

LBV ADVANCED BUDDHISM SERIES
2022 Thursday Series: Aug. 18 – Sep. 29: 7.00 PM-8.30 PM
Instructor: Bhante Upananda
Theme: MISSTEPS OF PERCEPTION

Dear participant:

Please note that this Thursday course is intended for advanced learners willing to learn the Dhamma with reference to key Pali canonical/scriptural terms and phrases that are incorporated into a single theme. Therefore, questions asked must pertain to the theme.

Session #1: August 18, 2022

1. Definition of saññā:
The term is derived from the verbal root ñā [to know]. Sam+ñā =saññā literally means ‘assimilation of sensations.
2. Term ‘missteps of perception’ is the literal translation of VIPALLĀSA ,alternatively VIPARIYESA, which is derived from vi+pari+as (throw) = to pervert. SAÑÑĀ-VIPALLĀSA/SAÑÑĀ-VIPARIYESA is a term used by Buddha and fully enlightened ones like arhats to describe the pattern of perception of unenlightened ones. Oftentimes, this term is to be understood with another term which is PUTHUJJANA.
3. PUTHUJJANA [PUTHU+JANA] is one who often takes missteps in their perception. According to both Vedic (Sanskrit) and Pali ‘PUTHU’ means ‘various.’ Strictly in a Pali Buddhist sense, it means various ways of looking at.’ JANA is people.
4. ‘ASSUTAVĀ PUTHUJJANŌ -SUTAVĀ ARIYASĀVAKŌ’: This Pali phrase which occurs in different places of the Pali scripture explains what puthujjanas ought to do if they want to avoid missteps – to be a listener (=sutavā). Otherwise, a puthujjana will not become an ariyasāvaka or noble disciple. Elsewhere we come across a term sāvaka-buddha or suta-buddha meaning one who becomes enlightened by listening.
5. The risk of missteps of perception prevails until one becomes an arhat. (Arhat which comes from the Pali word arahanta entered the English dictionary in 1809. It means one who has reached enlightenment.

The story of the guru monk with jhāna tamed by his student is an ample example of SAÑÑĀ-VIPARIYESA.