

## THE PROCESS OF SENSE PERCEPTION AND EXISTENCE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON EARLY BUDDHIST DOCTRINES

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Sense perception bears the meaning of knowledge or perception that obtained based on organs such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. A clear analysis on the process of sense cognition is given in the *Madhupinḍikasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. This *sutta* explains that proliferation is the final stage of sense cognition. This could also be defined as spreading out of subjective concepts. The generation of such proliferations is dependent on sense perception, which is a major topic in Buddhist epistemology, and soteriology. This study seeks to understand how sense perception occurs and what relationship could be seen between sense perception and existence. This is a textual analytical study of the *Pali* canon and commentaries as primary sources, and recent academic publications as secondary sources. There are separate appropriate objectives that inter-connect with sense bases of perception. Only the eye can grasp visuals while the ear grasps sound. Of all the sense bases, the mind is primary. Accordingly, when all the sense bases are concerned, according to the *suttas*, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body are introduced as exterior sense bases, and the mind as a spirited sense base. Based on the feelings generated by sense bases the mind leads in creating wholesome and unwholesome ideas generating a sense of pleasure (*sukha*), un-pleasure (*dukkha*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). This process functions via sense bases as emotions and motivations. What is emphasized here is the fact that defilements are generated due to activities with the concept of self along with the combination of sense bases and the objectives. Hence, spreading what is unwholesome paves the way for the extension of the cycle of rebirths. The state without any unwholesome cravings, views and conceit is *Nibbāna*. Non-accumulation of determination, not having affection and sense are the characteristics of it.

*Keywords:* Sense Perception (*indriyañāṇa*), Existence (*samsāra*), *Madhupinḍikasutta*,