PREFACE

Buddhism is an old religion and is still a major faith of many people of the world. It is the first missionary religion with a universal appeal. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is enlightenment for every person. It is generally held that the later Buddhists separated from the original doctrine of the Buddha. It is said that Buddhism is not a unitary system but a combination of different systems. The views of the Theravādins followed all the teachings of the Buddha. On the other hand, all the remaining schools modified the original doctrines of the Great Master and developed their philosophies in their own ways. The Sarvāstivādins' view is different from the Theravādins'. Their philosophy is based on metaphysical and psychological analyses. They also have their own Abhidhamma. However, the Sautrāntikas followed only the Sutta Pitaka or the original doctrine and believed this to be the authoritative text. The Madhyamika philosophy developed from the viewpoint of the theory of relativity or theory of dependent origination. The Yogācāra or the Vijñānavāda view is that the concept of self-consciousness is the only absolute and true knowledge.

In the present work named "A Study of Early Buddhism with Special Reference to Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda" I have tried to go into the details of the early Buddhist
philosophy, which is the foundation of Buddhism in general. In my research work I have singled out Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda for special treatment because these two schools were the most important schools of early Buddhism and others are developed and separated from these two schools.

Chapter I traces the background of Buddhism. It describes the usefulness of the religion and its applicability to all the individuals. Finally, it discusses some philosophical viewpoints of the Mahayana philosophers.

Chapter II discusses the similarity between the Upanisadic and Buddhistic thoughts. It gives a short life history of the Buddha, his fundamental doctrines. The development and downfall of Buddhism in India is traced.

Chapter III explains the differentiation of Buddhism into many sub-classes. Next, the principal schools of Buddhism with their philosophies are discussed.

Chapter IV deals with the origin of Theravāda and the philosophies and doctrines of the Theravādins. Then the principal philosophers of this school with their philosophies are concerned.
Chapter V discusses the Sarvāstivāda school, its origin and the philosophy of this school with the doctrines developed by the principal philosophers.

Chapter VI the last chapter is conclusion. It summarises the previous chapters. Then, finally, it discusses the comparison between the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda schools. As this is primarily a descriptive thesis, its conclusion is in the form of observations.

In completing the present work "A Study of Early Buddhism with Special Reference to Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda" I got help from many persons to whom I should convey my thanks. First of all, I express my sincere thanks to my respected guide Dr. Sibnath Sarma, Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Gauhati University, for his kind supervision of my research work. He helped me in selecting the topic and guiding at every step of my entire work with great care and attention. Without his help, I could never have completed my work. I am thankful Dr. D.K. Chakravarty Professor of Philosophy, Gauhati University for his much valuable advice and suggestions. I am also thankful to Dr. Nilima Sharma, Professor of Philosophy, for her deep encouragement. I am indebted to other respected teachers of the Philosophy Department, Gauhati University. In fine,
I would like to thank my teacher Professor S. Shyamkishor Singh, Dean of Humanities of Manipur University.

I express my sincere thanks to the Mayadevi Jashudhara Library, Pandu Buddhist Temple, Assam. Next, I am thankful to the venerable Bajirayan Mahathera and Venerable Sasana Kittī Bhikkhu for their kind helpful co-operation and suggestions. Without their help I could not complete my work within time. Because I had a great difficulty in collection of my materials particularly for Chapter V. Fortunately, with the help of them I could contact ‘The Calcutta Mahabodhi Society’ and ‘The Mahabodhi Society of Bangalore’. Then from ‘The Mahabodhi Society of Bangalore’, I got some valuable suggestions regarding the collection of materials.

I am also thankful to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Lucknow, for giving Library facility and residential fellowship. I record my profound obligations to my teacher Professor S. Lokendrajit Singh, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Manipur University who suggested ICPR residential fellowship.

I express my sincere thanks to the Librarian and the Library of Manipur University. I am deeply obliged to Dr. Kh. Binod Singh, Reader and Head of the Department of Philosophy, N.G. College, Imphal and the Scholar
Ng. Nityaichand Singh, for their kind help and affectionate encouragement.

I thank Sri Kali Charan Das, Geography Department, Gauhati University and Shri T. Lalitchandra Singh, Standard Typewriting Institute, RIMS Road, Imphal who have quickly and neatly typed out my thesis.

Above all, I am thankful to my parents and other members of my family who constantly inspired and helped me in completing the thesis.

Date 13-1-99

[Signature]

(LUKRAM IBEMPISHAK DEVI)