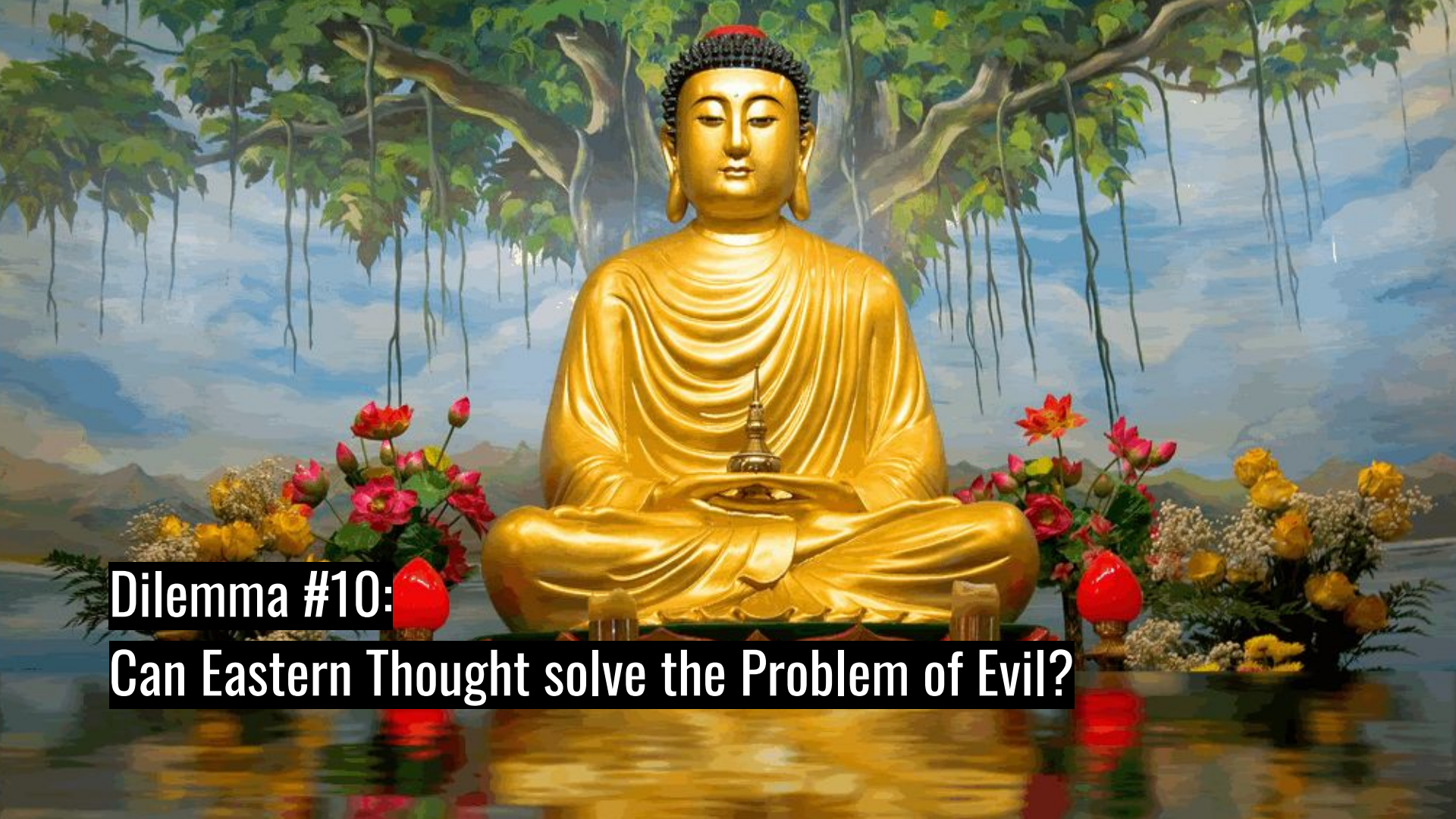


A vertical light streak on a black background, transitioning from a bright yellow center to a red outer edge, resembling a laser or a light beam.

Self-less



Dilemma #10:

Can Eastern Thought solve the Problem of Evil?



Buddhism: Important Concepts

Monism

Monism is the view that all things are one.

Dukkha

Dukkha is often translated as either

- a. suffering, or
- b. dissatisfaction;

for our purposes, we will define it as:

- c. the subjective feeling that a basic and important aspect of our lives isn't right.

Tanha

Tanha is often translated as:

- a. craving, or
- b. attachment;

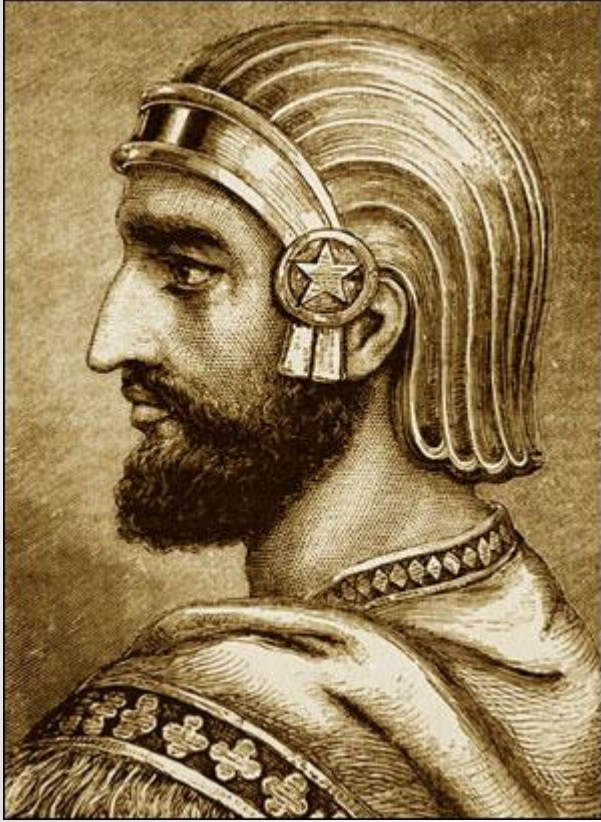
for our purposes, we will define it as:

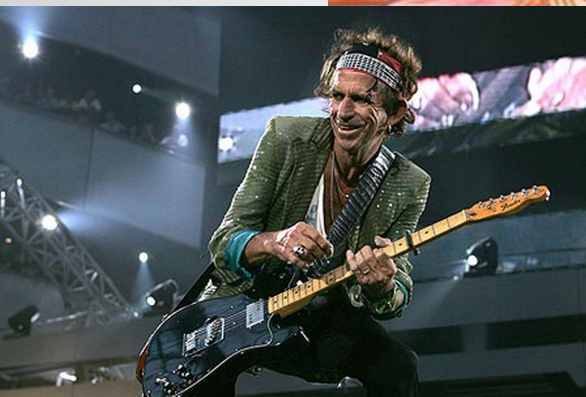
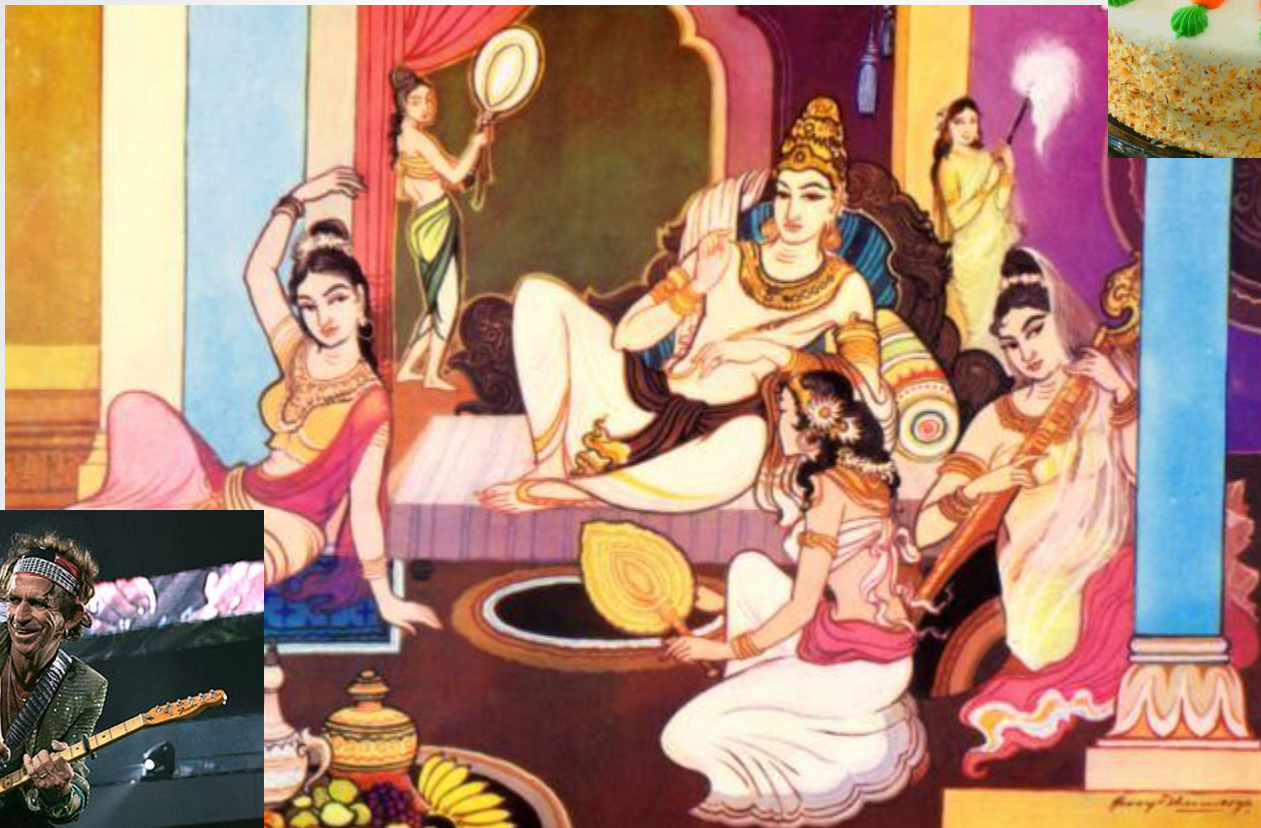
- c. trying to fulfill the object of our desire.

Storytime!

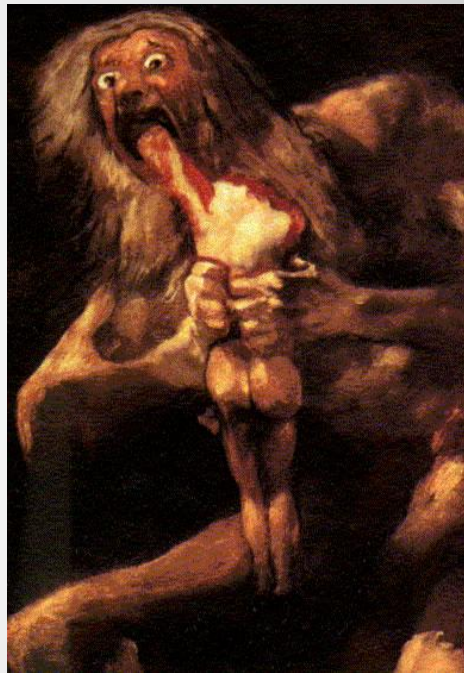
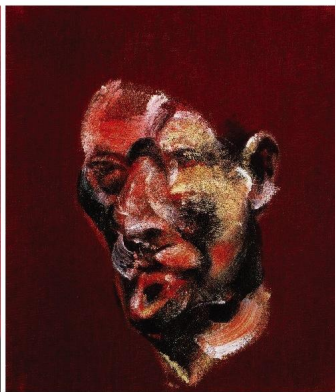
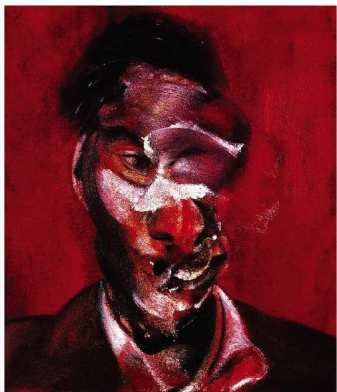
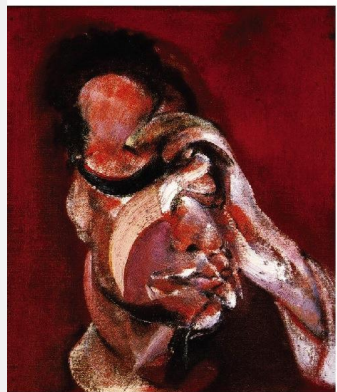










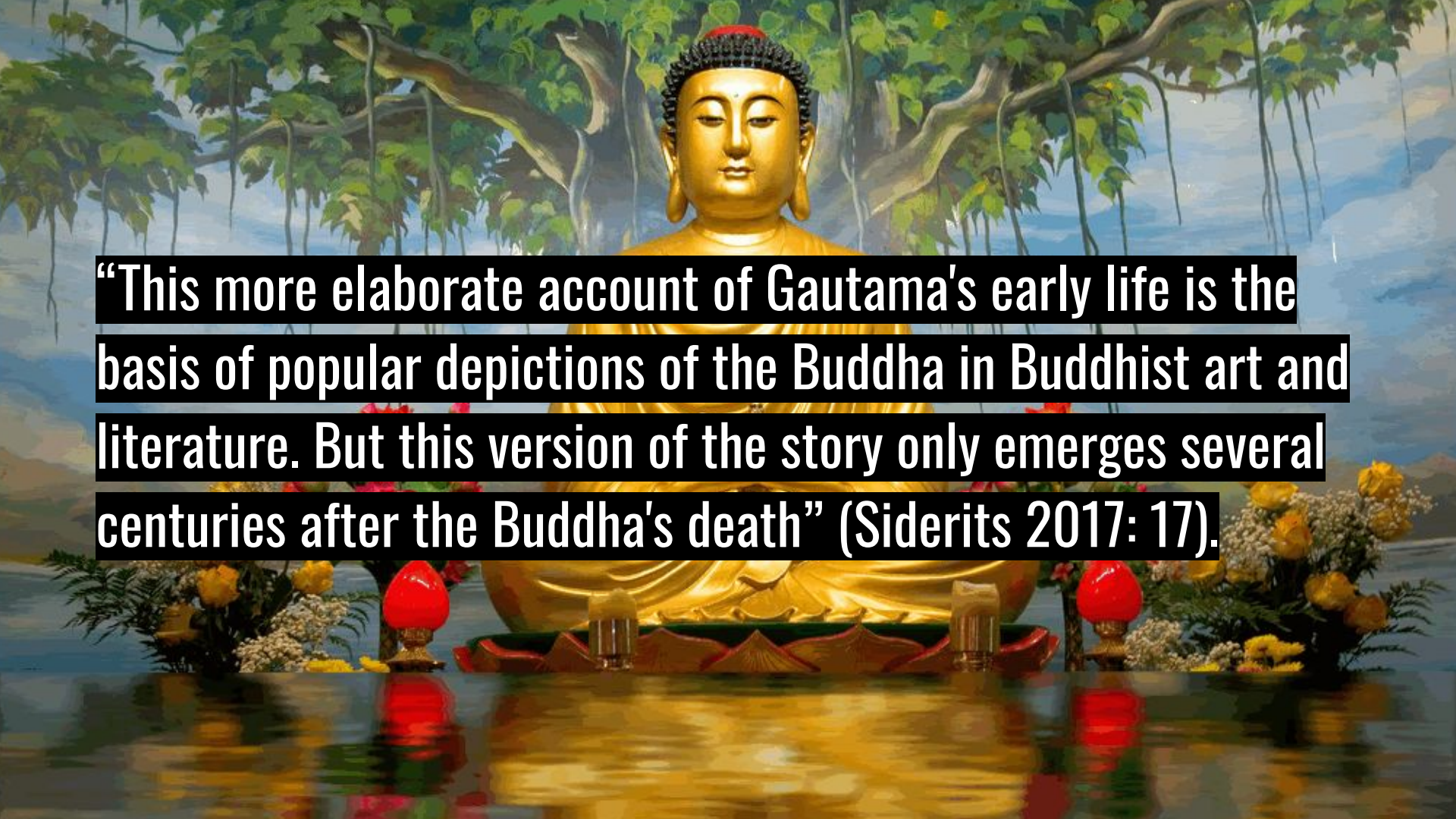










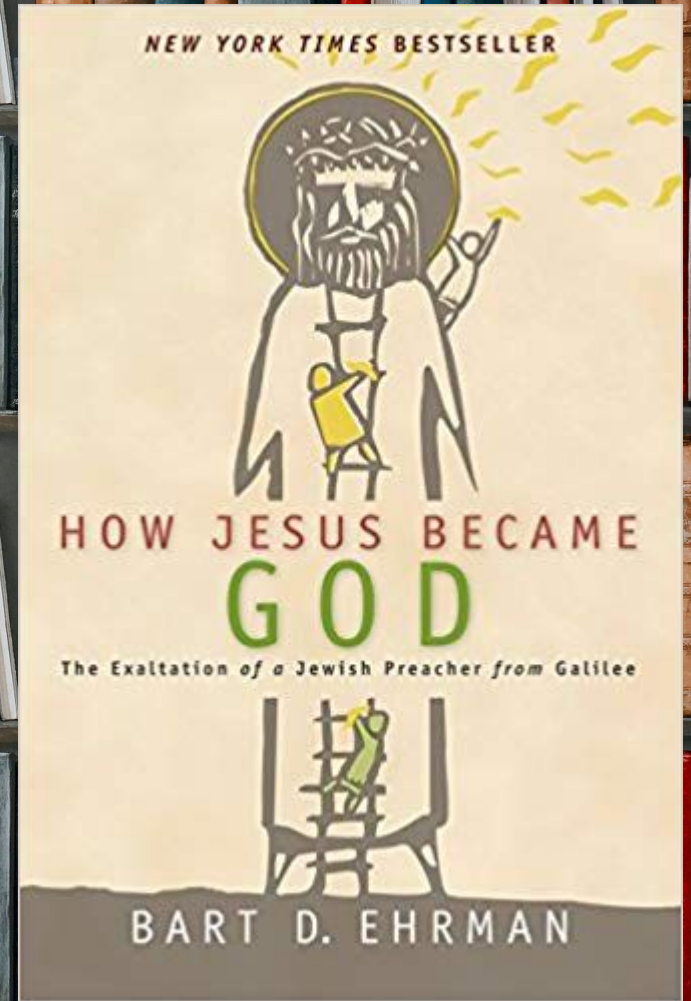
A golden Buddha statue is the central focus, seated in a meditative posture. The statue is set against a backdrop of a dense, green forest with large trees and hanging vines. In the foreground, there are several red lotus flowers and yellow flowers, along with two lit candles in glass holders. The entire scene is reflected in a body of water at the bottom of the image.

“This more elaborate account of Gautama's early life is the basis of popular depictions of the Buddha in Buddhist art and literature. But this version of the story only emerges several centuries after the Buddha's death” (Siderits 2017: 17).

S | D E B A R

This embellishing of origin stories appears to be common.

In *How Jesus Became God*, Bart Ehrman (2015) gives a non-theistic account of how Jesus of Nazareth, a charismatic apocalyptic prophet, came to be revered as the Son of God and (after some more time) as God himself.



The Four Noble Truths

- 1. The truth of suffering: All life is dukkha.**
- 2. The truth of the cause of suffering: Dukkha is caused by tanha.**
- 3. The truth of the end of suffering: The cessation of dukkha is possible, ie nirvana.**
- 4. The truth of the path that frees us from suffering– The Eightfold Path.**

The Eightfold Path

Right View- Seeing the world as it is, ie the Four Noble Truths.

Right Intention- Helping yourself and others reach enlightenment.

Right Speech- Not hurting feelings, not lying, not using deceptive or intentionally confusing language, not intentionally making people angry with our speech.

The Eightfold Path

Right Action- Making sure our actions go towards helping and not harming

Right Livelihood- Making sure what we do for a living is not causing suffering, but instead is neutral or helping.

Right Effort- Making sure we put effort into our liberation.

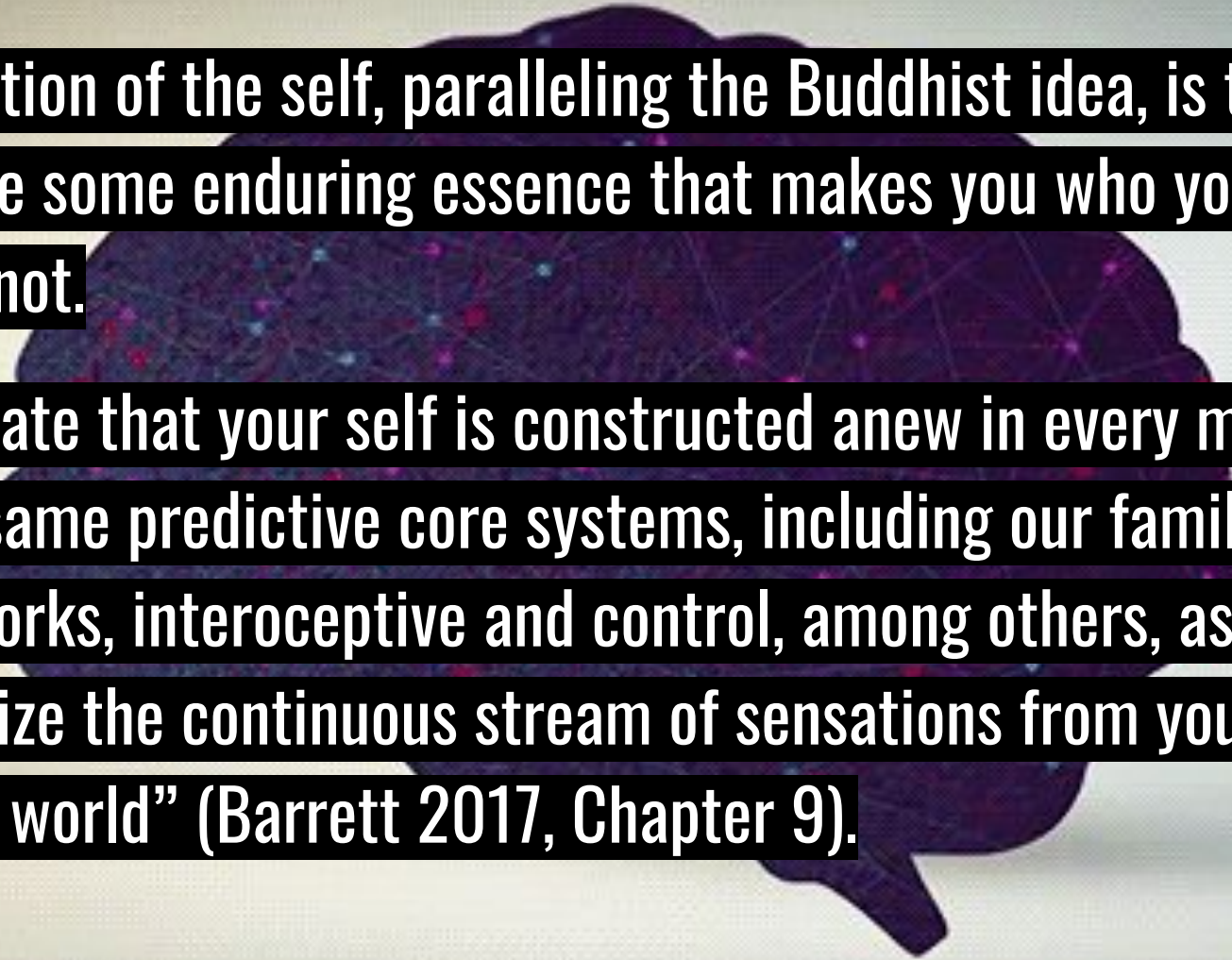
Right Mindfulness- Being present in the here and now.

Right Concentration- Meditation.

The Doctrine of No Self

The Buddha taught that if you live the Eightfold Path, and hence meditate regularly, you will eventually reach enlightenment.

Enlightenment occurs when one awakens to the realization that there is no self; the self is just an illusion.



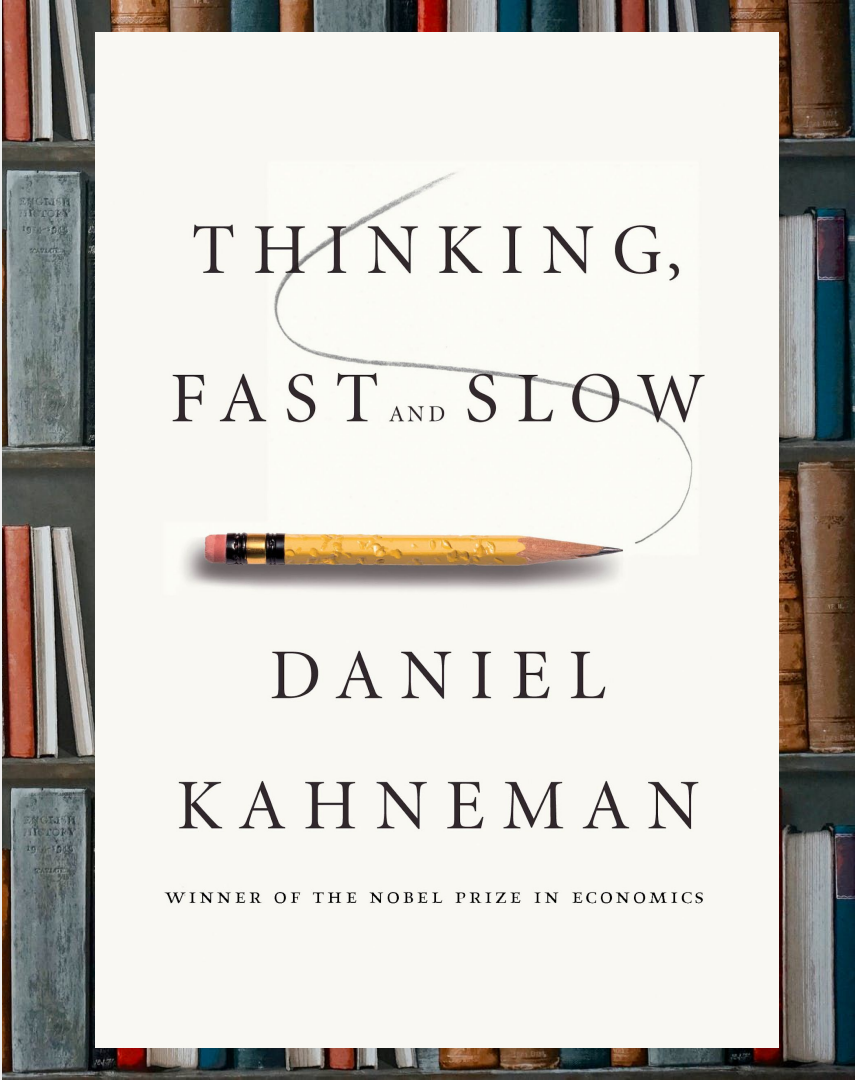
“The fiction of the self, paralleling the Buddhist idea, is that you have some enduring essence that makes you who you are. You do not.

I speculate that your self is constructed anew in every moment by the same predictive core systems, including our familiar pair of networks, interoceptive and control, among others, as they categorize the continuous stream of sensations from your body and the world” (Barrett 2017, Chapter 9).

“You do not believe that these results apply to you because they correspond to nothing in your subjective experience.

But your subjective experience consists largely of the story that your system 2 [higher-cognitive faculties] tells itself about what is going on.

**Priming phenomena arise in system 1 [automatic, emotion-based system], and you have no conscious access to them.”
(Kahneman 2011: 57; interpolations are mine).**



THINKING,
FAST AND SLOW

DANIEL
KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS





Buddhism on unnecessary suffering:

Humans are full of desire (tanha) and hence attached to material objects.

This leads to war, fighting, greediness, stealing, etc.

With liberation, we will be free of desire.

Hence, human wickedness will stop.

Problem

Buddhism is a non-theistic religion.

They do not have a God.

In fact, some people deny Buddhism is even a religion, and argue that it is more like a philosophy of life.

It seems, then, that the Problem of Evil would never arise for them in the first place.

Does God exist?

Do we have free will?

Do we have souls?

Do we only act from self-interest?

Kant or the Utilitarians?

Is morality relative?

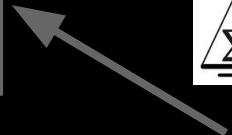
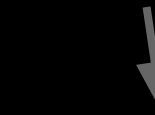
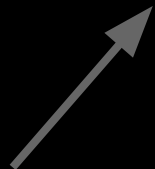
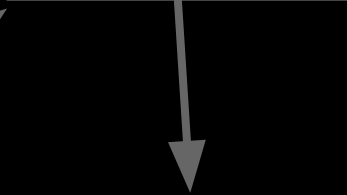
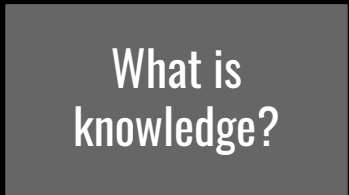
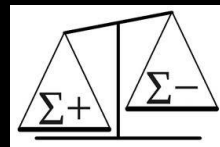
What is knowledge?

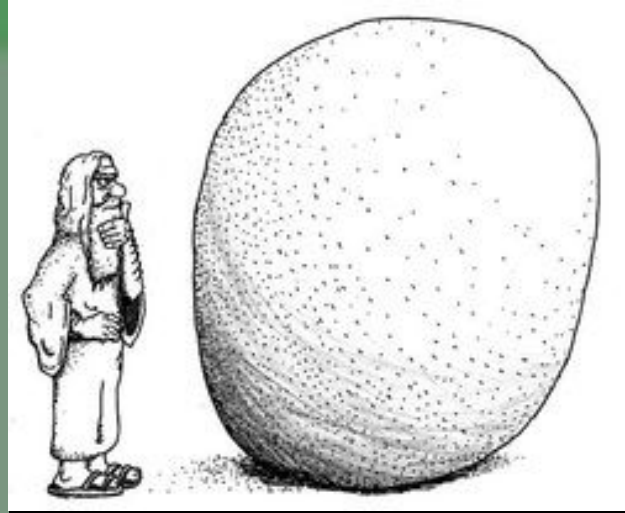
Empiricism Or Rationalism?

Possible Solutions:

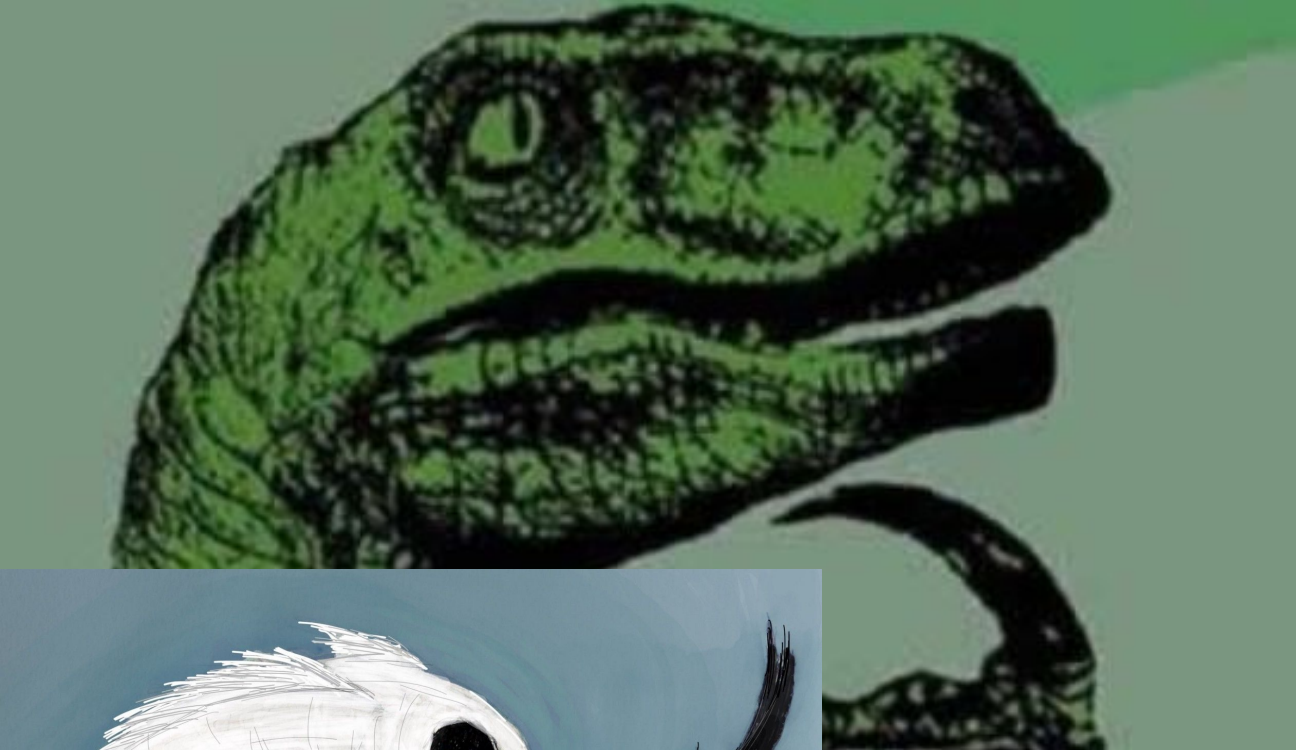
1. Free Will
2. Morality
3. Eastern Philosophy

POE





The Omnipotence Paradox



The Yin/Yang Paradox



Can God create moral goodness
without moral wrongness?

Good without evil?

Pleasure without pain?

If he can't, then he's not
all-powerful.

If he can, then he's not all-loving
(since he didn't).



Moreover, theists sometimes claim that the notion of karma helps solve the Problem of Evil, but:

- Why should we believe the Law of Karma exists?
- If suffering is a result of karma, why doesn't God ameliorate it, since God is omnipotent?
- Is God bound to the Law of Karma?



In short, for the theist, Eastern Thought offers more questions than answers...



