

# The Five Skandhas

Excerpted from Luminous Mind by Kalu Rinpoche<sup>1</sup>

Our feeling of existing, of being a “me,” “my body,” “my mind,” is the experience of individuality. This individuality is made up of five heaps, or aggregates – *skandha* in Sanskrit. The five heaps are as follows:

1. **Forms**, including the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space) as well as the body, along with the sense consciousnesses (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental).
2. **Feelings**, which are basically of three types: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral.
3. **Perceptions**, understood as representations, discriminations, or conceptions.
4. **Compositional factors**, including all the mental factors and habits that cause us to react and that motivate our actions.
5. **Consciousness**, which is the awareness of all experiences created by the five sense powers and mental sense powers; it is the support for their apprehension.

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<sup>1</sup> Luminous Mind: The Way of the Buddha, Kalu Rinpoche (1997) Wisdom Publications, Boston