

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

Hot

Structured	<u>Hot Structured</u>	<u>Hot Unstructured</u>	Unstructured
	<p><u>Ontology</u>: The one reality manifests itself in a dazzling array (<i>vyūha</i>).</p> <p><u>Cosmology</u>: <i>Samsāra</i> is inconceivably vast and contains innumerable surprises.</p> <p><u>Anthropology</u>: Man can do anything – don't accept limitations.</p> <p><u>Soteriology</u>: Everything in <i>samsāra</i> is sacred – live as though that were true.</p> <p><u>Buddhology</u>: The great magician; the great manipulator of forms.</p> <p><u>Examples</u>: Mahāyāna <i>sūtras</i> like the <i>Śūramgama-samādhi</i> and the <i>Gandhavyūha</i>; Vajrayāna/Tibetan Buddhism.</p>	<p><u>Ontology</u>: Everything is in the Buddha's hands.</p> <p><u>Cosmology</u>: The Buddha-fields are constantly purified by Buddhas.</p> <p><u>Anthropology</u>: We need help from the Buddha.</p> <p><u>Soteriology</u>: And, he will give it, if we ask for it (or even if we don't).</p> <p><u>Buddhology</u>: The compassionate one who grants liberation.</p> <p><u>Examples</u>: Pure Land</p>	
	<u>Cool Structured</u>	<u>Cool Unstructured</u>	
	<p><u>Ontology</u>: "There is an unborn . . ."</p> <p><u>Cosmology</u>: <i>Samsāra</i> is a huge, but ordered whole.</p> <p><u>Anthropology</u>: Man is caught in <i>samsāra</i>.</p> <p><u>Soteriology</u>: He gets out by learning how <i>samsāra</i> operates.</p> <p><u>Buddhology</u>: The master craftsman; the great <i>yogī</i>.</p> <p><u>Examples</u>: Theravāda</p>	<p><u>Ontology</u>: Only the Buddha-nature/<i>Dharma-kāya</i> is real.</p> <p><u>Cosmology</u>: All multiplicity is illusory.</p> <p><u>Anthropology</u>: We are Buddhas . . .</p> <p><u>Soteriology</u>: . . . Just realize it.</p> <p><u>Buddhology</u>: The immutable essence of all.</p> <p><u>Examples</u>: Mahāmudrā, Zen, Dzogchen.</p>	

Cool

Explanations

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.

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'.

- Buddhist view: 'Hot' is when other-power elements are stronger.

Cool is the very essence of oneself; one need not go to another to find it. Hence one *does* have access to it as of right. It is quiet and still, and is associated with self-realization.

- Buddhist view: 'Cool' is when self-power elements are stronger. 'Cool' can also mean 'not outside of oneself'.

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.

- Buddhist view: 'Structured' is found in approaches in which gradual features dominate.

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.

- Buddhist view: 'Unstructured' is found in approaches in which sudden transformations dominate.

(Rawlinson, 1997, pp.98-9; Buddhist view based on notes from Dr. Peter Harvey.)

Source: Rawlinson, A. (1997) *The book of enlightened masters: western teachers in eastern traditions*. Chicago, Illinois: Open Court. (pp. 96-131.)