

## Bushido Honor

Letter found on the bodies of the 47 Ronin (masterless samurai) who avenged the dishonor of their lord Asano Takumi no Kami by a court official, Lord Kôtsuké no Suké, signed by Oishi Kuranosuke, his Retainer and forty-six others, early 18th century

"Last year, in the third month, Asano Takumi no Kami (Lord of Asano) , upon the occasion of the entertainment of the Imperial ambassador, was driven, by the force of circumstances, to attack and wound my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké in the castle, in order to avenge an insult offered to him. Having done this without considering the dignity of the place, and having thus disregarded all rules of propriety, he was condemned to hara-kiri, and his property and castle of Akô were forfeited to the State, and were delivered up by his retainers to the officers deputed by the Shogun to receive them. After this his followers were all dispersed. At the time of the quarrel the high officials present prevented Asano Takumi no Kami from carrying out his intention of killing his enemy, my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké. So Asano Takumi no Kami died without having avenged himself, and this was more than his retainers could endure. It is impossible to remain under the same heaven with the enemy of lord or father; for this reason we have dared to declare enmity against a personage of so exalted rank. This day we shall attack Kira Kôtsuké no Suké, in order to finish the deed of vengeance which was begun by our dead lord. If any honorable person should find our bodies after death, he is respectfully requested to open and read this document.

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