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The Invention and Reception of the *Minoòdera engi*

In this article, I attend to the creative processes involved both in the writing and the reception of *jisha engi*, through the example of a twelfth century Shugendo *engi* called *Minoòdera engi*. First, I examine how the *Minoòdera engi* contributed decisively to the hagiographic evolution of En no Gyōja, the seventh-century figure whom Shugendo practitioners chose as their founder. Then I focus on the way in which this text was used and received, both at *Minoòdera* and in a broader, regional context. Through comparison with historical, literary, and religious sources, I argue that documents like the *Minoòdera engi* played an instrumental role in restructuring the spatial and temporal imaginaire of their surroundings and of Japanese Buddhism. Overall, my aim is to draw attention not only to the composition and the contents of *engi*-type documents, but also to their use and circulation in the early medieval period.

KEYWORDS: spatial and temporal imaginaire—Minoò—En no Gyōja—*yamabushi*—*sangoku denrai*—Kanjō—Ninnaji—*Shichi tengu-e*

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AS DISCUSSED in the introduction to this special volume, *jisha engi* 寺社縁起 narrate the origins, which is to say the invention, of sacred sites. Although in many cases research on *engi* has attended primarily to the circumstances surrounding the initial process of textual composition, more creativity is involved in the reception of these texts. My objective in this article is to illustrate this assertion through an analysis of the *Minōdera engi*.

Religious practice in the mountains (*sanrin shugyō* 山林修行), which was an integral element in the religious culture of Mino^o, had been common among both semi-lay figures and official monks (*kansō* 官僧) even earlier than the Nara period (TSUJI 1991, 1–6). In the Heian period, monks who had acquired “marvellous powers” (*genriki* 験力) through practice in the mountains joined specialists in esoteric ritual as “persons of power” (*genja* 験者) who served the emperor or high-ranking aristocrats by performing healing treatments (TOKUNAGA 2001). During the *insei* period, *yamabushi* 山臥, literally “men who lie down in the mountains,” who were not necessarily fully ordained, gained public recognition for their special powers. *Yamabushi* were employed among the guardian monks (*gojisō* 護持僧), who were charged with ritually protecting the emperor’s person (WAKAMORI 1972, 108–10). It was also during the *insei* that pilgrimage to Kumano became popular among the royalty and aristocracy (MOERMAN 2005); when retired emperors traveled to Kumano, they employed *yamabushi* as their pilgrimage guides (*gosendatsu* 御先達), rewarding them with honorary monastic rank and office (MIYACHI 1954, 93–129, 147–69; TOKUNAGA 2002).

As a corollary to their new recognition in the social sphere, *yamabushi* also began to make a place for themselves as important participants in the history of Japanese Buddhism. The legitimacy of Japanese Buddhism was grounded in the understanding that Buddhism had been transmitted in an unaltered state from India to China and then Japan: this concept is known as “transmission through the three countries” (*sangoku denrai* 三国伝来). Therefore *yamabushi*, who did not trace their dharma lineage back to India, were situated outside of the Japanese Buddhist orthodoxy. During the *insei* period, *yamabushi* for the first time appear to have felt the need for a founder of their own.¹ En no Gyōja 役行者, the most famous historical mountain practitioner, was chosen and vene-

1. The use of the term *shugen* 修験 to designate mountain practitioners exclusively seems to date only from the late Kamakura period onwards (HASEGAWA 1991; TOKUNAGA 2002); therefore, I refer to them here as *yamabushi*.

rated in this role. Importantly, En had long been known as an *upāsaka* (*ubasoku* 優婆塞), that is, as a religious specialist who had not been officially ordained as a Buddhist monk. In time, En no Gyōja's apotheosis as a founder figure was so successful that, based on the temporal and spatial imaginaire of Japanese Buddhism, which had been shaped by notions of the transmission through the three countries, the temporal and spatial imaginaire of sacred mountains around the capital (that is, Kyoto) and "the southern capital" (*nanto* 南都, Nara) were successively reconceptualized.

The process of reimagining En no Gyōja's career in order to cast him as a founder figure provides the primary context in which the *Mino'odera engi* circulated. One of the many oral transmissions (*kuden* 口伝), records (*kiroku* 記録), and *engi*-type documents that appeared during the *insei* period, this particular text focuses mainly on En no Gyōja's founding of the temple of Mino'ō in the mountains of the Teshima 豊島 district in the province of Settsu 摂津, an area that is now part of Mino'ō, Ikeda, Toyonaka, and Suita cities in the northern reaches of present-day Osaka. The *engi* also contains En no Gyōja's admonitions, in which he warns monks against negligence and promises them his protection. Although the tone is general, he instructs them to view those who break the precepts as "manifestations of Hitokotonushi" (*Hitokotonushi no hengen* 一言主の変現), and tells them that even if his body may go to "Hu and Yue" (胡越, that is, China), his heart shall always remain at Mino'ō. The fact that the *Mino'odera engi* contains En no Gyōja's last words before his departure for China warrants its antiquity and veracity. Finally, the text ends with an eight-line verse (*ge* 偈). As I will discuss later, this verse in classical Chinese has been valued as an expression of the core meaning of the *engi*. However, since various interpretations were allowed depending on the *kundoku* chosen, the verse was not only widely accepted, but also facilitated the creation of new meanings.

In this article, my aim is both to position the *Mino'odera engi* in the genealogy of En no Gyōja's hagiographies, and to determine how it was received in contexts that were both interior and exterior to Mino'odera. I shall argue that in the wake of the appearance (or forgery) and reception of this document, the spatial and temporal imaginaire of Mino'odera, as well as that of the sacred mountains in the Yamato area, and even that of Japanese Buddhist history, was reconfigured.

The Contents and History of the Mino'odera engi

It is unclear just when and how the *Mino'odera engi* was first composed. Though we may certainly imagine that the circumstances surrounding its compilation were connected to issues in the temple's administration, such as legal disputes involving the temple's estates and properties (*shōen* 荘園, *jiryō*

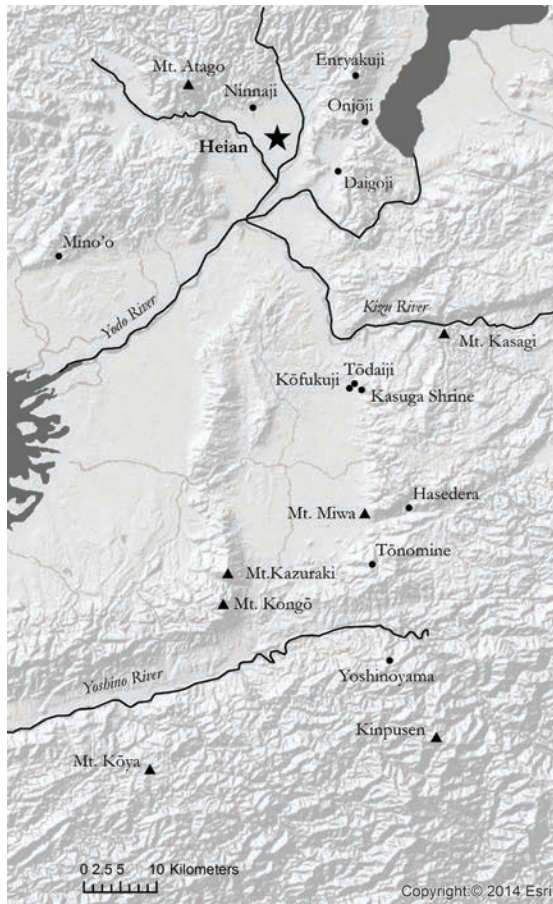


FIGURE 1. Map created by Theresa Quill, Indiana University. Adapted and reprinted from Heather Blair, *Real and Imagined: The Peak of Gold in Heian Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015). Copyright © 2013 Esri and its data providers. All rights reserved.

寺領) or fundraising campaigns for restoration purposes, no concrete evidence remains. The text is written in *kanbun*, in a careful and dignified hand, so that even though the author is also unidentified, it may be surmised that he was someone of erudition and ability. The only extant manuscript is a one-scroll, Kamakura-period copy from the library of the aristocratic Kujō 九条 family; this is now held by the Archives and Mausolea Department of the Imperial Household Agency (KUNAICHŌ SHORYŌBU 1970). The manuscript is part of a large group of *engi* collected by Keisei 慶政 (1189–1268), a monk of the Kujō family. Marked by formal variation, these manuscripts combine the work of Keisei and other copyists. One may therefore surmise that although

the manuscripts were copied under different circumstances, Keisei collected them in connection with the religious policy of the Kujō family, to which he belonged (CHIKAMOTO 2005).

En no Gyōja's achievements feature not only in the *Mino'odera engi* but also in another document belonging to the same group, the *Taimadera ruki* 当麻寺流記. At the end of this text, Keisei, who was apparently concerned about the date of its contents, added comments in his own hand, including some parts of the *Mino'odera engi*. Stating that he felt the need to investigate dates linked to En no Gyōja's biography, Keisei quoted three examples from the *Mino'odera engi* and one from what he called the *En no Gyōja-den* 役行者伝, all of them with reference to specific dates.

As far as I have been able to determine, the earliest evidence for the circulation of the *Mino'odera engi* occurs in a ritual pronouncement (*hyōbyaku* 表白) written by Kakuken 覚憲 (1131–1212), a high-ranking Kōfukuji 興福寺 monk, for a commemorative ceremony for Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614–669), the founder of Kōfukuji.² As proof of his claim that “Japan is the world of virtuous roots of the Great Vehicle and its people are of the same nature as bodhisattvas,” Kakuken cited two sources. The first is a passage from the “Dwellings of the Bodhisattvas” chapter in the eighty-fascicle version of the *Kegonkyō* (Sk. *Avatamsaka sūtra*; Ch. *Huayan jing*), which states that the bodhisattva Hōki 法起 resides at “Mt. Kongō” (Kongōsen 金剛山) (T no. 279, 10.241b23–b26); the other is a line from the verse at the end of the *Mino'odera engi*, which reads, “Hōki Bodhisattva of Mt. Kongō” (金剛山法起菩薩). According to Kakuken, in both cases this refers to Japan's Mt. Kongō in the Kazuraki mountain range.

This verse was clearly well-known in Kakuken and Keisei's day, for it also appears in the *Shozan engi* (*engi* of the mountains), a roughly contemporary text that, like the *Mino'odera engi*, is preserved in Keisei's manuscript collection. Moreover, the ten-fascicle version of the early-Kamakura *Iroha jiruishō* 伊呂波字類抄 (*Iroha* dictionary) extracts portions of the *engi* narrative and the verse, thereby presenting another early example of the text's reception (*Kōkan bijutsu shiryō* 1: 224).

In terms of content, the *Mino'odera engi* centers on an account of a dream, in which En no Gyōja dreams that he enters a dragon cave hidden at the top of the Metaki 雌瀧 waterfall at Mino'o. En discovers that in reality the cave is the Pure Land of the bodhisattva Nagārjuna (Ryūju Bosatsu 龍樹菩薩). There En receives an esoteric initiation (*kanjō* 灌頂) from Tokuzen Daiō 德善大王, in the presence of both Nagārjuna and Benzaiten 弁才天. Afterwards, En no Gyōja founded the temple of Mino'odera.

2. Kakuken's *hyōbyaku* is preserved in his *Sangoku dentōki* 三国伝灯記. On this text, see YOKOUCHI 2004; ICHIKAWA 1999, 46–69; KAWASAKI 2007.

This episode is important for several reasons. First, it does not appear in earlier accounts of En no Gyōja's life, and thus represents a creative extension of En no Gyōja's biography. Second, it appropriates the traditional esoteric Shingon lineage, which starts with Mahāvairocana (Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来) and Vajrasattva (Kongōsatta 金剛薩埵), extends through Nagārjuna (Ryūmyō 龍猛, who was assumed to be the same as Ryūju Bosatsu 龍樹菩薩), and ends with Kūkai.³ The *Minōdera engi* inserts En no Gyōja into this lineage without creating the slightest ripple. Most importantly, by using the device of a dream to distort both the time and space of the Shingon lineage, this episode makes En no Gyōja over into an orthodox esoteric monk even before the introduction of Shingon Buddhism to Japan.

In order to understand the transformation in En's persona wrought by the *Minōdera engi*, it is necessary to consider earlier versions of his biography. The earliest account of En's life appears in the *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 under the heading "E no kimi ozunu 役君小角" (Lord E Little Horn), and focuses on his banishment to an island off the shores of Izu (*Shoku nihongi*, Monmu 文武 3 [699] /5/24). This exile episode formed the core of En's narrative career, and was taken up in various later sources such as the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記 (vol. 1, no. 28), *Sanbōe* (vol. 2, no. 2.2), *Honchō shinsenden* 本朝神仙伝 (no. 3), and *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (vol. 11, no. 3). Among these retellings of En's life story, the *Sanbōe*, written by Minamoto no Tamenori 源為憲 in 984 (Eikan 永観 2), is of particular interest because it accords him status as one of Japan's Buddhist heroes by placing his biography between those of Shōtoku Taishi 聖德太子 and Gyōki 行基. The Shōtoku–En–Gyōki succession later became one of the standard ways of describing Japanese Buddhist history (ABE 2013, 454–57; MAEDA 1999, 120–32). Significantly, none of these men were eminent monks in the classical sense: Shōtoku was a prince and a layman, En was a semi-lay practitioner, and Gyōki gained fame for his work among commoners rather than service at elite rites and temples. This tendency to valorize En as an important Buddhist who operated outside official hierarchies was a crucial component in his later apotheosis as the *yamabushi* founder.

During the *insei* period, En no Gyōja's persona began to change in significant ways. An important first step was taken in the version of his biography included in the *Fusō ryakki* (Shortened chronicles of Japan), which was compiled toward the end of the eleventh century. This account is divided into two episodes. The first narrates En's exile to Izu in Monmu 3 [699] /5/24; the second tells of an imperial order issued in the first month of Monmu 5 [701] (=Taihō 大宝 1) calling for En no Gyōja to return to the capital. The second episode appears first as a summary drawn from the *Tamenori-ki* 為憲記 (that is, the *Sanbōe*); then the

3. Editor's note: on the orthodox Shingon lineage, see ABÉ 1999, 220–33.

complete account is recorded under the heading “*En no kimi den* 役公伝.”⁴ The *En no kimi den* narrative can be roughly divided into four stages:

1. En no Gyōja tries to have the *kami* build him a bridge between two mountains, Kinpusen 金峯山 and Mt. Kongō, but when the god Hitokotonushi 一言主 slanders him, En is exiled to an island off Izu.
2. From Izu, he visits Mt. Fuji 富慈 and, thanks to the intervention of the mountain's deity, Fuji Myōjin 富慈明神, receives a pardon from the emperor.
3. After returning to the capital, En no Gyōja puts a spell on Hitokotonushi and travels to China with his mother.
4. While visiting China, the Japanese monk Dōshō 道照 (629–700) chances upon En no Gyōja, who has become “third among the sages (*shōnin* 聖人).” This term has strong Daoist valences; furthermore, in other versions of the biography, the term “immortal” (*sennin* 仙人) is used instead. Once Dōshō is back in Japan, he relates the conversation he had with En.

All four of these narrative elements appear in biographies of En no Gyōja prior to the *Sanbōe*, but the *En no kimi den* also features elements that are absent in the other stories. Especially important are comments in the fourth episode to the effect that En no Gyōja is the “third in rank among the forty Immortals of Tang China” or the “third holy man,” as well as the claim that after his departure to China, En traveled back to Japan once every three years to visit Kinpusen, Mt. Kazuraki, and Mt. Fuji. These additions set a new standard in the elaboration of En's biography: En had now been vindicated of any wrongdoing, and had gained a continental pedigree.

By drawing upon these preestablished narratives, the *Mino'odera engi* capitalizes upon En's growing reputation in order to underscore its own status as a true account. First, the *engi* opens with an account of the introduction of Buddhism to Japan at the hands of Shōtoku Taishi. Then, it borrows the frame of the “En no kimi den,” while inserting a new section on Mino'ō before the anecdote about Hitokotonushi's interruption of the bridge construction. Finally, by connecting itself to admonitions given by En shortly before he departed for China in Taihō 大宝 1 (701), the *Mino'odera engi* establishes both the antiquity and the strong local quality of its contents.

The overall manner of the *Mino'odera engi* is expressed directly and concisely in the eight-line verse appended at the end of the scroll.

Third Immortal in China,
En no Ubasoku in Japan.

4. OYAMADA Kazuo (1996) suggests that the *En no kimi den* was written in Jōgan 貞観 15 (873), but his arguments are insufficient; therefore, the current assumption that the *Sanbōe* account is earlier must be maintained.

Hōki Bosatsu on Mt. Kongō,
 Daijō Itokuten on Kinpusen.
 Ryūju and Benzai at Minōdera,
 The great sage Lord Fudō at the foot of the waterfall.
 He changes his appearance in order to bestow the Buddhist teachings
 throughout the three worlds,
 But where he longs to leave his traces is here, at Minō.

大唐国第三仙人 日本国役優婆塞
 金剛山法起菩薩 金峯大政威徳天
 箕面寺龍樹弁才 瀧本大聖不動尊
 三世施化随類身 愛惜留跡是箕面

The first couplet, which describes En no Gyōja's manifestation before and after his stay in China, stems from the *En no kimi den* episode in which Dōshō encounters En in China. The second couplet represents deities, a bodhisattva (Hōki Bosatsu 法起菩薩), and a *deva* (Daijō Itokuten 太政威徳天), who reside on the two mountains En no Gyōja intends to link with his bridge. These two figures are based respectively on the eighty-fascicle translation of the *Kegonkyō*, as discussed above, and the *Nichizō yume no ki* 日藏夢記 (Dream record of Nichizō), a Heian-period account in which the holy man Nichizō travels from Kinpusen to heaven and hell.⁵ The idea that the “Vajra Mountain” (Kongōsen) described as Hōki's dwelling place in the “Dwellings of the Bodhisattvas” chapter of the eighty-fascicle *Kegonkyō* is one and the same as the Mount Kongō (Kongōsan 金剛山) that is the main summit of the Kazuraki mountain range appears to have been advanced by a high-ranking Kōfukuji monk named Zōshun 藏俊 (1104–1180).⁶ By contrast, the deity paired with Hōki in the verse has no canonical roots at all. According to an account preserved in two different recensions, in 941 Nichizō (then known as Dōken) entered a cave in the mountains near Kinpusen but died while performing mandala rites. Before returning to life, he had a series of adventures, in which he encountered Daijō Itokuten, who revealed himself to be the apotheosis of the deceased statesman and literatus Sugawara no Michizane (845–903).⁷ One of the reasons Daijō Itokuten (and not Kongō Zaō) was selected as the deity of Kinpusen may have been the sacralization of Shō no iwaya 笙窟, a rockshelter located southeast of the summit of Kinpusen, as the

5. This account exists in a longer version (the *Eikyūji-bon* 永久寺本) and a shorter, better-known version, the *Dōken shōnin meido ki* 道賢上人冥途記, which is included in the *Fusō ryakki* (YAMAMOTO 2012, 21–35; TAKEI 2004; ABE 2010). Since the verse is so condensed, it is impossible to know on which version it is based.

6. Zōshun is credited with this explanation in *Jōe wajō nyūbu-ki* 定恵和尚入峰記 (*Shozan engi*, 129–30; KAWASAKI 2007, 17).

7. See *Fusō ryakki*, Tengyō 天慶 4/third month. Translator's note: for English translations of this account, see TYLER 1987, 144–49, and HINO 2009, 287–93.

locus of the encounter between Nichizō and Daijō Itokuten and the transformation of this narrative into a literary theme (HIRATA 2008).

The verse's third couplet locates both Benzaiten and Nagārjuna at Mino'odera and refers to Fudō as the main deity of its waterfall. The first two deities correspond to the main text of the *Mino'odera engi*, which, as mentioned earlier, has En receive an initiation from Nagārjuna. Although no extant source corroborates the link between Fudō and Mino'ō, given Fudō's close associations with waterfalls at other sites, it is quite plausible that he was venerated in the same way at Mino'ō.

Finally, the last two lines state that Mino'ō is where En no Gyōja "leaves his traces." This couplet sums up the entire *engi*: it not only subsumes the contents of *En no kimi den*, the *Kegonkyō*, and *Nichizō yume no ki*, but also explains that the reason for Mino'ō's predominance is to be found in the career of En no Gyōja. Once it was recognized as a reliable account, the *Mino'odera engi* continued to be received as a source that conveys the true voice and innermost secrets of En no Gyōja.

Religious Activity and Engi at Mino'odera

In this section, I provide an outline of cultic elements at Mino'odera prior to the *insei* period. From there, I turn to an examination of the ways in which the *Mino'odera engi* actually reshaped the site's temporal and spatial imagineire, thereby inventing En no Gyōja's footsteps, which lead from the secret of the transmission of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism prior to Kūkai to the construction of the stone bridge.

Mino'ō's religious origins are tied to the site's great waterfall, which is surrounded by mountains. During the regency period (mid-tenth to late eleventh century), Mino'ō was known as a place of religious practice of a general, even generic, type. Narrative sources such as tale 23 in *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* 日本往生極樂記, compiled in 985–987 by Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤 (933?–1002), or tale 2.53 in *Dainipponkoku hokekyō genki* 大日本法華經驗記, compiled in 1040–1044 by Chingen 鎮源 (n.d.), cast Mino'ō as a place where Pure Land practitioners would pray for rebirth. In the *Shinsarugakuki* 新猿樂記, written by Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡 (989–1066), Mino'ō figures alongside Ōmine 大峰, Kazuraki 葛城, Kumano 熊野, Kinpu 金峰, Tateyama 立山, Hashiriyu 走湯, and so forth, and Akihira lists these as sacred mountains visited by a fictional character named Jirō 次郎. According to Akihira, Jirō is a practitioner even more exceptional than En no Gyōja or Jōzō 淨藏 (891–964) (HIRABAYASHI 1976; YANASE 1943). In addition, the *Fusō ryakki* mentions a waterfall at Mino'ō under which Senkan 千觀 (918–984) is said to have prayed for rain. The example of *Shinsarugakuki* shows that the major Japanese sacred mountains visited by practitioners were already systematized by the mid-Heian period, and that Mino'ō was counted as one

such mountain. On the other hand, the example drawn from *Fusō ryakki* demonstrates that Mino'ō's waterfall was known as a place for rainmaking practices.

During the *insei* period, Mino'ōdera began to emerge more clearly as a site where *hijiri* 聖, mobile “holy men,” were especially active.⁸ Two songs in the *imayō* 今様 collection *Ryōjin hishō* describe Mino'ō quite clearly as one of Japan's most distinguished “dwellings of the *hijiri*.” Poem 297 enumerates the dwellings of the *hijiri* in a geographical order:

Where are the dwellings of the *hijiri*?

In Mino'ō, in Kachio, on Mt. Sosa in Harima; at Wanibuchi and Hi-no-misaki in Izumo; and in the south, at Nachi in Kumano.

聖の住所はどこどこぞ、箕面よ、勝尾よ、播磨なる書写の山、出雲の鱒淵や、日御崎、南は熊野的那智とかや

Here the progression of sites begins in the Kinai 畿内 with Mino'ōdera and Kachiodera in the province of Settsu, followed by the San'yōdō with Mt. Sosa in the province of Harima, the San'indō with Wanibuchi and Hi-no-misaki in the province of Izumo, and ends in the Nankaidō with Kumano and Nachi in Kii province. By comparison, poem 298 supplies the names of important sites of mountain practice without any geographical order:

Where are the dwellings of the *hijiri*?

In Ōmine, Kazuraki, Ishi-no-tsuchi; in Mino'ō, in Kachio, on Mount Sosa in Harima; and in the south, at Nachi and Shingū in Kumano.

聖の住所はどこどこぞ、大峰、葛城、石の槌、箕面よ、勝尾よ、播磨なる書写の山、南は熊野的那智、新宮

Here Ōmine and Kazuraki (Yamato province) are followed by Ishizuchi (Iyo province), then Mino'ōdera, Kachiodera, and Mt. Sosa, and in the end, Nachi and Shingū in Kumano.

Given that these lyrics were compiled by Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192), their representation of Mino'ō shows that aristocrats and high-ranking monks from the capital were aware of this area as a site for aspiration and faith on the part of itinerant holy men.

Votive texts and pilgrimage records indicate that the contents of the *Mino'ōdera engi* were shaping practice at the site toward the end of the twelfth century. For example, an 1179 prayer used for the dedication of a Hall of Constant Practice (*jōgyōdō* 常行堂) begins with the following statement: “Well, Mino'ōdera in the province of Settsu has been a splendid mountain god. En no Ubasoku started his practice there, and Tokuzen Daiō has become the tutelary deity of its sacred shrine” (“Mino'ōdera jōgyōdō kuyō ganmon” 箕面寺常行堂供養願文, dated Jishō

8. On *hijiri* more generally, see GORAI (1975) and HIRABAYASHI (1981).

治承 3/10, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 28.1: 524–25). A few years earlier, when Taira no Nobunori 平信範 (1112–1187) made a pilgrimage, he characterized Mino'odera as “the sacred site of Ryūju Bosatsu’s manifest traces (*suijaku* 垂跡), a miraculous place of vast virtue.” He wrote that he made an offering of lamps, went before “the goddess Benzai” (Benzai tennyo 弁財天女), and climbed up to the foot of the waterfall, where he worshipped at several places. The various offerings of coins and valuables Nobunori had prepared amounted to a large sum (*Hyōhanki*, Kaō 2 (1170)/4/5). From these sources, we see not only that the *engi*’s vision of the local founder figure (En no Gyōja) and the local pantheon (Ryūju and Tokuzen) had taken hold, but also that elite pilgrims had begun to visit Mino’o.

One may surmise that during this period, Mino’o’s partisans were trying to uphold the site’s relationship with the capital’s great temples while also enhancing its spiritual authority (*reii* 靈威), a common strategy at other sites. There are, however, very few documents available to substantiate this inference. One striking piece of evidence is that in 1204 Dharma Prince Dōhō 道法法親王 (1166–1214), who was the seventh royal Ninnaji abbot (*Ninnaji omuro* 仁和寺御室) and was involved in several of Retired Emperor Go-Toba’s pilgrimages to Kumano, visited Mino’o.⁹ In light of Dōhō’s visit, it is important to note Mino’odera became a Ninnaji subtemple in 1214, although the present state of the historical record makes it impossible to prove a connection between these two events. Most likely, Dōhō’s pilgrimage was part of a larger pattern of interchange between Ninnaji and Mino’odera; indeed, ties between the two sites appear to have dated back at least to the time of Dharma Prince Kakushō 覚性法親王 (1129–1169), who was active at Kumano and was Ninnaji’s fifth royal abbot.¹⁰ In fact, it is clear from poetic sources that Kakushō secluded himself at Mino’o in order to undertake religious practice there. Three *waka* are attributed to him: two sent as replies in poetic exchanges with Minamoto no Yoritsune 源頼経 and the Dharma Bridge Keishin 慶信 (*Shukkanshū* nos. 760 and 763, *Shinpen kokka taikan* 7: 154), and one composed when Kakushō emerged from Mino’o and departed for Kōya 高野 (*Shukkanshū* no. 745, *Shinpen kokka taikan* 7: 154). The last of these, which is anthologized in the *Senzai wakashū* (vol. 16, no. 1001, SNKBT 10: 300), is well known:

箕面の山寺に日ごろ籠り出でけるあか月、月のおもしろく侍れば
仁和寺入道法親王〈覚性〉
木の間もる有明の月の送らずはひとりや山の峰を出でまし

9. Dōhō either performed ritual prayers for Go-Toba’s pilgrimage to Kumano at Ninnaji (1206, 1210) or went to Kumano ahead of the imperial procession (1207, 1212, 1214); see MIYACHI (1954, 262–86).

10. In 1156 Kakushō went to Kumano for the dedication of the nine-storied octagonal pagoda built there on the basis of a vow made by Retired Emperor Toba. He also installed Kumano Nyakuōji 熊野若王子 as the tutelary deity of Ninnaji’s Daishōin 大聖院 (KAWASAKI 2003).

Minoò no yamadera ni higo komori idekeru akatsuki, tsuki no omoshiroku haberikereba

Ko no ma moru ariake no tsuki no okurazu wa hitoriya yama no mine wo idemashi

The Novice Dharma Prince from Ninnaji [Kakushō], on regarding the moon before dawn when he emerged from a seclusion of many days at the mountain temple at Minoò:

If the lingering moon at daybreak, its light filtering through the trees, had not seen me off, I would have been alone in departing from the mountain.

Setting aside the question of the poet's skill, we might infer that by depicting himself as carrying out strenuous practice at Minoò, Kakushō aimed to compare himself with Gyōson (1055–1135), who was the epitome of high-ranking monks engaged in performing religious practice in the mountains and forests. Gyōson, who held the offices of Onjōij abbot (*chōri* 長吏) and Tendai patriarch (*zasu* 座主), served as a guide (*sendatsu* 先達) to both Retired Emperor Shirakawa and Retired Emperor Toba on their pilgrimages to Kumano. Even after Gyōson passed away, his disciple Kakushū 覚宗 (1078–1153), and Kakushū's disciple Kakusan 覚讚 (1095–1180) were regularly summoned as imperial guides to Kumano. Gyōson also was a famous poet, and his achievements as a mountain practitioner were well known through his poems (KONDŌ 1978; KAWASAKI 2008). Alternatively, we might view the inclusion of Kakushō's poem in an imperial anthology as an index of the popularity of the Minoòdera cult. The date of the *Minoòdera engi*'s compilation is unknown and it is impossible to substantiate any concrete connection between that text and Kakushō's activities; nonetheless, Kakushō represents a convergence of elite monks, court culture, and the Minoò cult that is indicative of the growing stature of the site.

By the first decades of the thirteenth century, not only was Minoòdera a client of Ninnaji, but it was also drawing an array of elite pilgrims. When the nobleman and diarist Fujiwara no Tsunemitsu 藤原経光 (1212–1274) made a pilgrimage to Minoòdera in 1233 (Tenpuku 天福 1), he mentioned seeing more than three hundred monastic cells there raised on stilts. Even if Tsunemitsu exaggerated the number of residences, his comments still speak to the site's prosperity. Like Nobunori, Tsunemitsu echoed the formulae presented in the *Minoòdera engi*: first he worshipped Nagārjuna, whom he called Ryūju Gongen 龍樹権現, and then the tutelary deity, who, according to the 1179 prayer quoted above, was Tokuzen Daiō. After that, he went on to visit Fudō 不動 under the waterfall, describing him as the main deity from the days of old when the temple was founded. Although his attendants climbed the precipitous path up to the top of the waterfall, Tsunemitsu himself did not, a circumstance that he considered a source of bitterness (*ikon* 遺恨). His attendants told him that above the waterfall, there was a dazzling site called “the place for ascetic practices” (*gyōdōsho* 行導

[=道?]所). Furthermore, Tsunemitsu let it be known that the appearance of the priests and the Treasure Hall at Mino'ō's tutelary shrine were similar to those at Kumano (*Minkeiki*, Tenpuku 天福 1 [1233]/2/3).

Despite the limited source material available as evidence, we may safely conclude that as early as 1170, a pilgrimage route had been set up at Mino'odera, along which lay pilgrims would climb all the way to the foot of the waterfall after having worshipped Ryūju Bosatsu in the temple's main hall. We may also imagine that the origins of the area around the top and the foot of the waterfall, as well as the various spots in the scenery visible from there, were explained by the temple monks, and that the site came to be revered as the actual place where En no Gyōja's dream initiation had taken place. We cannot know the inner thoughts of the creators of the *Mino'odera engi*, but after the *engi* had been accepted at the temple, Mino'ō took shape as a sacred site where intensive practice by monks intersected with the pilgrimages of laypeople.

*Appropriation and Transformation: The Mino'odera engi
in the Hands of the Kōfukuji Monks Kakuken and Jōkei*

As Dōhō and Kakushō's activity at Mino'ō indicates, influential monastics without longstanding ties there took a growing interest in the site at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Yet we also need to consider how the *Mino'odera engi* was received outside of Mino'odera itself; in this respect, two Kōfukuji monks, Kakuken 覚憲 and his disciple Jōkei 貞慶, provide a helpful example. As mentioned earlier, Mt. Kongō, the main summit of the Kazuraki mountain range, situated on the western edge of Yamato Province, had come to be known as a mountain where En no Gyōja had practiced. Kakuken, who was the disciple of the aforementioned Zōshun, another Kōfukuji monk, articulated the same theory as his master when he delivered lectures on the *Mukushōkyō* 無垢称経 (Scripture of the stainless name), Xuanzang's translation of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, in 1173 (Shōan 承安 3/8/9). Kakuken, however, supported his argument with a citation of the eight-verse stanza at the end of the *Mino'odera engi*, which he referred to simply as "an *engi*." The only point of divergence is that in the fifth line Kakuken refers to "Ryūju Bosatsu 龍樹菩薩," whereas the *Mino'odera engi* has "Ryūju and Benzai 龍樹弁才."¹¹ This shows that the *engi*, or at least the stanza, was circulating among Kōfukuji monks by the last quarter of the twelfth century.

In the milieu surrounding Gedatsubō Jōkei 解脫房貞慶, a renunciant monk (*tonseisō* 遁世僧) from Kōfukuji who moved to Kasagidera 笠置寺 in 1193 (Kenkyū 建久 4), information about Mino'ō was used to enhance the reputation of Kasagi. Located in southern Yamashiro 山城 Province (now Kyoto

11. See *Mino'odera engi*, 128.

Prefecture), this site is well known for its carving of an image of Maitreya (Miroku 弥勒) in the cliff behind the temple (TAKEI 1986; 1987; CHIKAMOTO 2000; FUNADA 2010).¹² Around the time that Jōkei started renovating this temple and rebuilding it on a grand scale, a text known as the *Ichidai-no-mine engi* 一代峯縁起 was produced to celebrate the ancient history of Kasagi. The earliest extant version of the *Ichidai-no-mine engi* is contained in the *Shozan engi*, which was copied sometime around 1230?–1260?; it also bears an opening note and a colophon stating that it was compiled by Dōken 道賢 (that is, Nichizō 日藏) on Engi 延喜 16 (916)/5/12. In terms of content, the *Ichidai-no-mine engi* differs dramatically from previous *engi* about Kasagidera. Nonetheless, the earlier *Kasagidera isō tō no koto* 笠置寺異相等事 does say that Nichizō had climbed up to Kasagidera, which shows that there was indeed a connection between older texts and the new *engi*.¹³ In addition to recounting Dōken’s mystical experiences in “the dragon hole of the Kokūzō cave” (*Kokūzō iwaya no ryūketsu* 虚空藏岩屋の龍穴) at Kasagi, it also makes new claims, namely, that En no Gyōja was a previous incarnation of Nichizō, that both En and Nichizō made the ascent to the cave at Kasagi, and that they shared a common pledge to live on Mt. Kasagi in order to protect the practitioners of generations to come.

Elements found in the *Ichidai-no-mine engi* narrative are woven into the first half of the eight-verse stanza found in the *Minōdera engi*: “Third Immortal in China, En no Ubasoku in Japan. / Hōki Bosatsu on Mt. Kongō, Daijō Itokuten on Kinpusen.” Conversely, the *Ichidai-no-mine engi* reuses a phrase from the same stanza in the section preceding the record of En no Gyōja’s ascent into the Kasagi cavern, and models the section in which Dōken enters Kasagi’s cave upon the episode in *Minōdera engi* where En enters Ryūjū’s Pure Land behind the Minō waterfall. Furthermore, in describing En no Gyōja’s territory, the *Ichidai-no-mine engi* augments Mt. Kongō and Kinpusen with “the cave of Kasagi, Ichidai-no-mine” (*Ichidai-no-mine no Kasagi iwaya* 一代峰の笠置岩屋). This produces a framework for a new sacred landscape, in which the mountains are interpreted as “the peaks of the three-fold secret dharma” 三部秘法の峯: the Vajra Realm (Kongōkai 金剛界), the Susiddhi Realm (蘇悉地界), and the Womb Realm (Taizōkai 胎藏界) (*Shozan engi*, 136).

Much as we saw with Kakuken, the *Minōdera engi* text was being repeatedly used in ways that were not directly linked to devotion to Minōdera. It is unclear who authored the *Ichidai-no-mine engi*, but its manuscript history, together with its contents and Kasagidera’s institutional circumstances, make it quite likely that Jōkei and his circle created the text. In this respect, it is important to note

12. Translator’s note: in English, see also GOODWIN (1977; 1994) and BROCK (1988).

13. *Kasagidera isō tō no koto* is included in *Kondō honbutsu shuchiki* 金堂本仏修治記; see KUNAICHO SHORYŌBU (1970, 165–71).

that *Kasagidera isō tō no koto*, mentioned above, was also owned by Keisei in the form of a manuscript copied from a version that had been written out by Jōkei. It is thus quite possible that Keisei's manuscript of *Shozan engi*, which included the *Ichidai-no-mine engi*, had also been copied from a text transmitted by Jōkei and his circle.

Approximately a decade later, during the Kennin 建仁 era (1201–1203), Kōfukuji monks, including Jōkei, were involved in the restoration on the temple at Mt. Kongō. Although the project's sponsor (*ganshu* 願主), a monk named Keiun 慶運, remains unidentified, we know that the Kōfukuji abbot (*bettō* 別当) Gaen 雅縁 (1138–1223) raised funds for this campaign.¹⁴ Furthermore, Jōkei authored the dedicatory vow (*Sanbutsujō-shō* 讚仏乘抄, in *Kōkan bijutsu shiryō* 2: 95–96; see also KAWASAKI 2010). In this *ganmon*, he presents Hōki Bosatsu and En no Gyōja as being of a single substance (*dōtai* 同体), which suggests that they are both present at Mt. Kongō. On the basis of these considerations, we may infer that Jōkei was using the second and third verses of the stanza from the *Minōōdera engi* as a reference.

In creating a sense of mystery surrounding Yamato's sacred mountains, statements initially made in order to feign the authenticity of the *Minōōdera engi* thus came to function precisely as statements made in the *Minōōdera engi*. The production of these claims is a fascinating phenomenon in and of itself, but I want to call particular attention to the fact that neither Kakuken nor Jōkei was interested in narratives of the origins of *Minōōdera per se*. Rather, they turned to the text known as the *Minōōdera engi* because of its reputation for age and authenticity, and drew upon it as a source text in support of their own opinions. Moreover, by rereading and rewriting it, they invented another, supposedly ancient and reliable body of lore about sites in which they had strong interests, namely, Kasagidera and Mt. Kongō. For them, the sites to be revered and glorified were the sacred mountains of Yamato; therefore, they did not see it as their task to extoll the origins of *Minōōdera*, despite their sense of the age and truth of those origins.

Esoteric Orthodoxy and the Dream Initiation (muchū kanjō)

As stated above, the dream initiation described in the *Minōōdera engi* suggests that En no Gyōja was endowed with the legitimacy of Esoteric Buddhism by Ryūju Bosatsu (Nagārjuna) through the mediation of Tokuzen Daiō in a dream. Unfortunately, there is no way to know how the Ninnaji abbot and Dharma Prince Dōhō viewed the relationship between orthodox

14. See *Kongōsan nain ge'in konryū kanjin chō* 金剛山内院外院建立勸進帳, dated Kōchō 弘長 2 [1262], seventh month (TŌKYŌ KOTENKAI 2009, text 65, plate 39).

esoteric transmissions and En no Gyōja's dream initiation, or how he brought Minoōdera under the sway of Ninnaji. Later sources, however, do give a sense of how the idea that En was an esoteric patriarch was received in the years after the *engi's* composition.

In the *Shichi tengu-e* 七天狗絵, compiled at the end of the Kamakura period, the fifth section, which is devoted to *yamabushi* and *tonsei* renunciants, is particularly striking (TAKAHASHI 2003; ABE 2003). In this passage, a description of Minoō immediately follows accounts of Ōmine and Kazuraki:

Minoō's waterfall is Ryūju's Pure Land, as well as Benzaiten's sacred site. Below the deep basin, there is a waterfall three feet in height, which always spouts black clouds. Seeing a five-colored light, En no Gyōja entered the mountain to search for it. He went into the abyss at the top of the waterfall and, opening a gate of stone, he encountered Ryūju and received water from the vase of the five wisdoms (*gochi* 五智) and the school of the three mysteries (*sanmitsu no nagare* 三密の流れ).
(TAKAHASHI 2003, 105)

In other words, Ryūju anointed En with water in an *abhiṣekha* (*kanjō* 灌頂). Obliterating the ambiguity found in previous sources, this account clearly states that the Buddhist teachings were conferred upon En no Gyōja by Ryūju Bosatsu. The text then continues:

After that, Kōbō 弘法 and Chishō 智証, the two great masters (*daishi* 大師), both entered Ōmine, where they followed En no Gyōja's traces.

In other words, this section of the *Shichi tengu-e* asserts not only that En no Gyōja possessed an impeccable esoteric pedigree, but also that both Shingon and Tendai lineages endorsed it by following his traces. En thus becomes an esoteric patriarch in his own right; by extension, Minoō becomes an esoteric site *par excellence*.

It would be untenable to rely on a single source to assess the degree of awareness people had of Shingon monks during the Kamakura period, but fortunately two other texts, the *Tōdaiji gusho* 東大寺具書 and *Shingon den*, corroborate the view provided by the *Shichi tengu-e*. In *Tōdaiji sanjū sojō an* 東大寺三重訴状案, a document included among records of a fourteenth-century dispute between Tōdaiji and Daigoji in *Todaiji gusho*, the Tōdaiji side brought up En no Ubasoku in response to Daigoji's assertion that the Shingon school had not yet been transmitted to Japan at the time of Tōdaiji's founding.¹⁵ They claimed that "the peak of awakening" (*bodai no mine* 菩提の峯, Ōmine) was a site for esoteric initiation, and that Narutakidera 鳴瀧寺, located on "the peak of the single vehicle" (*Ichijō*

15. See *Tōdaiji gusho* scrolls b, c, and d. The disputes centered on main-branch temple status and occurred between Shōwa 2 and 4 (1313 to 1315) (NAGAMURA 1988; INABA 2008, 749–74).

no mine 一乘峯, Kazuraki), manifests the twofold mandala. Furthermore, they stated that at the foot of Mino'o's flying spring (飛泉), which is to say the waterfall, En no Ubasoku saw the true body of the *mahāsattva* Nagārjuna (Ryūmyō Daishi 龍猛大士) and received the secret mudra awarded by the king of the teachings (scroll B; *Tōdaiji honmatsu sōron shiryō*, 659). Moreover, the Tōdaiji partisans also asserted that En no Ubasoku had received an esoteric initiation into the twofold mandalas (*ryōbu kanjō* 兩部灌頂) at the foot of the Mino'o waterfall, and that the mandalas showed “Kinpu in the southern mountains” (南山の金峯) (scroll C; *Tōdaiji honmatsu sōron shiryō*, 671). In other words, the Tōdaiji side used this episode as an important basis from which to lay claim to a Shingon transmission that occurred *before* Kōbō Daishi. Although there are some differences between the Tōdaiji account and the *Mino'odera engi* (for instance, in the former, En receives his initiation at the bottom of the waterfall), the two sources are remarkably similar.

The *Shingon den*, compiled by the Kajūji 勧修寺 monk Yōkai 榮海 (1278–1347), includes a section on “En no Ubasoku.” It seems that Yōkai looked at a number of different biographies of En no Gyōja in order to put together his own version, but the source he relied upon most heavily was the *Mino'odera engi*. In several places there is verbatim correspondence between the two texts; therefore, it is quite possible that Yōkai had direct access to the *Mino'odera engi*. In the middle of the biography, under the heading “I think...” (*watakushi ni iu* 私に云う), Yōkai concedes that the identity of En no Gyōja's teacher is at best questionable, given that Shingon was introduced to Japan by Kōbō Daishi, who lived a century or so later. Nonetheless, he adds:

What is most praiseworthy about our country is that he practiced in Ōmine and revealed that it is the Two Realms. Perhaps En no Gyōja, by visiting Ryūju Bosatsu's Pure Land and by going so far as to receive the teachings as well as the initiation, manifested supernatural powers (*jinriki* 神力).

Here, in a context where En's esoteric initiation serves as the cause of his practice in the Two Realms (that is, Ōmine), Yōkai expresses his approval. The need for additional sources to confirm these examples notwithstanding, it seems doubtful that Yōkai's stance was uncommon. To all appearances, by the end of the Kamakura period, En had completed his transformation into a fully esoteric figure, a process that had been inaugurated by the *Mino'odera engi*. This shift is especially important because it occurred just when the term *shugen* came to be applied exclusively to *yamabushi* (TOKUNAGA 2001; HASEGAWA 1991).

Conclusion

During the *insei* period, the *Mino'odera engi*, which first gained acceptance as an ancient and reliable document, took on different guises and produced different

values depending on when, where, and how it was received, whether inside or outside Mino'odera itself. Depending on the occasion, it imbued the physical surroundings of Mino'odera with meaning, constructed a pilgrimage route and objects of worship, or generated an entirely different temporal and spatial imagination by virtue of changes and modifications to the text.

What I want to emphasize in particular is that following its reception outside the temple, the *Mino'odera engi* transformed from being an *engi* about one single temple into a text that described the core of Japan's Buddhist history in light of the transmission through the three countries (*sangoku denrai*). As a result, people became conscious of En no Gyōja, the *ubasoku* founder of the *yamabushi* community, as an esoteric Buddhist monk who had received the first esoteric initiation in Japan—even before Kūkai, and directly from Ryūju Bosatsu. By the Kamakura period, this awareness of En was widely disseminated, even among Shingon monks; in fact, it was deeply connected to the circumstances of Japanese Buddhism during the Kamakura period. These circumstances meant that on the one hand, *yamabushi* were valued sufficiently that they came to monopolize *shugen*. On the other, *yamabushi* coexisted with specialists in exoteric (*kengyō*) and esoteric (*mikkyō*) Buddhism, and were more accepted than rejected at great temples where the study of multiple doctrinal schools and ritual practices flourished. From the period of the Northern and Southern Courts onward, we see strong assertions of the privileged status of *yamabushi shugen* vis-à-vis exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism. This was the eve of the establishment of Shugendo, demarcated by a line between it and other schools.

When we relate an *engi's* interior (its form and content) to its exterior (its reception within particular institutional and social contexts), we find that *jisha engi* have a rich and multifarious existence. This gives us reason to call for a more inclusive view of these ever-changing texts, one in which the exterior of the text—its “outer workings”—are taken into consideration, sometimes even imagined. Once the validity of such an outlook and method is confirmed, we will be better equipped to appraise the value of *jisha engi* and the various projects involving them.

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