

Preface to the First Edition

These flowcharts came about when I was in Burma pondering why the masters did not tell us why we should pay attention to this object rather than another. It occurred to me that they had good reasons and this is when I first came up with the idea of the priority of objects. Later it developed into a more diagrammatic form of flowcharts. The original flowcharts were mainly for body mindfulness and feeling mindfulness, but I later included flowcharts on Consciousness based on my own practice and observations.

Recently, a yogi noted that a small booklet explaining these flowcharts with some explanations would be useful to practitioners. I agreed and so this is what you have here.

These flowcharts point out the choice of objects to follow and observe when one practices *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā* Meditation. Unlike the practice of pure tranquillity meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*), whose object is adhered to as it is being developed from the preliminary image (*parikamma nimmitta*) to the mirror image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*), in *Vipassanā* it is otherwise. This is because in *Vipassanā* the object is a process of an Ultimate Reality that is non-conceptual, although it still has its conceptual connections at the start. It is later more precisely directed to its transcendental nature described as the three universal characteristics, i.e. impermanence, suffering and non-self. And so, to be an object of insight meditation, it would have to be a process, a quality or characteristic that changes moment to moment naturally, otherwise it is best dismissed as unsuitable. This and other conditions too many to mention here implies a choice of the objects suitable to the occasion and to the point of development.

These flowcharts should not be taken as the only way that things might go, but in most cases for people practising insight meditation according to the method expounded by the most venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw of Burma, they would apply.

Again the reader must bear in mind that one should not adhere dogmatically to what one reads. One has to be flexible. The guideline here is mindfulness and better still *Vipassanā* Mindfulness. The object is nevertheless important; just like the road that leads to its destination. Still, the critical factor is the driver. This is because if one has true *Vipassanā* Mindfulness, the object would naturally be a *Vipassanā* object although it may not be the ideal one for the occasion.

There is however something missing in this booklet, that is, flowcharts for the fourth foundation – Mindfulness of Natural Phenomena (*Dhammānupassanā*). That would have to wait for a later date to find it written.

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