

Manifesto of the Retainers of Asano Takumi

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[Patch of paper carried by Ôishi Sezæemon]

In the Third Month of last year, Takumi, because of the grudge against Lord Kira Kôzuke-no-suke, in charge of the duty of hosting the imperial envoys, and being probably hard to avoid the confrontation with him in the shogunal palace at that time, shed blood with his sword. Because of his extremely inappropriate behavior that showed no discernment of the occasion and place, he was ordered to commit *seppuku*, and the Akô castle and domain were confiscated. For the things abovementioned, all the retainers are overwhelmed with shame. The shogunal emissaries came from the capital to inform us that the castle and domain had to be surrendered and all the retainers had to be immediately dispersed. Because in the abovementioned quarrel he was seized by someone nearby and was not able to complete his vengeance against Lord Kôzuke-no-suke, Takumi in his last hours should have been overwhelmed by regret in the bottom of his heart. We retainers can no longer bear this situation. Although we retainers should restrain ourselves from expressing our indignation against a officer of ceremony of such an ancient family, it is nonetheless unbearable to live under the same Heaven with the enemy of one's Lord and father. For this reason today we force a visit to the mansion of Lord Kôzuke-no-suke with the sole intent to carry on the grudge of our dead Lord. After our death, if there would be someone investigating on this matter, we demand this letter to be taken into consideration.

Genroku 15 (1702), Twelfth Month

The Retainers of Asano Takumi-no-kami Naganori