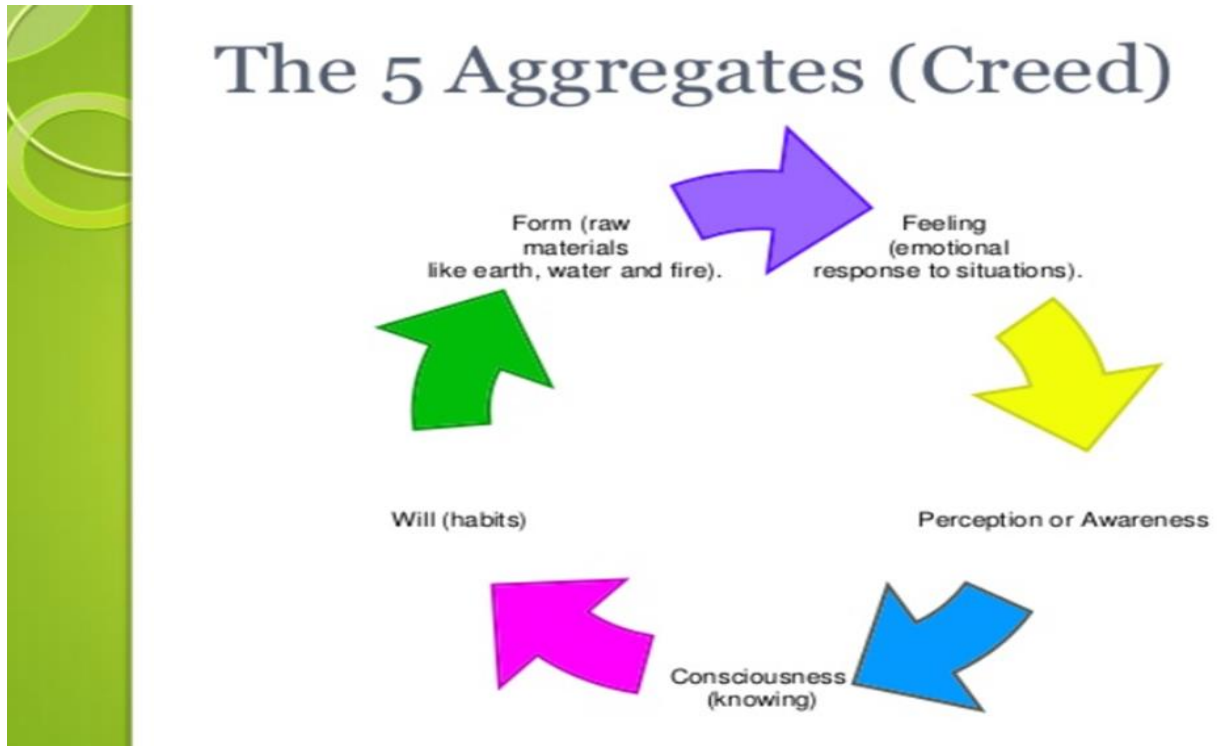


# Human Body 人体



The human body is the physical structure of the individual. According to the Buddha's analysis, the body is one of the five constituents that make up the individual and consists of the elements of solidity, fluidity, caloridity and space. He describes the body as 'material, made of the four elements, derived from mother and father, maintained on rice and gruel, impermanent, liable to injury and abrasion, being broken and destroyed, bound up with consciousness and dependent on it'). Following the medical theories of the time, he identified 31 significant body-parts – hair of the head, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, muscle tissue, ligaments, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, stomach, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, body oil, saliva, nasal mucus, lymphatic fluid

and urine. Later commentators added a 32nd part, the brain. The ancient Buddhists said that body also has nine orifices; the two eyes, ears and nostrils, the mouth, anus and urethra and two layers of skin; the epidermis and the dermis. They also identified 60 tendons and ligaments.

The Buddha recommended sometimes contemplating the unpleasant aspects of the body. This was not because he believed that the body is disgusting, but to balance the general tendency to regard only its pleasant and desirable aspects. A more realistic and balanced understanding to the body can help lessen personal vanity and cool sexual desire. However, the Buddha also said that physical attractiveness is a blessing to the degree that it does not arouse vanity 7).

Because of the close connection between body and mind anyone practicing meditation has to take into account the state of the body. The Buddha said that 'bodily discomfort scatters the mind to externals' (S.V,156). He also said that 'when the body is tired, the mind is distorted and when the mind is distorted it is far from concentrated' (M.I,116). Consequently, a relaxed comfortable body is an important prerequisite for successful meditation. See Hygiene and Posture.

## **Five components of Human Body (五蘊)**

Five components of life, five aggregates, or five skandhas. The five components are 1) **Form 色 Color**

(Earth 地 Water 水 Fire 火 Wind 風)

2) **Perception 受**

3) **Conception 想**

4) **Volition 行**

5) **Consciousness 識**

Buddhism holds that these constituent elements unite temporarily to form an individual living being. Together they also constitute one of the three realms of existence, the other two being the realm of living beings and the realm of the environment.

(1) Form 色 means the physical aspect of life and includes the five sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body—with which one perceives the external world.

(2) Perception 受 is the function of receiving external information through the six sense organs (the five sense organs plus the "mind," which integrates the impressions of the five senses).

(3) Conception 想 is the function of creating mental images and concepts out of what has been perceived.

(4) Volition 行 is the will that acts on the conception and motivates action.

(5) Consciousness 識 is the cognitive function of discernment that integrates the components of perception, conception, and volition.

Form represents the physical aspect of life, while perception, conception, volition, and consciousness represent the spiritual aspect. Because the physical and spiritual aspects of life are inseparable, there can be no form without consciousness, and no consciousness without form. All life carries on its activities through the interaction of these five components. Their workings are colored by the karma one formed in previous lifetimes and at the same time create new karma.