

The Buddha's Red Pill: Finding True Freedom Within Your Own Mind

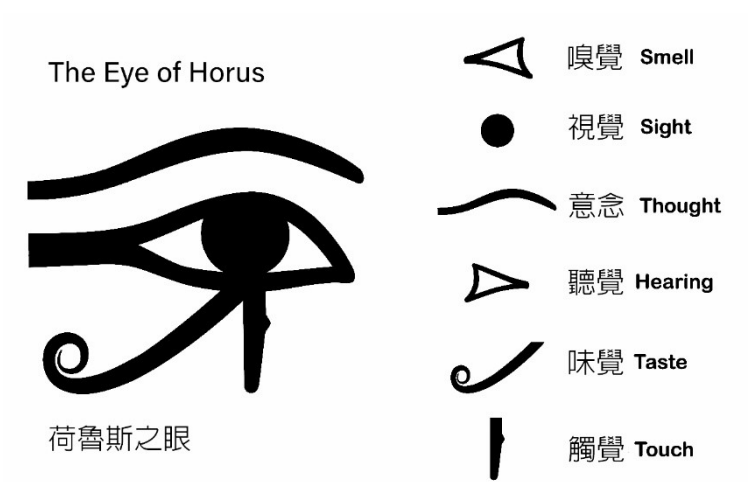
佛陀的紅藥片： 在你自己的心中尋找真正的自由

An Excerpt from a Talk by Professor Douglas Powers in the DRBU Online Lecture Series on February 3, 2022

Chinese Translated by Cliff Wang

摘自鮑果勒教授2022年2月3日法大線上講座系列

王立夫 中譯



Editor's Note: This talk is the first part of a class that Doug Powers taught, where he gave a Buddhist commentary on several clips from the movie *The Matrix*. In the first clip that was shown, Morpheus tells the protagonist Neo about the Matrix. He then offers him the chance to see it for himself or to forget about the disconcerting truth that our life is not what it seems, by taking a red or a blue pill respectively. .

編按：這次演講是道格·包威爾（鮑果勒）教授的課程第一部分，他從佛教的角度對電影《駭客帝國》中的幾個片段進行評論。在第一個片段中，墨菲斯向主角尼奧講述關於矩陣的事情後，給了他兩個選項，要麼吃下紅藥片去親自去看看矩陣，要麼吃下藍藥片來選擇忘記這個令人不安的真相——即我們的生活並非如此。

Morpheus says:

What you know you can't explain. But you feel it. You've felt it your entire life. That there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is but it's there, like a splinter in your mind driving you mad. It is this feeling that has brought you to me. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Neo: The Matrix?

Morpheus: Do you want to know what it is? The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us, even now in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.

Neo: What truth?

Morpheus says:

That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind...

Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself. This is your last chance. After this there is no turning back. You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes... Remember, all I'm offering is the truth, nothing more...

Douglas Powers [Joking:] Believe it or not, Morpheus is actually one of the recruiters for the programs at our Buddhist University. I am really glad you all just had the chance to see him in action. This is exactly how we recruit students. We ask them to take the "red pill" and they can decide for themselves, one way or the other.

Anyhow, this clip is great because it introduces a foundational view in Buddhism. What is here called

墨菲斯說：

你知道你雖然不能解釋，但你能感覺到，一直都能感覺到，這個世界似乎有些地方不對勁。你不知道是什麼，但它像一根刺一樣在你的腦子裡讓你受不了。就是這種感覺才把你帶到我這裡來的。你知道我在說什麼嗎？

尼奧：矩陣？

墨菲斯：你想知道它是什麼嗎？矩陣無所不在。它就在我們周圍，就在這個房間裡。當你向窗外看去或者打開電視時，它就在那裡。當你去上班，去教堂，付稅時，你可以感覺到它。就是這個擋在你眼前的這世界，遮蔽了真理。

尼奧：什麼真理？

墨菲斯：你是一個奴隸，尼奧，正像其他所有人一樣，你生來就受奴役，生活在一個你無法聞到、嚐到或觸摸的監獄裡，思想的囚籠……

不幸的是，沒有人可以告訴你矩陣到底是什麼。你必須自己去探索。這是你最後的機會，這之後就沒有回頭路了。你吃下藍藥片，故事就此結束，你在自己的床上醒來，相信你想相信的任何事情。你吃下紅藥片，你將留在仙境，我會帶你見識這個兔子洞有多深……記住，我只是想告訴你真相，僅此而已……

鮑果勒教授[詼諧地說]：說出來你可能不信，墨菲斯其實是我們佛教大學課程的招生員之一。我很高興你們剛剛有機會看到他的實例。這就是我們招收學生的方式，我們會讓他們吃下紅藥片，讓他們自己做出選擇，選擇這個方向或另一個方向。

不管怎樣，這個片段很棒，因為它介紹了佛教的一個基礎觀念。這裡所說的「矩陣」

“the matrix” is “the conditioned world” that Buddhism talks about. We live in a conditioned world that isn't exactly what we think it is; we never experience it directly. Instead, we experience it through our imagination of it.

Now the fortunate thing is that whereas the movie puts causality outside of the person, in Buddhism there is a way to become free from the inside. If you buy into the dynamic of the conditioned world, you're a slave, you're in the grip of karmic habits. As long as you are caught up in that habituation, there is no way out, there is no freedom. So, you have to find your way out through meditation so that you can come to a realization and see through the conditioned world. Other than in the movie, where there is a lot of emphasis on the matrix being outside of you and having control over you, Buddhism teaches that this distorted reality which you find yourself in is actually your own creation. You create it by distorting your experience and then becoming attached to the emotions and thoughts that come about due to this distorted experience. Since you constructed it, you can find your way out.

Of course, where Buddhism agrees is with this sense that things are not quite right. You've probably felt this yourself. There is something I'm missing.

In the face of this feeling, most people start looking for an ideology, an answer, a deity or something. The Buddha pointed out that the only answer that you can find to this sense of lacking is in your own awareness— deep within your own awareness. If you go deeply into your own awareness, there is a freedom that you can open up there that allows you to see what is really going on, both in the process of your own experience and in this conditional world that you're in.

The Buddha said that everyone has this potential in their awareness, this Buddha-nature, but also that if we have not gotten in touch with that through practice, we will feel a certain amount of dis-ease. So in general outline, the Matrix is very Buddhist, but the Buddhist approach to the issues presented would be quite different.

Furthermore, the Buddhist view of this constructed reality is more dramatic than what is presented in the Matrix. The Buddha's insight is that everything that is going on is something that we imagine to be going on. He would break

就是佛教所說的「緣起的世界」。我們生活在一個因緣和合的世界中，這個世界並不完全是我們想像的那樣，我們從未直接體驗這個世界。相反，我們總是通過我們對世界的想像來體驗它。

幸運的是，雖然電影把因果置於人類的掌控之外，但佛教告訴我們有一個辦法可以讓我們從內心獲得自由。如果你陷入這個緣起的世界，你就是一個奴隸，被業力的習氣所束縛。只要你陷入那種習氣中，就沒有出路，沒有自由。所以，你必須通過禪坐來找到自己的出路，這樣你就能覺悟，看穿這個緣起的世界。電影中強調「矩陣」在你的外面控制著你，而佛法教導的是，我們之所以陷於這個扭曲現實，完全是自己造成的。因為有扭曲的知見，然後執著於由此產生的情緒和思想，進而創造了這個扭曲的現實。但既然你可以創造它，你也可以走出來。

當然，佛教認同的是電影裡提到的這種感覺——就是感覺世界不太對勁。你可能自己也有過這種感覺，「似乎還是缺少了什麼」。

大多數人會因為這種感覺而去尋找一種意識形態，一個答案，一個神或者其他什麼東西。然而佛陀指出，你能找到的唯一答案就在你自己的意識深處——在你的意識之海的深處。如果你深入探索你自己的意識，你就能打開一扇自由的門，不論是你自己的體驗過程中，還是在你所在的這個緣起的世界中，你都可以如實的看到正在發生的事情。

佛陀說每個人的意識都有這種潛力——這就是佛性。但如果我們沒有修行來開發自己的佛性，就會多少感到不安。因此，從總體上看，《駭客帝國》很符合佛教的思想，但是佛教處理這些問題的方法不一樣。

此外，佛教對這種「創造現實」的看法比《駭客帝國》中所表達的更為戲劇

all of it down and say that when we have experiences through our senses, we are interpreting those experiences at every moment. While we are interpreting them, we remember past experiences, and we overlay all sorts of thoughts and feelings onto the situation. We are actually constructing our own universe of experience.

We create a self based on that, hold on to a certain number of the views, identify with a set of emotions, and so on. We then consider that to be who we really are. Then we protect that sense of self and spend a lot of our time being resentful that that self is not appreciated by others. Really, being resentful that we are not being appreciated enough is a third-level construct. So, the Buddhist account is more radical in terms of how fantasy-like and imagined the world that each of us lives in really is. However, as I said, it is because of a construction in which we are involved, rather than some massive conspiracy against us.

What is presented in the Matrix has a conspiratorial element to it; it plays into a kind of paranoia that is very rampant these days—all around we see ideas such as that the elections are rigged, or that the economic system is rigged against me. Given this mindset, everybody then goes and looks for some sort of group that they can join where they can all be victims of some sort of evil conspiracy.

The problem with that mindset, as not only the Buddha but also Western thinkers such as Nietzsche and Husserl pointed out, is that once we give away the place where freedom and choice is ours at the ultimate level, the level at which we have the freedom of interpretation, then we are always in a deterministic world. In other words, once you've made that move of seeing something outside of yourself as more powerful than your own freedom of decision, then you have given away the place of absolute freedom from the very beginning.

What the Matrix does really well is give a sense of how the world is totally constructed, like a simulation. However, the movie has this modern conspiratorial aspect to it. Something out there is in control. Ultimately, where does this really suggest our freedom lies? What, in the context of the movie, would you really be able to do to escape that construct? After all, isn't the matrix already constructed from external, conspiratorial elements?

化。佛陀教導我們一切唯心造。佛陀會把所有的一切都拆解開來，說當我們通過我們的感官去體驗時，我們在每一個瞬間都在解讀那些體驗。在我們解讀它們的同時，我們過去的記憶將各種各樣的想法和感情投射到現狀上。我們實際上是在構造我們自己的宇宙體驗。

我們由此創造出一個自我，堅持某些觀點，認同一些情緒等等。然後我們認為那就是我們真正的「自我」，進而保護那種「自我」感覺。然後又花大量的時間去抱怨這個「自我」無人賞識。實際上，抱怨無人賞識已經是自我創造的第三步了。所以，從我們生活的這個世界的虛幻程度來說，佛教的說法更為究竟。然而，正如我所說，這一切都是因為我們自己參與構造的，而不是外面有什麼陰謀來針對我們。

在《駭客帝國》中帶有的這種陰謀論滋生了一種非常猖獗的偏執狂——現在我們周圍到處都是這樣的觀點，比如選舉被操縱，或者經濟體系對我們有偏見等等。因為陰謀論，大家都覺得自己是某種惡毒陰謀論的受害者，紛紛加入各種團體。

不僅僅佛陀，包括尼采和胡塞爾等西方思想家都曾指出，這種心態的問題在於，一旦我們放棄了自己終極的自由和選擇權，放棄了解讀的自由，那我們就永遠處於一個決定論的世界裡。換句話說，一旦你認為外在的某種東西比你自身的自由決策力量更強大的時候，你從一開始就放棄了絕對自由的地位。

《駭客帝國》說得很好的一點是給了世界是完全創造出來的，就像計算機模擬的感覺。然而，這部電影有一種現代陰謀論的意思在裡面，就是說有一些東西在那裡控制著我們。那麼如何能獲得自由呢？在電影裡，你真的能逃出來嗎？畢竟，矩陣不就是已經由外部的陰謀而創造出來的嗎？

For real freedom, you must take absolute responsibility. Once you do that, of course, you might then fight the machine, for justice or something, but until you've found freedom within your own mind, you are trapped in the cycle.

However, from the Buddhist perspective, it seems that most people don't really want that kind of absolute freedom, because they do not want the responsibility that goes along with it. Everybody is looking for someone else to blame, because they don't want to be responsible for their own world, the world that they've constructed themselves. Nowadays, everybody just wants to join their own victimized group so that they can feel really good together, pointing fingers at this or that conspiratorial group that works against them. They then feel really good about themselves, while actually feeling very resentful. That is one approach to life.

The Buddha would suggest a different approach. If you really want to free yourself then you have to take full responsibility and freedom. To do so, you have to observe. Meditation and all the various contemplative techniques are ways to learn to observe. We observe the process of how the formations, the karmic conditions that we take on, the thoughts and emotions and so forth that we create and perpetuate—we learn to observe how we actually go about creating those and how we then hold on to those.

In meditative practice, we become a disinterested observer. From that standpoint, we observe the whole mechanism whereby we construct the world as well as our own identity within that construction; we watch how it comes about step by step. You have to see this process directly in your own mind so that you can free yourself from it. You cannot free yourself until you can truly see it.

For Buddhist practice, this perspective is foundational. You have to understand that you're looking for the place where you are constructing the world, you're not looking for the place where someone else is controlling you, or where you're a victim of something. If you're looking for that you'll find that; if you're looking for where you're free, you'll find that. ❀

要獲得真正的自由，你必須承擔絕對的責任。一旦你這麼做，當然，你可能會為了正義或者什麼理由而去對抗機器，但是除非你在自己的內心找到自由，不然你都被困在輪迴中。

然而，從佛教的角度看，似乎大多數人並不真正希望獲得那種絕對的自由，因為他們不希望承擔隨之而來的責任。每個人都熱衷於尋找替罪羊來責備，因為他們不想對自己所構造的這個世界負責。如今，大家似乎都熱衷選擇加入一個陰謀論受害者的團體，一起指責這個或那個「陰謀團體」對他們所帶來的威脅，來進行自我安慰。他們會因此得到一種表面的滿足感，但內心深處卻充滿了怨恨。這就是他們選擇的生活方式。

佛陀提出了一個不同的解決方法。如果你真的想要解脫，你必須全力承擔起責任和自由。要做到這一點，你首先需要學會觀察。通過打坐和各種觀照的技巧，學習觀察事物形成的過程，我們所承擔的業緣，思緒和情感是如何產生和延續的。學習觀察我們是如何創造這一切的，又是如何執著於這些現象的。

在禪修中我們要做一個無私的觀察者。只有從這個角度，我們才能看清楚整個過程，包括我們如何創造世界，以及這個過程中我們的身份，觀察這個過程是如何一步步發展的。你必須用自己的心看清這個過程，這樣你才能從中得到解脫。除非你能真正洞悉它，不然得不到解脫。

從佛教實踐的角度來說，這種知見是解脫基礎。你必須明白，你要研究你是如何創造出這個世界的，用功就是要在這個地方，而不是琢磨別人是如何控制你的，或者有什麼陰謀在害你。如果你要那麼想，你就越想越覺得是。但如果你從解脫處下手，你會究竟解脫。❀