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 Mino' odera engi. First, I examine how the Mino' odera 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 Mino’odera and in a broader, regional context. Through comparison with historical, literary, and religious sources, I argue that documents like the Mino’odera 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—Mino’o—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 *Minōdōra 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 (Tsujii 1991, 1–6). In the Heian period, monks who had acquired “marvellous powers” (*genriki* 驗力) through practice in the mountains joined specialists in esoteric ritual as “persons of power” (*genja* 驗者) 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’oderā 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 Minoō in the mountains of the Teshima 豊島 district in the province of Settsu 摂津, an area that is now part of Minoō, 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 Minoō. The fact that the Mino’oderā 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’oderā 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 Minoōdera. I shall argue that in the wake of the appearance (or forgery) and reception of this document, the spatial and temporal imaginaire of Minoōdera, 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’oderā engi

It is unclear just when and how the Mino’oderā 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
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 Departement of the Imperial Household Agency (KUNAIChÔ SHORYÔBU 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

**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.
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 Minōadera 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 Minōadera engi. Stating that he felt the need to investigate dates linked to En no Gyōja’s biography, Keisei quoted three examples from the Minōadera 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 Minōadera 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 Minōadera 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 Shōzan engi (engi of the mountains), a roughly contemporary text that, like the Minōadera 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 Minōadera 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 Minō. 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 徳善大王, in the presence of both Nagārjuna and Benzaiten 弁才天. Afterwards, En no Gyōja founded the temple of Minōōdera.

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. The Mino' odera 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 Mino' odera 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 日本霊異記 (vol. 1, no. 28), Sanbōe (vol. 2, no. 2.2), Honchō shinsenden 本朝神仙伝 (no. 3), and Konjaku monogatarishū 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 聖徳太子 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 Abe 1999, 220–33.
complete account is recorded under the heading “En no kimi den 役公伝.” 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’ōdera 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’ōdera engi establishes both the antiquity and the strong local quality of its contents.

The overall manner of the Mino’ōdera 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.

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 Minōadera,
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 Minōo.

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 濟本大聖不動尊
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 日蔵夢記 (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 蔵俊 (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

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\(^5\) 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).

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’ōdera and refers to Fudō as the main deity of its waterfall. The first two deities correspond to the main text of the Mino’ōdera 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’ōdera 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’ōdera

In this section, I provide an outline of cultic elements at Mino’ōdera prior to the insei period. From there, I turn to an examination of the ways in which the Mino’ōdera engi actually reshaped the site’s temporal and spatial imaginaire, 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 往生極楽記, compiled in 985–987 by Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤 (933?–1002), or tale 2.53 in Dainipponkoku hokekyō genki 大日本法華経験記, 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 新猿楽記, 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 浄蔵 (891–964) (Hirabayashi 1976; Yanase 1943). In addition, the Fusō ryakki mentions a waterfall at Mino’ō under which Senkan 千観 (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'o'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. Two songs in the imayō今様 collection Ryōjin hishō describe Mino'o 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'o, in Kachio, on Mt. Sosa in Harima; at Wanibuchi and Hi-no-misaki in Izumo; and in the south, at Nachi in Kumano.

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'o, in Kachio, on Mount Sosa in Harima; and in the south, at Nachi and Shingū in Kumano.

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'o 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’oderā 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’ō.

One may surmise that during this period, Mino’ō’s partisans were trying to uphold the site’s relationship with the capital’s great temples while also enhancing its spiritual authority (reii 霊威), 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’ō. In light of Dōhō’s visit, it is important to note Minōderā 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’ōderā; 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. In fact, it is clear from poetic sources that Kakushō secluded himself at Mino’ō in order to undertake religious practice there. Three waka are attributed to him: two sent as replies in poetic exchanges with Minamoto no Yōritsune 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’ō 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, SNKB1 10: 300), is well known:

箕面の山寺に日ごろ籠り出でけるあか月、月のおもしろく侍ければ
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).
Mino’o no yamadera ni higoro 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 Mino’o:

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 Mino’o, 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 Shira-kawa 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 覚讃 (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 Mino’odera cult. The date of the Mino’odera 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 Mino’o cult that is indicative of the growing stature of the site.

By the first decades of the thirteenth century, not only was Mino’odera 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 Mino’odera 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 Mino’odera 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
Furthermore, Tsunemitsu let it be known that the appearance of the priests and the Treasure Hall at Minoō’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 Minoōdera, 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 Minoōdera engi, but after the engi had been accepted at the temple, Minoō took shape as a sacred site where intensive practice by monks intersected with the pilgrimages of laypeople.

Appropriation and Transformation: The Minoōdera engi in the Hands of the Kōfukuji Monks Kakukken and Jōkei

As Dōhō and Kakushō’s activity at Minoō 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 Minoōdera engi was received outside of Minoōdera itself; in this respect, two Kōfukuji monks, Kakukken 觉憲 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. Kakukken, 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). Kakukken, however, supported his argument with a citation of the eight-verse stanza at the end of the Minoōdera engi, which he referred to simply as “an engi.” The only point of divergence is that in the fifth line Kakukken refers to “Ryūju Bosatsu 龍樹菩薩,” whereas the Minoōdera 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 脱房貞慶, a renunciant monk (tonseisō 遁世僧) from Kōfukuji who moved to Kasagidera 笠置寺 in 1193 (Kenkyū 建久 4), information about Minoō was used to enhance the reputation of Kasagi. Located in southern Yamashiro 山城 Province (now Kyoto

11. See Minoōdera 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 日蔵) 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 筚置寺異相等事 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 虚空蔵岩屋の龍穴) 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 Mino’oderā engi: “Third Immortal in China, En no Ubasoku in Japan. / Hōki Bosatsu on Mt. Kongō, Daitō 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 Mino’oderā engi where En enters Ryūjū’s Pure Land behind the Mino 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 胎蔵界) (Shozan engi, 136).

Much as we saw with Kakuken, the Mino’oderā engi text was being repeatedly used in ways that were not directly linked to devotion to Mino’odera. 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).
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 廃運, 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 讃仏乗抄, 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 Mino’ōdera engi as a reference.

In creating a sense of mystery surrounding Yamato’s sacred mountains, statements initially made in order to feign the authencity of the Mino’ōdera engi thus came to function precisely as statements made in the Mino’ōdera 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 Mino’ōdera per se. Rather, they turned to the text known as the Mino’ōdera 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 Mino’ōdera, 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 Mino’ōdera 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勧進帳, 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 Mino’odera 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 Mino’o immediately follows accounts of Ōmine and Kazuraki:

Minōo’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, Minōo 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 Tōdaiji 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 min e 菩提の峯) was a site for esoteric initiation, and that Narutakidera 鳴瀧寺, located on “the peak of the single vehicle” (Ichijō

no mine 一乗峯, 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 two-fold mandalas (ryōbu kanjō 両部灌頂) 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'o dera 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 栄海 (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 Minō'dera engi. In several places there is verbatim correspondence between the two texts; therefore, it is quite possible that Yōkai had direct access to the Minō'dera 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 supernormal 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 Minō'dera 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 Minō'dera 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'ōdera itself. Depending on the occasion, it imbued the physical surroundings of Mino'ōdera with meaning, constructed a pilgrimage route and objects of worship, or generated an entirely different temporal and spatial imaginaire 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'ōdera 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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**ABBREVIATIONS**

|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES

*Abe Mika* 阿部美香


*Abé Ryūichi*


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