I had the opportunity of studying the Vedānta system of Indian philosophy in the Degree class in Cotton College and in the Post-Graduate class in the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University. During the period of my study, I was interested in the Advaita Vedānta. I had read the Vedānta Paribhāṣā of Dharmarājādhvarīndra along with a few Vedāntic works. The Vedānta Paribhāṣā of Dharmarājādhvarīndra is a very important manual of the Vedānta system and it is the most widely read book on this subject. Although Vedānta has three main phases, viz., Dvaita, Viṣiṣṭādvaita and Advaita, it is Advaita that is the culmination of the philosophy. Contributions of Dharmarājādhvarīndra along with the great thinkers like Madhusūdana, Citsukha etc. open a new era in the domain of the Advaita Vedānta and add a new page in the history of the development of monistic thoughts.

The epistemology of the Vedāntic thoughts as treated in the Vedānta Paribhāṣā arrested my attention and at the advice of my Supervisor Prof. Dr. R. N. Sarma, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., thereby I got much more interest thereon and as a result of my interest, later on, I decided to prepare a dissertation on the
epistemology in the Advaita Vedānta for the award of Ph.D. degree. The epistemology is a branch of critical philosophy, which is investigating the nature and criteria of knowledge and manner with regard to episteme, i.e., knowledge. Thus, Pramāṇas or the sources of valid knowledge refer to the epistemology which is one of the important topics of the system of Indian philosophy. We are obliged here to examine human knowledge, its means, its nature and its various kinds. Reflection upon the nature of our human knowledge gives rise to a number of puzzling epistemological problems. Most of them were discussed by the Vedāntins and there is more or less agreement even now as to how they should be solved or otherwise disposed of. As such, our primary intention in the present dissertation is quite explicit. The treatment of the six pramāṇas in the Advaita Vedānta needs a critical and comparative study which has been made in this dissertation. I am really conscious of the probable shortcomings. If any error is there, it is mine, but in fine, I still echo Jayanta Bhaṭṭa’s words:

kuto vā nūtanaṁ vastu vayamutprekṣituṁ kṣamāḥ /
vacovinyāsavaicitram atra vicāryatām //

Dhirendra Mohan Kumar
(Dhirendra Mohan Kumar)