

*"... among men, the samurai."*

HERE AT LAST is an entertaining account in English of the historical mass seppuku (disembowelment) of the forty-seven ronin, or masterless samurai, shortly after the turn of the 18th century in the feudal Tokugawa days of old Japan.

The forty-seven ronin were ordered to commit seppuku for their vindictive slaying of a corrupt court official whom they held ultimately responsible for bringing about the death of their master, Lord Asano. Asano was the brash young daimyo from the country whose ignorance of and unfamiliarity with the changing ways of the Edo court led not only to his own seppuku but also to the complete ruin and dissemination of his family and clan.

Though based on an actual incident, many details have been lost to history, and, as a result, several versions of the forty-seven ronin story have been told. But the fact remains that they were given the death penalty for their deed, which, at the time, so embodied the Japanese's ideals of the noble samurai's devotion to his lord that the forty-seven ronin were enshrined at Sengaku Temple beside their beloved master. Thus came to a dramatic close the final chapter of what has been acclaimed the most famous vendetta in the annals of Japan.