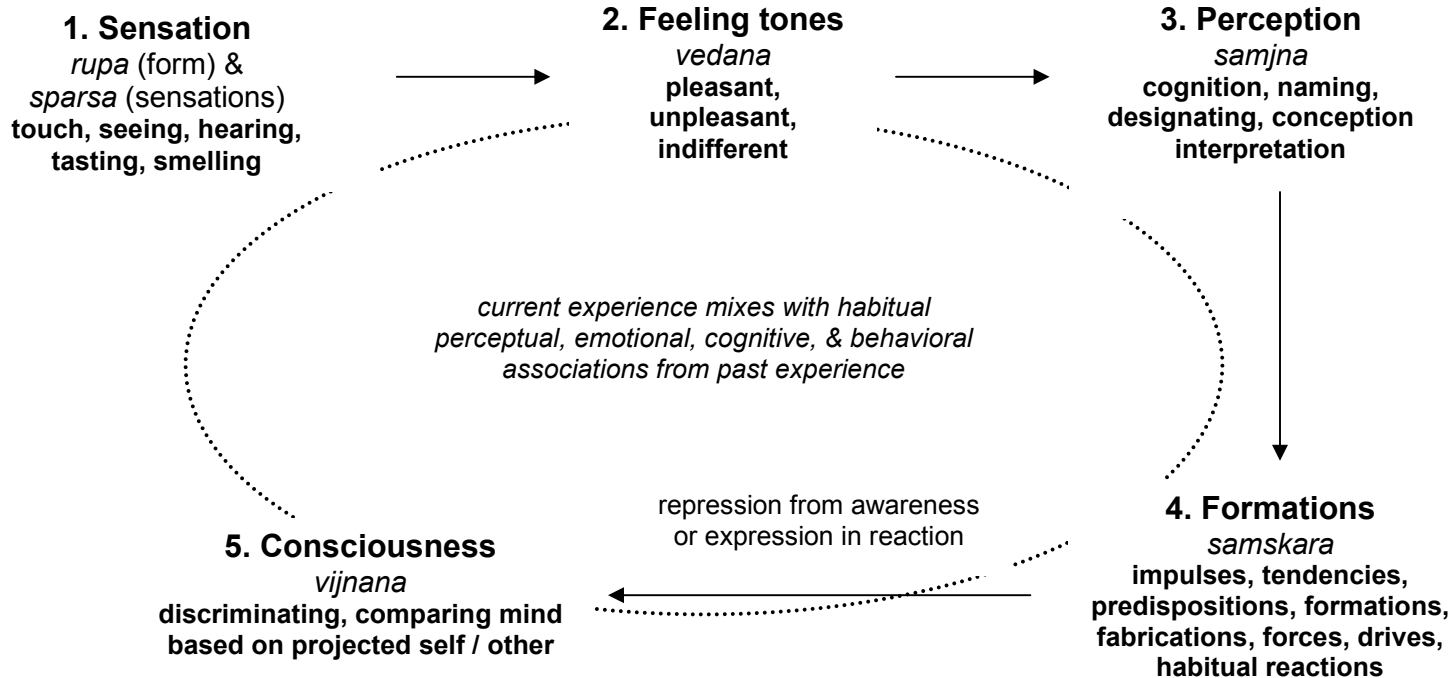


The Five Groups of Experience (*skandhas*)



Experience consists of five groups (*skandhas*): sensations, feelings, thoughts and emotions, impulses, and consciousness. The sense of self is a projection of continuity and independence onto experiences which are actually impermanent and dependent, arising and disappearing depending on causes and conditions.

The reactive emotions that lead to suffering are the self's habitual emotional and behavioral attempts to cling to pleasant experiences, push away unpleasant experiences, and ignore neutral experiences.

Attachment, aversion, and ignoring are the three poisons that fuel the cycle of reactivity. Reactive emotions, since they are based on false projections of independence, permanence, and satisfaction, never deliver the happiness they seek.

Experiencing sensations, feelings, emotions and thoughts, and impulses in attention, knowing them to be experiences and not facts, breaks the cycle of reactivity, and gradually dispels the confusion and projections that are the cause of suffering.

