Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my guide – supervisor Prof. Asok K. Bhattacharya for bringing to my notice the potentiality of Khiching and the continuous support of my research-- for his patience and faith in me, for enthusiasm and a deep understanding of Indian art history. He guided me throughout a long tenure even during his frail health, allowing me a free hand to think and develop on my own without being overbearing.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank Gouriswar Bhattacharya, Gerd J. R. Mevissen, Dr. D.R. Das and Dr. Gautam Sengupta (former Director General of Archaeological Survey of India) for their encouragement, insightful comments, and hard questions.

I am also thankful to the authorities of University of Calcutta for the permission to enjoy the benefit of continuity from my earlier PhD registration.

My sincere thanks go to Dr. Sudipa Ray Bandyopadhyay and Dr. Susmita Basu Majumdar of Ancient Indian History and Culture Department (AIHC) University of Calcutta for their valuable suggestions and for answering my endless queries.

Dr. Suchandra Ghosh, Dr. Nupur Dasgupta and Dr. Tapati Guha-Thakurta have been ever supportive and very keen to see this research come to fruition. My heartfelt thanks to them for all the mental support and stimulating dialogues.

I thank other researchers in the allied field, Dr Madhuparna Roychowdhury, Dr. Anindita Nag and Dr. Shraman Mukherjee for all the discussions, cross references and mutual sharing of knowledge. Would also extend my thanks to my friends and colleagues in The Asiatic Society, Kolkata and CASTEI (Centre for Archaeological Studies & Training Eastern India) particularly to Banani Bhattacharya, Anasuya Bhowmick, Sima Roy Chowdhury, Kaushik Gangopadhyay and Pranab K. Chattopadhyay.

I am indebted to all the authorities of different museums, libraries and individuals for giving me access to their collections for data and photographic documentation. A special mention is due to American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Gurgaon and the
former Joint Director, Dr. U.S. Moorti for facilitating my research at the photo archive and providing me quality prints.

It is not easy for a researcher to work in a different state and that too in a remote village. But the experience was almost problem free due to the co-operation and help extended by the scholars and institutions in Odisha, viz., Dr. Snigdha Tripathy, Dr. P.K. Mishra, Dr. Sadasiv Pradhan, the Department of State Archaeology, Odisha, Odisha State Museum, Bhubaneswar, Mr. Chaturbhuj Rautray of Diamond Jubilee Library (Sriram Chandra Library) Baripada, archive of District Collectorate Office, Baripada, and the site museum at Khiching. I deeply acknowledge the generous support extended by Smt. Mamata Bose (sunudi) and her husband Mr. Annadaprasad Mahapatra. Smt. Bose, granddaughter of K.P. Bose, popularly regarded as the “Father of Mayurbhanj archaeology”, gave complete access to the private papers and diaries of her late father and grandfather for the sake of an authentic reconstruction of history.

This research would not have been possible without the unstinted co-operation, love and hospitality received from the villagers of Khiching during my repeated field visits. No word of gratitude is enough to describe the help rendered to the present researcher by Muni, the caretaker of the site museum at Khiching and Sushant Mahakud, who guided me to village shrines in and around Khiching, overcoming the language barrier.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my friends and family profusely for putting up with my idiosyncrasies and this prolonged research, sprawling over a decade. Tithi Chanda of Town Hall Museum and Nandita Banerjee of Katwa College deserve special thanks. Nandita took immense trouble to organise the data collected during my physical indisposition. My mother Dr. Chitra Mukherjee and mother figures Chandrima Bhattacharya and Apala Chakraborty have been great motivators through their deeds and words. I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my loving father Gopal Mukherjee and my progressive mother-in-law Gayatri Sengupta, who have been spiritual supporters and great inspirations. But perhaps the greatest support in the realization of this project came from my husband, Supriyo Sen, who pushed me against all odds to complete this. He refused to give up, even when I despaired. I thank him for all the technical support like scanning of photographs and for keeping
an eye on the domestic front when I was out of town for data collection and conferences. My five year old son Mohul (Megh) has been the most positive incentive to overcome the depression caused by multiple bereavements and several, tedious medical managements in the family and galvanize back to academic activities. Thank you all.