

The Heroic Deed of the Genroku Period

Naganori Asano, Lord of Akō Castle and a man known for his goodness, unable to endure the persistently unfair treatment which he received from Yoshinaka Kira, the official overseer of ceremonies and a man of mean intent, drew his sword in protest against the latter in the Imperial castle of Edo. Because of this deed, Lord Asano was sentenced to death by disembowelment by the Shogunate. His faithful retainers, deeply discontented with this sentencing, made a plea to the Shogunate for Asano's re-establishment but they were unable to succeed in their endeavor.

Yoshitaka Ōishi, chief retainer of the Asano clan, and 47 other loyal retainers, rebelling against this political corruption and the government's inadequate measures, decided after long thought, to avenge the death of their lord. After much planning, at midnight, on December 14th of the 15th year of Genroku, (1702AD) they raided the mansion of Lord Kira and after a battle with Kira's retainers, they seized and beheaded him.

Their deed not only avenged the death of their Lord, but calmed the mounting discontent among the people towards the government. Abiding by the law of the country, they courageously took their own lives on February 4th of the following year. Their remains were buried beside the tomb of their lord and to this day the Tale of the Heroic Deed of the Genroku Period is handed down from generation to generation, deeply cherished by the Japanese people. This is why worshippers who come to pray for the repose of the souls of the Akō clansmen are unceasing in their devotion and will no doubt continue so in the future.