

Centering Human Flourishing in the Age of AI

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About this talk

- Focused on practical takeaways – not academic rigor
- Not an exhaustive overview of all that can be said about AI in relation to Buddhism, Christianity, and Yoga
- Agenda:
 - Introduction
 - Insights
 - Practices
 - Conclusion

Introduction

What makes us human? What does it mean to live a more human life in the age of AI?

Human flourishing is living a good life by fulfilling, in relationship with others, our capacities, potentialities, and needs as human beings.

Wisdom of the heart

“At this time in history, which risks becoming rich in technology and poor in humanity, our reflections must begin with the human heart. Only by adopting a spiritual way of viewing reality, only by recovering a wisdom of the heart, can we confront and interpret the newness of our time and rediscover the path to a fully human communication.”

Pope Francis, Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 58th World Day of Social Communications (24 January 2024)

What helps you stay
centered in your humanity
and flourish?

Insights

Respecting and promoting life

“Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, or in my way of life. Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world.”

Reverence for Life, first of the Five Mindfulness
Trainings of the Plum Village tradition

Dispositions to flourish

“By cultivating an attitude of friendship toward those who are happy, compassion toward those in distress, joy toward those who are virtuous, and equanimity toward those who are nonvirtuous, lucidity arises in the mind.” - [Yoga Sūtra I.33](#)

“that noble disciple, who is thus devoid of longing, devoid of ill will, unconfused, clearly comprehending, ever mindful, dwells pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness ... with a mind imbued with compassion ... with a mind imbued with altruistic joy ... with a mind imbued with equanimity [...] he dwells pervading the entire world with a mind imbued with equanimity, vast, exalted, measureless, without enmity, without ill will.” - [Kesamuttisutta](#)

“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” - [Galatians 5: 22-23](#)

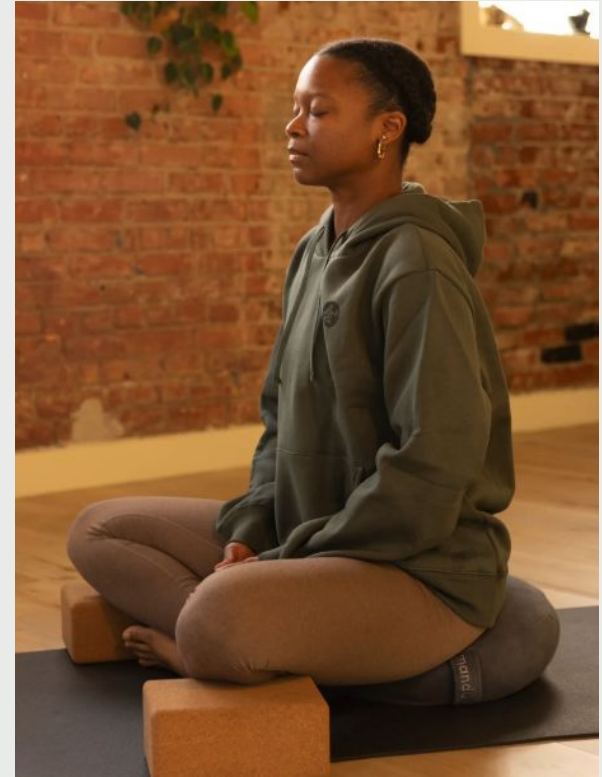
Being embodied and relational

“Although advanced AI systems can ‘learn’ through processes such as machine learning, this sort of training is fundamentally different from the developmental growth of human intelligence, which is shaped by embodied experiences, including sensory input, emotional responses, social interactions, and the unique context of each moment. These elements shape and form individuals within their personal history.”

[Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith & Dicastery for Culture and Education, *Antiqua et Nova*: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence \(14 January 2025\)](#)

Practices

Asana and Pranayama





Meditation and prayer

Meditation as cultivation

“Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness. When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfil the seven enlightenment factors. When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfil true knowledge and deliverance.”

Ānāpānassatisutta

Prayer as cultivation

“Beginners must realize that in order to give delight to the Lord they are starting to cultivate a garden on very barren soil, full of abominable weeds. His Majesty pulls up the weeds and plants good seed. Now let us keep in mind that all of this is already done by the time a soul is determined to practice prayer and has begun to make use of it. And with the help of God we must strive like good gardeners to get these plants to grow and take pains to water them so that they don’t wither but come to bud and flower and give forth a most pleasant fragrance to provide refreshment for this Lord of ours.”

The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Ávila, Chapter 11, paragraph 6



Community

Conclusion

In a nutshell

- Insights
 - Respecting and promoting life
 - Dispositions to flourish
 - Being embodied and relational
- Practices
 - *Asana* and *Pranayama*
 - Meditation and prayer
 - Community

What are two *concrete, practical* ideas that you got from this talk to help you stay centered in your humanity and flourish *starting tomorrow?*



Try again