Note on Transliteration

I have chosen not to use diacritics in this book so that the prose will be accessible to non-specialists, on the assumption that specialists in South Asia will already know the correct pronunciation of Indian-language terms. A glossary of key terms and diacritics indicating their correct pronunciation appears at the end of the book. Proper, caste, and place names are capitalized and also appear without diacritics. For ease in pronunciation, I have rendered both ś and ś as “sh” and c as “ch” in Indian language words; thus shakti rather than śakti, and Chhattisgarh rather than Chattisgarh. I have rendered plurals with the addition of an “s” at the end of Indian-language transliterated words rather than giving their plural forms in each language (veshams rather than veshallu in Telugu).

The chapters of this book draw on ethnographic research in several languages: Chhattisgarhi, Odiya, Hindi, and Telugu. I have generally followed the transliteration system of Sanskrit for words and names that are common across these languages. So while Hindi and Chhattisgarhi would pronounce Ram, Ramayan, Ravan, and math, I have transliterated these as Rama, Ramayana, Ravana, and matha. Exceptions are made in direct quotations or proper names that do not include the final “a,” such as Ravan Bhatha. An exception to the choice of Sanskrit transliteration is in words such as darshan (rather than Sanskrit darshanam) that have become common in English publications of South Asian materials.