

Model for Comparing Different Religious Traditions: From a Buddhist Perspective (Part I)

<i>Hot</i>			
Structured	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hot Structured</u></p> <p>The cosmos is vast and inhabited by innumerable powerful beings; liberation consists in finding one's way through the labyrinth with the appropriate passwords.</p> <p>This teaching represents a variant of esotericism: that liberation is a great journey through the cosmos, which is contained within oneself (and one needs initiation to complete it).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hot Unstructured</u></p> <p>There is a divine power, quite other than oneself, which encloses us and is the source of liberation.</p> <p>This teaching is that God creates the world (and not just the physical universe, either), that he is responsible for it, and that its forms express his divine nature.</p>	Unstructured
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cool Structured</u></p> <p>Liberation is within oneself but it must be uncovered by disciplined practice.</p> <p>This teaching is in effect saying: one's own self, which is identical with truth, is surrounded by layers which one has to work through.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cool Unstructured</u></p> <p>One's own nature is liberation; everything else is illusion.</p> <p>This teaching can be summarized as follows: everyone is God – now.</p>	
<i>Cool</i>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Explanations</u></p> <p>The following four statements concerning the human condition are all related. However, they are based on quite different axioms. Nevertheless, they are all true. One can give examples from the great traditions.</p> <p>Hot is that which is other than oneself; that which has its own life. It is not something that one has access to as of right. It is powerful and breath-taking, and is associated with revelation and grace. It is very similar to Otto's 'numinous'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buddhist view: 'Hot' is when other-power elements are stronger. <p>Cool is the very essence of oneself; one need not go to another to find it. Hence one <i>does</i> have access to it as of right. It is quiet and still, and is associated with self-realization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buddhist view: 'Cool' is when self-power elements are stronger. 'Cool' can also mean 'not outside of oneself'. <p>Structured is that there is an inherent order in the cosmos, and therefore in the human condition. There is something to be discovered and there is a way of discovering it. A map is required to find the destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buddhist view: 'Structured' is found in approaches in which gradual features dominate. <p>Unstructured teachings say that there is no gap between the starting point and the finishing point. Method and goal are identical. We are not separate from reality/truth/God, and so no map is required. Everything is available now and has always been.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buddhist view: 'Unstructured' is found in approaches in which sudden transformations dominate. <p>(Rawlinson, 1997, pp.98-9; Buddhist view based on notes from Dr. Peter Harvey.)</p>			
<p>Source: Rawlinson, A. (1997) <i>The book of enlightened masters: western teachers in eastern traditions</i>. Chicago, Illinois: Open Court. (pp. 96-131.)</p>			