Caught up between academic pursuit and existential problems, the present study literally took ages to complete. Brought up in the close environments of the ruins of Lalitgiri and Chandia (now extinct due to a prosperous antique market), I had a sense of belongings with the Buddhist heritage of Orissa but it was only after 1997 that I took up the studies on Buddhism quite seriously. Before that I had only heard of Panca Dhyani Buddhas, seven Manusi Buddha, Avalokitesvara Padmapani, Prajnaparamita, Manjusri and few other Buddhist gods and goddesses. A study of Benoytosh Bhattacharya's Indian Buddhist Iconography first exposed me to myriad pantheon structures of Buddhism. Studies of the original Sādhanamāla, Nispamayogāvalī, Vajrāvalī and many other excellent books published by Sata Pitaka series considerably broadened by my horizon. Scholarly works particularly of Wayman’s Buddhist Tantras, Snellgrove’s translation of Hevajra tantra and other books on Tibetan Esoterism and Dasgupta’s obscure religious cults and Karunakar Kar's Ākṣara Cavyārāja (Oriya) helped in understand the complex philosophies of Vajrayāna Buddhism. On the other hand, much of the social works on Buddhism is derived from numerous studies on Newar Buddhism.

However, when I began fieldwork in the Chitrotpala-Birupa and Kimira Valleys with the help of Mohapattā’s invaluable work Archaeology of Orissa and Debala Mitra’s Ratnagiri, I faced difficulties in identifying many deities, particularly cult of Bodhisattvas in Lalitgiri. Fortunately I came across one article of Donaldson on Buddhist mandalas in Orissa, published in East and West. After 2000, Donaldson published a series of books on iconographies—Buddhist, Vaishnava and Šākta, which have considerable academic value. I have profited enormously from these books and the present could not have assumed the present shape without the timely publication of these books.

I have profited enormously from the extensive fieldwork of temples of Orissa as a research assistant in the Orissa Research Project under the supervision of Padmashree von Stietencron of Tubingen University. The fieldwork from seven in the morning to six ‘O’ clock in the evening in Nov-Dec 2002 provided an opportunity to study the temples of coastal Orissa.

However, my supervisor Himanshu Prabha Ray has been most influential in shaping my academic career as well as the present form of the study. She taught me the nuances of historical research. She spent her valuable time in making the argument more cogent and structure more gestalten.
I thank Sailendra and Srividya for going through the proofs. I also thank my friends Atanu and Umakant for scanning the photographs.

I am also indebted to Lokesh Chandra to permit to use personal library. I have also profited enormously from the neat library of American Institute of Indian studies, Gurgaon and their rich photo archive. I have also been helped from the photo archives of the Archaeological Survey of India. My due thanks to the Superintendent of Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar for allowing me to take the photographs of Achutarajpur hoard.

However, I am alone responsible for the mistakes and inadequacies of the present study.