

Buddhist Psychology I

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SKANDHAS, AYATANAS, AND DHATUS

Skandhas

The personality can be analyzed into five groups of dharmas (*skandhas*) for the purpose of doing away with the term “I.”

The five skandhas are:

form (matter)	inclination
sensation	perception
conception	

Ayatanas

Contemplation on the twelve *ayatanas* is concerned with the origin of the mental dharmas—i.e., conception. Such contemplation reveals conception to be the result of the conjunction of the sense organs and the sense objects—i.e., the *ayatanas*.

The twelve *ayatanas* are:

eye	sight-object
ear	sound-object
nose	smell-object
tongue	taste-object
body	touch-object
mind	thought-object

Dhatus

Contemplation on the eighteen *dhatus* reveals that “objective facts,” e.g., a sight object, is inextricably bound up with, in this case, the sensing sight organ (the eye) and the act of sight consciousness. The focus of concern is on how we commonly devote full attention to the object at the total expense of the other two factors of experience—i.e., the sense organ and consciousness.

The eighteen *dhatus* are:

eye	sight-object	eye-consciousness
ear	sound-object	ear-consciousness
nose	smell-object	nose-consciousness
tongue	taste-object	tongue-consciousness
body	touch-object	body-consciousness
mind	thought-object	mind-consciousness