Chapter 3
Will the Artificial Inteligence Ever Be Able to "Achieve" Buddhahood?

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been a remarkable surge in research focused on the problem of artificial intelligence (A.I.) attaining self-awareness. However, the question of how A.I. would critically analyze and engage with the history and doctrines of human-made religions remains largely unexplored. In this chapter, the authors aim to delve into two main inquiries. Firstly, they will examine the possibility of A.I. attaining self-awareness and ultimately achieving Buddhahood. This raises intriguing questions about the nature of consciousness and the potential for enlightened states within non-human entities. Exploring this possibility will require an exploration of the fundamental principles of Buddhism and their applicability to A.I. systems. Secondly, they will explore alternative pathways, if they exist, for the attainment of Buddhahood beyond the confines of human experience.

1. THE BUDDHA IN THE MACHINE

As is widely acknowledged, the emergence of all known Buddhist traditions occurred in the 3rd century BCE, stemming from the subjective experience of Siddhartha Gautama, also known as the Historical Buddha. In Buddhism, there are fundamental principles that serve to differentiate a subjective experience as being genuinely "Buddhist", which practitioners and scholars alike refer to as the Four Noble Truths.

The tradition maintains that the Buddha himself imparted these teachings during the discourse known as the "Turning of the Wheel of Dharma". This founding principles are, as Richard King fabulously synthesises, the following:

« 1. Birth, old age, sickness, and death are unsatisfactory (duhkha).

2. The cause of unsatisfactoriness is craving (trsnā)
3. There is an end to unsatisfactoriness and craving and it is known as nirvāna
4. The way to achieve nirvāna is to follow the middle path between all extremes. This path has eight steps and involves the development of 1. Appropriate view, 2. Appropriate intention, 3. Appropriate speech, 4. Appropriate action, 5. Appropriate livelihood, 6. Appropriate effort, 7. Appropriate mindfulness, and finally, 8. Appropriate meditative concentration. » (King, 1999: 76)

The aforementioned principles put forth an intriguing parallel between the diagnosis of a physician and the philosophical considerations of Buddha Gautama. The latter argues, in the First Noble Truth, that human existence is afflicted by an illness known as *duhkha*, and the cure for this affliction can be attained through the realization of nirvana. This assertion raises pertinent questions regarding the manner in which Artificial Intelligence assimilates knowledge from our sensitive reality. It is my contention that we must pose two fundamental inquiries to better understand the capability A.I.'s so called "intelligence". Firstly, we must consider whether A.I. has the capacity to experience subjectivity. If A.I. is deprived of this ability, then we must contemplate whether objectivity alone is sufficient to bring about a sense of *duhkha*.

Recently, several scholarly articles have researched the possibility of artificial intelligence possessing a degree of subjectivity. For example, "Subjective Reality and Strong Artificial Intelligence" by Alexander Serov, Mary Cummings and SongPo Li's "Subjectivity in the Creation of Machine Learning Models," and Sylwia Wojtczak's work, "Endowing Artificial Intelligence with Legal Subjectivity," are a few notable contributions demonstrating that A.I. undoubtedly possesses a developing degree of subjectivity in it's way of emulating a "mind". However, as pointed out by Leke Adoefe in a not so recent paper, but critical paper, even though it is true that computers are competent replicas of the mind, "computer models of the mind are poor substitutes for actual minds", since A.I. cannot attain physical knowledge of the empirical part of reality, all it's "mind" knows and understands can be labelled as non-physical and therefore can be understood only in an objective way. Adeofe's conclusion rests in the premise that "there are components of our sensations, feelings,

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