11. Acknowledgements

The journey undertaken when pursuing a Ph.D. is a long and arduous one. Fortunately those who provide support, motivation, knowledge, friendship and love, make the trip through the long research and writing process more bearable and very rewarding. This is not only an opportunity to give thanks to people who have shown great kindness, provided academic, administrative and financial support to me over the years, but for me also a personal pleasure to acknowledge their tremendous contribution. This is also for those remarkable people who supported me personally in every aspect.

I believe no words I could write which could fully encompass the amount of gratitude and respect me have for Prof Ferdinand Hucho. For his easy-going attitude yet thorough professionalism, I thank Prof. Hucho not only for his supervision and scientific expertise provided during this period, but also for imparting wisdom that has inspired me to be a life-long learner. I thank him for his trust on me, which allow me to enjoy a complete freedom to perform. Prof Hucho, a teacher of biochemistry actually taught me both life science and life beyond science.

In this juncture I thank Prof. Gerd Multhaup not only for critically evaluating this thesis work, but also for allowing me to work in his laboratory.

I thank my lab members from deepest of my heart for being so friendly all the time. It is these remarkable people who provided such a nice environment at laboratory where working is a fun. In this juncture I would like to mention Denis, Bandini, Lisa, Olaf, Recarda, Victoria, Alejandra, Lori and many others who helped me when ever I needed. Sangeeta and Ingu actually could not have helped me more than what they have done in a short duration. I thank all the lab members for upgrading my “understanding of deutsch”, but my special thank goes to Chris, Henning and Mathias for improving my skill with English and corrections with the writings. Herman helped me many a time with his expertise during protein purification. Without his help, some of the key experiments would have been illusive.

I thank Doris for her superb expertise with cell culture and molecular biology. This is due to her enormous contribution this work brings the success. Without her help, this work would never be finished. Further thanks must be given to Dr. Mathias Dreger, for his advice, support with the MALDI-MS and superb consultancy on the topic of research. I would like to thank Linda Stewani, Shu Liu and Mark Hartmen who worked with me, contributed a lot and produced some important results. I thank Catarina Hoffman for her great tolerance for many a year to my endless pestering about administrative matters. Without her constant attention this would have been an impossible task. Wulf-Burkhard Göhmann helped me a lot to solve problems associated with the computer.

I especially want to convey my thanks to Oliver Bogen, who has been of enormous help in numerous ways and always covered me like a big brother. His help begun at morning 6.0 clock for collecting cattle brain, reminding me the last date to fill up the important form at 10.0 clock, filling-up that form for me at 12.0 clock, discuss the performances of his favourite team “Schalke” in last champions league match at evening 08 PM and gossiping at morning 02 AM. I thank Oliver for being so friendly during all the years.

I thank Dr. Hannes Smith and Prof F. Rathjan from Max Delbruke Centrum für molecular medicine with whom some of the key DRG-explant experiments were performed. I thank Dr. Blanche Schwappach from Heidelberg for preparing the stable cell line. I thank
Prof. Thomas Baukrowitz and his colleague Dr. Hariolf Fritzenschaft for a successful collaboration where some of the excellent electrophysiological experiments were performed.

I thank the Freie Universität of Berlin and the authorities for granting me the opportunity to conduct my research within this prestigious institute. I would also like to acknowledge SFB-515 for supporting me financially. I thank International Society for Neurochemistry for providing me the travel grant to cover ISN-ESN meetings at Warsaw during 2003 and Innsbruck during 2005.

This list will be incomplete without mentioning the contribution from family and friends. I want to thank my parents, brother, sister in law and a number of relatives for their support throughout the time. I thank my numerous friends in Germany, USA and in India who motivated me in many ways. I thank all my teachers from whom I learned many things. It is due to their contribution and affection that makes me to reach at this level. Last, but not least, I thank Luna, who always encouraged me even in the deepest of turbulent time. Without her support and motivation, this work would have been incomplete.

Chandan Goswami.