

The Gourd Beaters
(Hachi Tataki)

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Gourd Beater 1 (GB1)
Gourd Beater 2 (GB2)
Gourd Beaters
Gourd God

GB1 The one who stands before you now is a gourd-beating priest and I reside in the capital. I intend to make a pilgrimage to Kitano Shrine with a group of my fellow gourd beaters, for which they are slated to arrive here, so I will wait for them.

GB2 (He comes on leading the group of GOURD BEATERS, chanting, beating their gourds, and dancing.)
 In the peaceful spring,

GOURD BEATERS (Chanting.)
 In the peaceful spring,
 In the capital,
 We gourd beaters beat our gourds,
 In time to our cry of
 ‘Buy our tea whisks,
 Please buy our tea whisks.’

GB1 Oh, I say, the master gourd beaters themselves have come out chanting and dancing.

GB2 That indeed we have. It is such a felicitous occasion that every one in bustling about, so we came out to join them with our chant and dance.

GB1 I understand completely. Let us proceed to Kitano Shrine. Come, come, let us be on our way.

GOURD BEATERS With all our hearts.

GB1 Now just what do you all think? There has never been such an unusual religious habit as the type we wear. Since we do not take the tonsure, we cannot become ordained priests, and since we wear priestly robes, we are not of the mundane world either. We go about selling our tea whisks, carrying one gourd each, and chanting of the transience of the world. As the work we do is not all that different from the average citizen, we are very similar to them, so is our religious sect not a most felicitous one?

GB2 And since tea whisks do not sell well these days, though we all don priestly robes, we have not seen each other for quite some time.

GB1 Thus, as we have gathered together today to make our pilgrimage, I am certain that we will be granted a substantial blessing. Well, here we are already at the Kitano Shrine. First, let us approach the altar.

GOURD BEATERS With all our hearts. (All sit a row in the center of the stage.)

GB1 (Singing.)
The Shakyamuni Buddha has departed this world,

GOURD BEATERS (Singing.)
But the Miroku Bodhisattva has not yet appeared in this world,
So offering prayers to the Amida Buddha
Is the only way left for us to obtain
The gracious Buddhist blessings.

GB1

As Paradise,

GOURD BEATERS

Is our desired goal,
We offer pine branches as we assiduously pray.

GB1

But Hades,

GOURD BEATERS

Is so close it is visible to the naked eye,
We are forced to observe the troubles of this world,
Even so,

GB1

As worldly comfort

GOURD BEATERS

In this life, we ask how it can be obtained,
And we are advised that it is best
To seek neither pure clarity nor total obscurity,
Neither coming out or going in too much,

GB1

Seeking constantly the middle way.

GOURD BEATERS

In accordance, we offer
Short bean blossoms
And long chestnut blossoms.

GB1

In the mountain depths,

GOURD BEATERS

Three monkeys gather,
One that sees no evil,
One that hears no evil,
And one that speaks no evil.

GB1

Of all things in this world,

GOURD BEATERS

Where all is falsehood and deceit,
Death alone,
Is truth absolute.

GB1

Cast your eyes up and you will see

GOURD BEATERS

Smoke rise from Mount Toribe,
Rising, rising constantly,
Each and every day.

GB1

The dew on the Adashi Plain

GOURD BEATERS

Is said to symbolize transience,
But even more transient than dew,
Is human life.

GB1

When you think about it, this floating world

GOURD BEATERS

Is merely a dream,
All glory is like the flowers of spring,

So we are best advised to abandon desire for fame and gain,
Accept that there are Buddhist laws and worldly laws,
That there are worldly passions and prayers for salvation,
That willow leaves and all the flowers wither away,
And direct our prayers constantly
Toward speedy admittance to the Pure Land.
In the gracious name of the Amida Buddha,
In the most gracious name of the Amida Buddha.

(During the final two lines of this song, the GOURD
BEATERS all move to stage left and sit in a line facing stage
right.)

GOURD GOD (Singing and dancing as he appears.)

Hear ye, hear ye!
I am the deity of a subsidiary of Kitano Shrine,
And I am known as the Gourd God.

GOURD BEATERS (Singing as the GOURD GOD continues
to dance.)

In the presence of this most felicitous apparition,
In the presence of this most felicitous apparition,
Our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy,
For, in answer to all our ardent prayers,
In this midst of this pleasantly prosperous era,
Where even the winds make no sound in the pine branches,
The Gourd God has himself delivers to us his divine blessing,
Then he announces his departure,
In response to which, all of us present,
Clutch at his sleeves, begging him to remain among us.
Turning back, once more, he promises
To watch over us through all our lives,
To watch over us through all our lives.
After which he enters his sanctuary.

