

The following discussion by Harada sekkei-roshi was from an interview in 1993 with a Japanese television announcer who specialized in religious topics and was featured on the program, "The Awakened Self".

Roshi: Hoshinji is an official training monastery. However, for the last 80 years or so the lay people have been permitted to attend sesshin. They are requested to follow the same rules as the monks and if they can, they are allowed to come and sit sesshin.  
Announcer: Eighty years ago would be the Taisho Period.  
Roshi: Yes. At most training monasteries, I think there is quite a bit of resistance to having lay people come and sit zazen.

Announcer: Is that right?  
Roshi: Those with "bodaishin", the mind which seeks the way of liberation. Out of consideration for this, lay people are allowed to come and sit with us.  
Announcer: In conveying Zen to people of other countries, there must be some differences which appear.  
Roshi: Some changes must be made, I think. For example, one person asked me, "We've already learned enough from religions in the form of teaching, including Buddhism, but I want to know what is the essence of those teachings?"

Announcer: The essence...  
Roshi: I explain that the essence is the Dharma. Buddhism or the Buddhahadharma is the religious teaching based on the Dharma expounded by Shakyamuni. This teaching came into being because he clarified himself. So if you people here truly clarify yourselves, then the teaching becomes your own. This means that the Dharma doesn't only belong to Shakyamuni. Since it belongs to any person who grasps it, if that person expounds what they have grasped, then it becomes their teaching. This means it isn't only restricted to Shakyamuni's teaching.

Announcer: This means that the teaching and the Dharma are different.  
Roshi: Yes. When Bodhidharma went from India to China, he met the emperor of China. Wutei. The emperor had a great intellectual understanding of Buddhism and asked many questions, but Bodhidharma rejected all of it. He realized that in such conditions there would only be the possibility of spreading the teaching, but no chance to spread the Dharma. So Bodhidharma went into the mountains and sat for nine years in a cave facing a wall. In that way he demonstrated the Dharma itself, without giving explanation. Finally, as he had thought, he was able to foster a great disciple, Taisho Eka.  
Announcer: Is that why you gave the Dharma talk in America in which you said the people there shouldn't understand Zen or the Way of the Buddha conceptually or intellectually?

Roshi: That's right. The Chinese characters for the word religion mean "the teaching of the source." Therefore the people generally think that all religions, including Buddhism, are teachings of the source. I think there is the danger of getting them confused. There is the need to point out that the teaching of Buddha is slightly different from other religions. Announcer: Especially in the case of Zen. Earlier you spoke of Bodhidharma...there is an emphasis on not being able to understand it intellectually...  
Roshi: As long as we don't clarify ourselves, we hear the teaching through the self, the