Fig.IV.7b) in her upper two arms. Vaishnavi (plate 87. Fig.1) carries cakra in upper right and śaṅka in upper left arm. The lower right arm of these goddesses is in abhaya and the lower left arm is in varada pose. They wear makuṭa, kuṇḍalas, graivēyakas, kucabāṅḍha, ardhōruka and mañjiras (Fig.III.14). Chāmuṇḍa (plate 87.Fig.2) has eight arms. She is shown in the act of killing the demon with trisūla (Fig.IV.5a). She wears kuṇḍalas, graivēyakas, kaṅkaṇas and ardhōruka. Below the pedestal, the figure of the demon is found as prētavāhana. These images closely resemble the māтриka images of Rāmagiri. On the basis of artistic features, these images may be dated to the Vijayanagara period, about A.D.16th century.

The Agastyēśwara temple at Samudāyam, Chittoor district contains in its mukha-maṇḍapa a group of loose stone images (plates 88 & 89) of Mātrikas. The seven divine mothers including Chāmuṇḍa are represented in ardhaparyānkāsana (Fig.I.3) with four arms, holding appropriate weapons in the upper arms and keeping the lower right arms in abhayamudra and the lower left arms in varada. Three headed Brāhmaṇī wears jatāmakuṭa and the other māтриkas have karandaṃakuṭa (Fig.II.9). Chāmuṇḍa has flaming hair (jvālakēśa). She is represented as an ordinary female figure. The respective vāhanas of the goddesses are carved on the pedestal. The usual ornaments such as kuṇḍalas, hāras, yajño pavīta, kēyuras, armlets, kaṅkaṇas and pūrnōruka are worn by the Mātrikas. These loose images of māтриkas appear to be the products of the later Vijayanagara period, about A.D.17th century.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid., 1927, No.1021

3. Mahalingam, T.V., Administration and Social Life Under the Vijayanagara Empire (Madras, 1940) Pp.177-178


5. M.E.R., 1915, No.11


7. M.E.R., 1906, No.496


10. Subrahmanym, R., Suryavamsi Gajapatis of Orissa (Waltair, 1957) p.46

11. T.T.D.I., Vol II, No.4


13. M.E.R., 1919, No.53


16. S.I.L, IX-2, No.475


19. M.E.R., 1915, No.18


27. A.R.E. 1912 - 13 C.P.No.1


33. Naidu, P.N., Chola and Vijayanagara Art - A Comparative Study of Temples of Chittooor District (Madras, 1994) p.11
37. Ibid.