

ties to its origins. Both orthodoxy and authority are at stake in such efforts, but the Zen school is concerned with more than establishing its institutional legitimacy. It does not wish to be an institution but to lay claim to a spiritual tradition. In the Zen Buddhist view, what is being passed on in Zen is the very essence of Buddhist truth itself. For such a transmission, one may object, names and genealogies are hardly necessary. Every truly enlightened Zen master would agree. Still, Zen does belong to history, and the five chronicles from the Sung period, for all their historical inadequacies, point to one of the essential traits of the way of Zen.

The five chronicles were composed during a relatively short period of two hundred years. The first of them, *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, is foundational. Compiled by the monk Tao-yüan of the line of Hōgen, it was completed in the Northern Sung dynasty in the year 1011. The chronicle narrates how the Dharma was passed on through the centuries from Śākyamuni himself to his disciple Kāśyapa, who is last in a line of seven Buddhas, the Indian Zen patriarchs begins, ending with the Chinese Zen patriarchs. Thus the disciple Kāśyapa, who is mentioned in the Pāli Canon,<sup>6</sup> is the first official transmission. According to tradition, he had married at a young age but did not consummate his marriage. The first time he saw the Buddha he threw himself at his feet and was received into the community of disciples and ordained a monk. As a sign of special favor, the Buddha exchanged robes with Kāśyapa. In the Buddhist scriptures Kāśyapa is referred to as the "first of the strict observers of the rule"; he took a leading role in the order.

The second of the Chinese chronicles of the Sung period, *The T'ien-sheng Record of the Widely Extending Lamp*, is the work of an industrious lay disciple of the Rinzai school. Without naming the previous Buddhas, this chronicle begins with Śākyamuni and narrates the memorable event to which the Zen school ascribes its origins. According to this account, once, during his sermon on Vulture Peak, the Exalted One held up a golden lotus blossom to all those assembled. Only Kāśyapa understood, and smiled. According to book 2 of the chronicle, which is probably the earliest version of this well known episode, "the World Honored One thereupon turned to the assembly and said, 'I possess the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvāṇa. I entrust it to Mahākāśyapa.'"

The third chronicle, entitled *The Chien-chung Ching-kuo Supplementary Record of the Lamp*, was completed in 1101 (and published in 1103) by a learned monk of the Ummon school named Fo-kuo Wei-po. The title of book 1, "The True School," reveals the intent of the work: to preserve the unbroken transmission of genuine enlightenment. The line of transmission is traced from Śākyamuni through the twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs until around

the end of the T'ang period (618-907), the episode of the transmission.

What the third chronicle presents is *A Collection of Essential Episodes of the Line of the Lamp*. This chronicle is a genealogical record of the yogic line of the Rinzai school, tracing back to the seven Buddhas, then continuing through the Chinese and culminating with figures who completed his task in 1183. Here we find the final elaborated form of the transmission of the five schools. In book 1 of the chronicle

The World-Honored One, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvāṇa, the Gate that does not rest outside of the scriptures.

The last of the five chronicles, *The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, was compiled by Lei-an and completed in 1204. It is an excellent collection of lay Zen friends, episodes in the history of Zen, primarily on Zen during the Sung period, the so-called Five Chronicles of the Lamp"—Śākyamuni's experience

The foundational story of the transmission of the Dharma to the disciple Kāśyapa has been the central theme since the time of its normative formulation. It owes its place in the life of Zen Buddhism to its basis on the version of the foundation of the widely used kōan collections, the *Wu-men salts* the narrative with

Rather strange. What is the true Dharma [the true Dharma eye, how would the true Dharma be passed on [at all]? What if it has not been passed on, it is like the Dharma at the village gate. But if it has been passed on, could it then have been e

According to tradition, the Dharma was passed on second in the line of twenty-eight Buddhas only after the death of the Buddha. The Dharma also becomes a kōan in the *Wu-men salts*. It was given to Kāśyapa with the transmission of the Dharma. Legend has it that Kāśyapa was