

18321

: S H O C H I K U :

" ATAKA NO SEKI "

(Or, The Barrier of Ataka)

Kabuki play in Two Scenes.

Written by Chikamatsu-Monzaemon.

To be presented by Koshiro and
Kikugoro troupes at the Tokyo Theatre,
from March 3, 1948.



----- CHARACTERS -----

Baiko

Minamoto no Yoshitsune, brother to Yoritomo,
the Shogun

Shoroken

Togashi-no-suke Ienao, keeper of the Ataka barrier

Gonjuro

Musashibo Benkei

Ise-no-Saburo Yoshimori

Suruga-no-Jiro Kiyoshige

Kataoka-Hachiro Tsuneharu

Masuo-no-Juro Kanefusa

Kumai-no-Taro Tadamoto

Kamei-no-Rokuro Shigekiyo

Washio-no-Saburo Yoshihisa

Hitachibo Kaison

Village Children

Guardsmen

Accompanied by Nagauta and Gidayu Orchestras.

*Shige &
naru*

SYNOPSIS :

Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune, having incurred the displeasure of his brother Yoritomo, Shogun of Kamakura, was seeking safety in flight for Michinoku escorted by Benkei and many other retainers.

Though Togashi, keeper of the Ataka barrier, penetrated who they really were, he was much moved by Benkei's devotion to his lord, and let them pass unchallenged.

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SCENE I

By the famous pine-tree "Ataka-no-Matsu"

(In the middle of the main stage, a big old pine-tree. A rocky hill in the right hand. The sea, far away in the left. Some stones at the root of the tree. The stage, in the whole, represents the neighbourhood of the famous pine-tree of the Ataka barrier. The gidayu orchestra on the right hand stage and the nagauta orchestra in the left. The curtain rises.)

Nagauta: "The sleeves of travelling clothes
Are apt to be wet with tears.
It was in the end of February
That Lord Yoshitsune left the capital
And sought safty in flight
Through deserted mountains"

Gidayu: "He is going to shelter himself
In the care of Hidehira of Michinoku
He hides his face in a hermit's cap."

(Yoshitsune appears into the stage passage dressed
as a mountain guide.)

Nagauta: "The retainers, Ise-no-Saburo Yoshimori,
Suruga-no-Jiro Kiyoshige and Kataoka-Hachiro
Tsuneharu,

All of them wander in the journey in Echigo
Disguised as yamabushi (itinerant monks.)"

Gidayu: "Masuo-no-Juro Kanefusa, Kumai-no-Taro Tadamoto
And Kamei-no-Rokuro Shigekiyo follow them".

Nagauta: "Washio-no-Saburo Yoshihisa
And Hitachibo Kaion have also followed their lord.
Leaving the town behind them."

Gidayu: "Now comes Musashibo Benkei
Attired as the leader monk
And bringing up the rear."

(The retainers come into the stage as the
recitation goes on. Benkei has a trumpet-shell
and a rosary in his hands.)

Nagauta: "They have at last arrived Ataka
As the sun-set bell sounds
And the cherry-blossoms
Fall in the breeze."

Yoshitsune (having arrived the main stage): It is said that
the past and the future of a human being can be
guessed by the present. I, Yoshitsune, who
have risked my life for my brother Lord Yoritomo
and have had three years of difficulty fighting
in the mountains, on beaches and on the water
-----.

- Ise: Sometimes he left himself at the mercy of the tempest of the sea and sometimes he fought his way among the deep snow of the mountain.
- Suruga: And he had such a hard time of it camping on the beaches of Suma and Akashi.
- Kataoka: By what a karma is it, that he has been reduced to the present situation after all his troubles and merits?
- Masuo: Good people usually suffer and the flatterers and slanderers prosper in this world.
- Kumai: My lord, though so wise, is not suited to the time.
- Kamei: And now he is guised as a humble mountain priest clothed in a linen coat, a hermit's cap, a black surplice and with a priest's cane in his hand.
- Washio: Though he, by appearance, has the might of bringing demons under, he is a refugee in reality.
- Hitachi: And is afraid of even woodmen and scarecrows. Is it that the divine providence can not be trusted?
- Nagauta: "So the followers lament
Over the misfortune of their lord
When Benkei preaches them."

Benkei: It's silly of you to shed tears.
If the divine is not to be trusted, we're
not to be called sinful, nor Lord Yoritomo,
the high. How care-free it is to look at the
water falling in a mountain spring. Ha-ha-ha.

Nagauta: "So preached,
They forget their sorrow for a while".

Gidayu: Just then, the village children come along
Raking up fallen leaves"

(Three children come into stage from the right
with panniers on their back and rakes in their
hands.)

Child I: Look, there are hermits. They'll be
decapitated by Lord Barrier Keeper.

II: The hermit that was killed the day before yester-
day looked hateful.

III: The one that was killed yesterday looked amiable.

I: Oh, don't talk of hermits.

II: Lord Barrier Keeper may hear us.

III: It'll be awful.

Gidayu: "And they advise each other
Not to talk, nor hear, of hermits".

Nagauta: "Lord Yoshitsune signs Benkei
To inquire then of the situation".

Gidayu: "So Benkei stands up and -----".

Benkei: You're children of the village? It's admirable of you to rake up the wind fallen leaves and gather herbs. I'd like to give you something. Ah, here it is ----- (Presenting them the fans of Suruga, Kumai and himself.) There are the special product of Kyoto and called the "castle fan". I'll give them to you, one for each.

Gidayu: "As Benkei throw the fan,
The children take them up
And seem much pleased with them."

Ben: Well, this pine-tree is very fine.
What is it called?

Child I: It's the pine-tree of Ataka, one of the attractions of the county.

Ben: Oh, is it? I've heard much of it
Well, do you know the nearest way to go to Hiraizumi in Michinoku?

Gidayu: "So demanded, the children willingly answers,
For they're" thankful for the fans."

Child II: There're three ways to Michinoku the upper,
the middle and the lower.

Ben: What about the upper way?

Child II: It is said that there are so many laws and regulations that one can't even take lodging at his own will.

Ben: And the lower one?

Child I: Well, it is by sea along the long beach of Echigo, ^{and} sometimes when the wind blows down Mt. Hakusan, the boats will be drifted far to the Sado island and will float for a year or two.

Ben: Well, then, the middle?

Nagauta: "Though there are perilous passes
Such as Oyashirazu and Koshirazu, -----".

Child II: It is the shortest way to Michinoku.

Child III: But, there's one thing very vexing.

Ben: What's that?

Child III: It is rumoured that Lord Yoshitsune and his nine retainers have set on a journey to Michinoku, in the disguise of so many itinerant monks so hermits are strictly inquired, you know.

Child II: Esquire Togashi-no-suke, Lord of the manor, who keeps this Ataka barrier, has built a barricade over the pine-grove there.

Child I: The watch is very close and hermits with features answering the description will be decapitated.

Nagauta: "One with a fair face with round eyes
And teeth a little projecting

And his head will be hung high on a pole."

Child III: One with a sun-burnt face, with prominent cheeks and shining eyes will be treated as Benkei, the strongest warrior in Japan.

Child I: There hermits were killed the day before yesterday and two, yesterday. Every day some will be killed, and often, five or seven in one day.

Child II: Though we've been told not to tell tourists about it, we advise you to take caution, for you've given us such fine fans.

" III: And you're ten in number, too.

" II: None of you will be safe if Lord Barrier Keeper finds you.

Children: You'd better go back at once, Mr. leader priest.

Gidayu: "So they go away biddin farewell."

Nagauta: "The party, surprised at the news, Stand stock-still not knowing what to do."

Yoshitsune: The rumour we heard on the way was true after all. Barriers have been set everywhere both on land and on sea. I am almost being sought with a big net spread all over the country. I cannot advance, nor retreat. It'll be a shame to live ignobly. It's been very kind of you all to have always taken part with me, whom the Providence even has foresaken. I'll be obliged to you and be glad to live with you in the next seven lives. Well, cut off my head and give it to Lord Yoritomo. Only, offer Kajiwara's head before my grave to please my soul.

Nagauta: "And he was on the point of unsheathing his sword.

And committing a happy despatch, ---".

Gidayu: "When Benkei clang to him and stopped him.

Other retainers all shocked, stood up and said."

Ise: It's only for you that we have disguised ourselves and sought for a refuge.

- Suruga: Now that you've made up your mind to kill yourself, we aren't at all afraid of Lord Yoritomo.
- Kataoka: We'll just violate the barrier, go to Kamakura and kill Kajiwara and his son.
- Kumai: We'll challenge all the Kamakura warriors and then go to the Hachiman shrine of Tsurugaoka and commit harakiri all together there -----.
- Masuo: To spite the Hachiman deity who can do nothing for our lord who looks up to him as the guardian god.
- Nagauta: "And they are just about to go,"
- Gidayu: "When Benkei glares at them and says -----."
- Ben: Are you mad, folks? Young people may well get agitated, but you, Kanefusa, have you lost discretion together with youthfulness? Why did you retreat at Koshigoe last year, if bluff is of use. And you, my lord, do you intend to waste all our devotion by committing a happy dispatch? If

you mean to let us die, to no purpose,
behead us first and then do what you
please.

Gidayu: "And he admonishes his lord,
With tears in his eyes."

Nagauta: "So Lord Yoshitsune and his brave
retainers,
Shed tears, moved by his words."

Yoshitsune: (Wiping tears) Well, what you say
stands on reason, Benkei. But it
seems that hard times are come to
me now. Today, February 20, I feel
myself unable to forward, nor to re-
treat.

Ben: I hear that Kishin of the Chinese Kan
dynasty saved his lord Koso by breaking
through the besieging enemy. Wait here,
folks. I'll go alone and tell the
barrier keeper that we are traveling
about soliciting contributions for the
building of the Buddhist Todaiji temple
in Nara. I'll blow the trumpet-shell three
times if I succeed.

Yoshi: And in case you fail?

Ben: Well, then, I'll blow just once to bid you good-bye. Then you will shelter yourself somewhere and wait for a favorable time. It's indeed trying to be snatched from the jaws of death. Mind, folks, and never be rash even if I blow farewell. I'll resent you very much if you hurry to the barrier to save me and so cause my lord a trouble.

Yoshi: I'm much obliged for your offer, but it'll be pity if you go alone and get into a scrape.

Ben: Oh, don't worry about it, please. I've made up my mind to do my best to succeed and blow the trumpet of triumph.

Nagauta: "Though he speaks with spirits,
He, too, is worried about the consequence."

Gidayu: "He goes with his heart left behind
For he'll have no chance to see his
lord again,

If he fails in the attempt. "

(Benkei goes off.)

- Nagauta: "Lord Yoshitsune follows Benkei
with his eyes,
And his retainers, too,
Feel as if treading on eggs,
Some bluffing, some dejected."
- Yoshi: We're to depend only upon divine power
now. Come, folks, let's offer prayers.
(He washes his hands and takes to
offering prayers.)
We now pay homage to the various
gods and deities of the sixty counties
of Japan.
- Hitachi: Especially to Hachiman enshrined at
Iwashimizu.
- Masuo: And to Tamonten of Kurama.
- Yoshi: I pray you to move the heart of the
barrier keeper and let him listen
to Benkei and overlook us.
- Nagauta: "As Lord Yoshitsune reads the Buddhist
sutra Fumon-bon,
The retainers, too, make addresses to
their guardian gods,
Some calling Shinto deities,
Some reading nannya or Kongo sutras,
And other reciting charms of Fudo.
It was a scene both sacred and moving."
(Yoshitsune and his eight retainers

makes a service of yabushi.)

Gidayu:

"The water running in the vale,
And the wind blowing over pine-woods
Sound very like the trumpet shell
And the nine wait impatiently
for the sign,

when the trumpet sounds in the distance,"

Nagauta:

"The party, stirred up at this ---."

Hitachi:

One blow is the sign of farewell.

Washio:

Three, that of success.

Nagauta:

"So they listen in vain,
For no more will sound."

Yoshi:

That's the sign of failure. This is
the end of everything.

Hitachi:

(Clinging to his lord.) How unre-
liable of you. Have you forgotten
what Benkei told you? You'll be
worthy of the name of a general only
when you live to accomplish your work.
I, Hitachibo-Kaison, shall present my-
self there and die in your place.

Yoshi:

Oh, no. It is not for myself that
I shelter myself and wait for a fa-
vorable time. My only desire is to

make you my attendants lords of
manors. I regret very much that
Tsugunobu died in my place at
Yashima and Tadanobu, at Yoshino.
Life won't be worth living for me if
I lose Benkei or any one of you.
Let me go there.

Ise: We won't cede even one step, if you
persist in it.

Suruga: We'll just die altogether at the
barrier house.

Kataoka: We'll follow you even to the Hades.

Yoshi: I am very much contented with your
proposal. Come, let's go now.

Nagauta: "So the lord, and his retainers
Hurry to the barrier house
Emboldened and braced up."

(The stage goes round when the party
retire to the right.)

SCENE II

The Barrier House.

(A housing in the middle. Silvered sliding, doors at the back. Gates on both sides of the flat stage. Barricades outside of the gates. The stage, in the whole, represents the barrier house of Ataka

Togashinosuke, the barrier keeper, dressed like a manor lord as he is, is looking at the subscription book Benkei brought and read.

Benkei, caught in a rope, squats on the left of the stage watched by four solders Gen-nai, Tonai, Heinai and Mitsunai. The stage stops.)

Togashi: Well, reverend traveller, you had better own that ~~you~~ you're Benkei, now that all has been revealed.

Ben: It's hasty of you to say so. How can I say that I am Benkei, when I am not.

Togashi: You audacious priest you'll be killed on the spot if you won't acknowledge it.

Ben: I'm stupified at your words. All right, it's misfortunate of me to have happened to pass by here. Kill me, if you please.

- Gidayu: "As Benkei shuts his eyes
And waits calmly to be killed, ----"
- Nagauta: "Lord Toshitsune and his retainers
Hurry in and stands in the garden."
- Yoshi: If you don't want to contribute for the
Todaiji temple, suffice it to say that
you won't. How did you dare to catch
our leader monk and rope him inspite of
his religious robe. We'll tell our main chappel
of this and ask to plead the Yamakura government
against you. You'll be punished, then, Esq.
Togashi, and it'll be too late to repent.
Let off the rope, will you?
- Nagauta: "As he approaches Togashi,
The soldiers surround him all round."
- Gidayu: "Benkei, surprised at this,
Glares at his lord and signs him,"
- Nagauta: "While pretending to doze."
- Togashi: You feigned hermits as ~~the~~ As the priest there
read this book as a contribution book,
I robbed him of it and found nothing about
contributions written in it. It's blasphemous
of him to have deceived both men and the
Buddhas by reciting "As we ponder upon
the reasons of the universe" and so on.
He certainly is the famous Benkei of Saito,

and I have committed no mistake by
switching him at the Shogun's order.

Yoshi: He surely looks like Benkei, for he is tall
and sumburnt. But, have you got any
further proof? -- Are not you prejudiced?

Togashi: Ha-ha-ha. It's so bold of you to
criticize me for my doing. Look at this likeness
of his.

Gidayu: "And showing him the picture ----."

Togashi: His looks, eyes, limbs, hight, the mole
by his left eye --- - all answer to this.
He can't escape now, can he?

Yoshi: As you've got Benkei's likeness, you must
have Yoshitsune's, too. Yoshitsune is the
author of the trouble, you know. You'd
better arrest one looking like Yoshitsune and
let go that leader monk.

Togashi: You are Lord Hangan. It's quite sure
without the picture.

Nagauta: "As the barrier keeper orders his soldiers
To arrest Yoshitsune,
The retainers puts their hands on the holds
of their swords,
For they think the life of their lord at
risk."

Gidayu: Benkei, approaching Yoshitsune,
Knocks him down and kicks him."

Ben: It's impertinent of you a young mountain guide
to forward yourself among older priests. You
told him to arrest one looking like Yoshitsune.
What, if you are. Though I am not so strong as
Benkei, I can scatter about three or five soldiers
without any difficulty. It was because I took
pity of you because you've got no parents, nor
any relation but the only one who neglects you,
that I let myself caught in a rope. You would
have been caught, if I were not.

Gidayu: "Ropes binding the body.
Can be unbound if one tries."

Ben: But the ropes binding round the fame can never
be taken off all through the history. Have you ~~forgot~~
forgotten your great purpose of travelling all
over the country and re-building the Todaiji
Temple? Stand up, and go on.

Nagauta: "You, fellow-priests,
Take him with you, please."

Ben: A monk has no master but the teachings of the
Buddha. The cap and the surplice, representing
the Buddha's teachings, are the only master to a
priest.

Gidayu: "I shall be retributed
For having kicked my master under my foot.
What a fear."

Ben: Now, young guide, I'm not making bows to you, but
to my masters, your cap and surplice. Forgive
me, please.

Gidayu: "As Benkei wept under the pretence
Of discretion for Buddhism,
The eight hermits, too
Wept for their lord."

Nagauta: "Togashi, though so strong-hearted,
Was moved much by this scene
And, after pondering for a while,
Jumped down from the verandah
And unbinding Benkei -----".

Togashi: You foolish hermits. You've fooled me by
pretending to be Lord Yoshitsune and his followers.
How can I, who am duty-bound to keep this barrier,
be without the real knowledge? I am sure you
have planned to make me arrest you, by disguising
yourselves as Lord Yoshitsune and Benkei, making
an artificial mole by the left eye, just in order
to befool me as revenge for having killed your
fellow hermits. It's blasphemous of you.

I should imprison you for fifty or a hundred days to punish you, but, as it would be in the way of searching for the real Yoshitsune and Benkei, I'll just let you go. Away, at once.

Nagauta: "'Away' he cries,
And the soldiers open the gate
To the relief of all the party
The lord, pretending not to be pleased at all."

Yoshi: We're not at all pleased, for we aren't Benkei, nor ~~Yoshi~~ Yoshitsune. You should be accused for having been so rude to hermits, but as you're a layman, I'd say nothing more to you. Are you sure you won't be sorry to have let us go?

Gennai: Shut up and go.

Soldiers: At once.

Nagauta: "Though they hurry in their hearts,
They walk by easy stages,
When one of the soldiers cries all of a sudden."

Heinai: Stop. There's an armour in your pannier, it seems.

Soldiers: Stop.

Nagauta: "As the soldiers flares up,"

Togashi: How smart you are in your fake. You carry armours to pretend to be Lord Yoshitsune and his party. There are two barriers kept by Inoue-Saemon and by Ueda-no-Hyoe on your way. I'm

sure you'll do them just what you've done with me. Take this certificate."

Gidayu: "And, giving them the travelling certificate-----"

Togashi: Go quick, now, for now that you've got this, no one will be deceived by you even if you pretend to be Yoshitsune and Benkei,

Gidayu: "As Togashi throws the certificate, Benkei, seeming not at all pleased -----"

Ben: You're so stingy not to contribute any money after detaining us so long for no purpose.

Ha, ha, ha.

Nagauta: "So they had a narrow escape
Treading on a lion's tail"

Gidayu: "Thanks to the braveness
Of both the lord and the followers."

Togashi: Forgive me, Hachiman, deity of warriors,
For having roped so devoted a man.

Gidayu: "No adversity"

Nagauta: "Could smash Benkei's faithfulness".

(Togashi rises the rope reverently to his head, when the curtain falls on the main stage with the sound of wooden clappers.

Yoshitsune and his eight retainers ~~xxxx~~ retire through the stage passage.

Benkei, left alone, takes his rosary out of his pocket and prays.)

Ben: Hail to the Buddha Marishiten, the Four
Devas and the various deities of all the directions.
Please favour Togashinosuke with divine protection.
(He takes up his pilgrim's staff and retires from
stage while treading in a posture named ropps.)

----- The End -----