

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

History: East Asian V3925

*Chûshingura* and the Samurai Tradition

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Spring 2002  
M/W 10:35-11:50

***Course Description***

It all began in the spring of 1701 when the daimyo of Akô was ordered to commit *seppuku* after drawing his sword in Edo Castle, and culminated almost two years later when a group of Akô retainers themselves committed *seppuku* as punishment for their vendetta to avenge the death of their lord. Over the following three centuries, the story has been elaborated in countless ways and multiple media, most famously in the stage and film versions of *Chûshingura*, the puppet play of 1748 that paved the way for the historical incident to become Japan's national legend. This undergraduate seminar takes a specific focus on the story of the 47 Ronin as a way of exploring two key themes in Japanese history in the early modern and modern periods. One is the transformation of the samurai estate from the elite ruling class into the dominant force in the modernization of Japan in the Meiji period (1868-1912), and then into a powerful legend and ideology that continues today to have a widespread influence both in Japan and throughout the world. The other theme is precisely this process of the working of legend in history. The recurring tension of “fact” and “fiction” in the story of the Akô Rônin highlights issues of history and historiography that are urgent today, when the line between history and myth is constantly questioned.

***Prerequisites***

Members of the seminar are expected to have taken either “Introduction to East Asian Civilizations: Japan” (V2361) or “Introduction to Major Topics in Asian Civilizations: East Asia” (V2002), or to have a comparable background in Japanese history and culture.

***Course Requirements:***

- 1) Regular class attendance, with careful preparation and thoughtful participation in class discussion. (35% of grade)
- 2) Participation in a team project to prepare as integrated Web-based segment on one of the following four themes: I) the making of Bushido in the early Edo period; II) the

sources and structure of *Kanadehon Chûshingura*; III) re-telling the story of the 47 Ronin in the West; and IV) films on the 47 Ronin. Depending on the size of the class, each team will consist of 2-4 members. The aim is to create a public Web site that will provide accurate information and critical analysis. Each team will first prepare a draft Web site on the assigned topic 24 hours before the primary discussion of that topic, as indicated on the syllabus below. The site must then be thoroughly revised and polished within ten days of the class discussion of the topic. (30%)

- 3) A final research paper on a topic of your choice, related either to Chûshingura or to the history of the samurai. 10-15 pages, due Friday, May 3. (35%)

EXAM OPTION: Those who do not wish to write an individual final research paper will have the option of taken a final examination, which will be given on Friday, May 3. It will be a three-hour in-classroom exam, and you will be allowed (in fact, are encouraged) to bring any notes that you have taken yourself on the course readings—but not any xeroxed copies of the assigned materials, even if you have written your notes on them.

**Books for Purchase:** Available at Labyrinth Books.

Ikegami, Eiko, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Yale University Press, 1995). Paper, \$20.95. [EA reserve: DS827.S3 I54 1995]

Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shôroku, and Namiki Senryû, *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, trans. Donald Keene (Columbia University Press, 1971). Paper, \$17.50.

Katsu, Kokichi, *Musui's Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*, trans. Teruko Craig (University of Arizona Press, 1988). Paper, \$17.95. [EA reserve: DS881.5 .K285 A3 1988]

Recommended for background and review: Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Paper, \$35.16. (Assigned sections are in reader.) [EA reserve: DS881.9 .D88 1998]

**Other Readings:** All other assigned readings will be made available in a xerox reader (indicated as "RDR" on the syllabus. In addition, all of the books for purchase, as well a copy of the xerox reader, will be available on reserve in the Starr East Asian Library (call numbers as above).

## SYLLABUS

**#2. Samurai as Image, Samurai as History (Monday, Jan. 28)**

Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* (The Overlook Press, 1995), pp. xiii-xxxiii. [RDR]

Henry Smith, "Five Myths About Early Modern Japan." In Ainslee Embree and Carol Gluck, eds., *Asia in Western and World History: A Guide for Teaching* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 514-522. [RDR]

Mikiso Hane, "'Forty-Seven Rōnin Incident,'" *Kōdansha Encyclopedia of Japan* (1983). [RDR]

Henry Smith, "Rethinking the Story of the 47 Ronin: Chūshingura in the 1980s," on the Web at: <[www.cc.columbia.edu/~hds2/47ronin.htm](http://www.cc.columbia.edu/~hds2/47ronin.htm)>

### **#3. *The Origins of the Samurai* (Wednesday, January 30)**

Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, stories from *Konjaku monogatari*: pp. 19-21 ("The Duel," cf. Ikegami 61-2, 73-5), 47-51 ("The Meaning of Revenge"), 71-79 ("Let Your Little Kid Be Stabbed"), and 88-90 ("The Silent One"). [RDR].

Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Yale University Press, 1995), ch. 2 (pp. 47-77).

Martin Collcutt, "The 'Emergence of the Samurai' and the Military History of Early Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 56:1 (June 1996), pp. 151-164. [RDR]

H. Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 12-19. [RDR]

### **#4. *Tales of the Genpei Warriors* (Monday, February 4)**

Helen McCullough, trans., *Genji & Heike* (Stanford University Press, 1994), ch. 9 (pp. 370-97). [RDR]

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, pp. 78-90.

Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*, pp. 56-66, 82-87. [RDR]

### **#5. *Warriors in the Era of the Taiheiki* (Wednesday, February 6)**

Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 157-87 (on Kusunoki Masashige) and pp. 188-203 (on Ko no Moronao). [RDR]

Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*, pp. 167-83. [RDR]

William Scott Wilson, trans., *Ideals of the Samurai: Writings of Japanese Warriors* (Burbank, CA: Ohara Publications, 1982), “The Regulations of Imagawa Ryoshun” (pp. 58-63) and “The 17 Articles of Asakura Toshikage” (pp. 66-72). [RDR]

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 4 (pp. 95-117)

**#6. Tokugawa Japan: The New System of Samurai Rule (Monday, February 11)**

Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1998), “Emperor, Shogun, and Daimyo,” pp. 21-26, “The Samurai Elite,” pp. 29-31. [RDR]

Michael Cooper, ed., *They Came to Japan--An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640*, pp. 40-47, 53-55, 93, 101-103, 141-2, 160-63. [RDR]

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, chs. 7 & 9 (pp. 151-63, 177-94)

David Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History* (M. E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 189-93 (Hideyoshi’s regulations) and 203-08 (“Laws of Military Households” (*Buke shohatto*)). [RDR]

**#7. Codifying the Way of the Warrior (Wednesday, February 13)**

**Draft of Segment I (“The making of Bushido in the early Edo period”) due noon Tues.**

Wilson, *Ideals of the Samurai*, “The 21 Precepts of Hojo Soun” (pp. 74-80) and “The Last Statement of Torii Mototada” (pp. 121-125). [RDR]

“Miyamoto Musashi: *Gorin no Sho* (Book of Five Elements),” in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 254-72. [RDR]

“Yamaga Sokô and the Origins of Bushidô,” *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. I (paperback), pp. 385-91. [RDR]

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 10 (pp. 197-222).

**#8. Genroku (Monday, February 18)**

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 12 (pp. 241-64)

George Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1943, 1962), ch. 22 (pp. 471-93) [RDR]

Donald Shively, "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, The Genroku Shogun," in Albert Craig and Donald Shively, eds., *Personality in Japanese History* (University of California Press, 1970), pp. 85-126. [RDR]

**#9. *Saikaku Tell New Tales of the Samurai* (Wednesday, February 20)**

Ihara Saikaku, *Tales of Samurai Honor*, trans. Caryl Ann Callahan (Tokyo: *Monumenta Nipponica*, Sophia University, 1981): "Introduction," pp. 5-7, 12 bot-16; "Umbrellas in an Ill Wind that Blew Their Lives to Shreds" and "The Midô Drum is Beaten—So Too the Enemy" (pp. 51-61, also see appendix 147-8); "Inspiration from a Gourd," pp. 71-4; "At Least He Wears His Youth's Kimono," pp. 96-101; "Far Better to Consider What She Said at the End," pp. 118-121. [RDR]

Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Univ. of California Press, 1999), pp. 23-44. [RDR]

Paul Gordon Schalow, "Male Love in Early Modern Japan: A Literary Depiction of the 'Youth,'" in Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (NY: NAL, 1989), pp. 118-128. [RDR]

**#10. *The Akô Incident* (Monday, February 25)**

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 11 (pp.223-40).

"The Forty-Seven Samurai: An Eyewitness Account," in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 304-21. [RDR]

**#11. *Debating the Akô Incident* (Wednesday, February 27)**

"The Forty-Seven Samurai: Arguments," in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 322-38. [RDR]

"Yamamoto Tsunetomo: *Hagakure*," in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 287-303. [RDR]

Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, ch. 14 (pp. 278-98)

**#12. *Chikamatsu's Version* (Monday, March 4)**

Donald Keene, *Nô and Bunraku: Two Forms of Japanese Theatre* (Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 123-28, 134 bot-143 mid, 147-149 mid, 152-54, 159-61. [RDR]

Donald Keene, "Variations on a Theme: *Chûshingura*," in James Brandon, ed.,

*Chushingura: Studies in Kabuki and the Puppet Theater* (University of Hawaii Press, 1982), pp. 1-13. [RDR]

Jacqueline Mueller, "A Chronicle of Great Peace Played Out on a Chessboard: Chikamatsu Monzaemon's *Goban Taiheiki*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 46:1 (June 1986), pp. 221-267. [RDR]

**#13. *Kanadehon Chûshingura, I* (Wednesday, March 6)**

**Draft of Segment II ("Sources/structure of *Kanadehon Chûshingura*;" ) due noon Tues.**

Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shôroku, and Namiki Senryû, *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, trans. Donald Keene (Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 1-103 (Introductions and Acts I-VI).

**#14. *Kanadehon Chûshingura, II* (Monday, March 11)**

Keene, trans, *Chushingura*, pp.104-180 (Acts VII-XI).

**#15. *Kanadehon Chûshingura on the Kabuki Stage* (Wednesday, March 13)**

James Brandon, "The Theft of *Chûshingura*: or The Great Kabuki Caper," in Brandon, ed., *Chushingura*, pp. 111-154. [RDR]

"*The Forty-Seven Samurai: A Kabuki Version of Chûshingura*," in Brandon, ed., *Chushingura*, pp. pp. 155-221. [RDR]

**SPRING BREAK, MARCH 18-22**

**#16. *What Sort of a Samurai Was Musui?* (Monday, March 25)**

Duus, *Modern Japan*, "The Social Impact of Economic Growth," pp. 54-57. [RDR]

Katsu, Kokichi, *Musui's Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*, trans. Teruko Craig (Univ.of Arizona Press, 1988), complete (or at the very least through p. 69).

Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*, pp. 273-77. [RDR]

**#17. *The Restoration Shishi* (Wednesday, March 27)**

Duus, *Modern Japan*, “The Foreign Threat,” pp. 61-66, “‘Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians’,” pp. 71-75. [RDR]

Ryusaku Tsunoda et al, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 591-603 (Mito School), 616-23 (Yoshida Shôin), and 624-37 (Fukuzawa Yukichi). [RDR]

Fukuzawa Yukichi, “*Kyûhanjô*,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, 9:1-2 (April 1953), pp. 304-29. [RDR]

**FRI., MARCH 30: Proposal for final research paper due by noon in EALAC office.**

**#18. *Ex-Samurai Reactions to the New Regime* (Monday, April 1)**

Duus, *Modern Japan*, “The End of the Samurai Class,” pp. 93-95; “‘Civilization and Enlightenment’,” pp. 99-102; “Peasant Riots and Samurai Rebellions,” pp. 103-08. [RDR]

Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Encouragement of Learning* [*Gakumon no susume*, 1872-76], trans. David Dilworth (Tokyo: Sophia Univ., 1969), pp. 35-40, 69-74. [RDR]

Ivan Morris, “The Apotheosis of Saigô the Great,” in *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975), pp. 217-275. [RDR]

**#19. *Western Versions of the 47 Ronin* (Wednesday, April 3)**

**Draft of Segment III (“Western versions of the 47 Ronin”) due noon Tues.**

Rutherford Alcock, *Capital of the Tycoon* (London, 1863), pp. 357-9. [RDR]

A. B. Mitford, “The Forty Seven Rônins,” in *Tales of Old Japan* (1871), pp. 15-41. [RDR]

Tamenaga, Shunsui, *The Loyal Ronins: An Historical Romance*, trans. by Shiuichiro Saito and Edward Greey (NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1880), pp. iii-x, 1-12, 256-71. [RDR]

James Murdoch, “The Forty-Seven Rônin,” in *A History of Japan*, vol. 3 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1926), pp. 218-37. [RDR]

**#20. *The Samurai Legacy in Late Meiji Japan* (Monday, April 8)**

Mori Ôgai, “The Abe Family” (*Abe ichizoku*, orig. 1913), in Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, pp. 341-79. [RDR]

“Nogi Maresuke (1849-1912)--The Emperor’s Samurai,” in Robert Jay Lifton, Shûichi Katô, and Michael R. Reich, *Six Lives/Six Deaths: Portraits from Modern Japan* (Yale University Press, 1979), pp.29-62. [RDR]

### **#21. *The Re-Invention of Bushidô* (Wednesday, April 10)**

Nitobe, Inazo, *Bushido, The Soul of Japan: An Exposition of Japanese Thought* (originally published Tokyo, 1899), chs. 1 (“Bushido as an Ethical System”), 15 (“The Influence of Bushido”), and 16 (“Is Bushido Still Alive?”). [RDR]

C. Cameron Hurst, III, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidô Ideal,” *Philosophy East and West*, 40:4 (October 1990), pp. 511-27. [RDR]

James Scherer, *What Is Japanese Morality?* (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Co., 1906), ch. 1: “The Forty-Seven Ronin,” pp. 3-22. [RDR]

Colin Holmes and A. H. Ion, “Bushidô and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 14:2 (1980), pp. 309-329. [RDR]

### **#22. *The 47 Ronin under Japanese Militarism* (Monday, April 15)**

“Fundamentals of Our National Polity,” in Ryusaku Tsunoda et al, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (NY: Columbia UP, 1964), pp. 785-795. [RDR]

Ivan Morris, “The Kamikaze Fighters: ‘If Only We Might Fall . . . ,’” in *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975), pp. 276-334. [RDR]

“‘The 47 Rônin’: The Most Popular Play in Japan Reveals the Bloodthirsty Character of Our Enemy,” *Life*, November 1, 1943, p. 52. [RDR]

### **#23. *Genroku Chûshingura, I* (Wednesday, April 17)**

**Draft of Segment IV (“Films on the 47 Ronin”) due noon Tues.**

VIDEO: Mizoguchi Kenji, *The Forty-Seven Ronin (Genroku Chûshingura)* (1941-2), Pt I.

Donald Keene, “Variations on a Theme: *Chûshingura*,” in James , *Chushingura: Studies in Kabuki and the Puppet Theater* (University of Hawaii Press, 1982), pp.13-21. [RDR]

Brian Powell, "The Samurai Ethic in Mayama Seika's *Genroku Chûshingura*," *Modern Asian Studies*, 18/4 (1984), pp. 725-45. [RDR]

**FRIDAY, APRIL 19: Draft of final research paper due by noon in EALAC office.**

**#24. *Genroku Chûshingura, II* (Monday, April 22)**

VIDEO: Mizoguchi Kenji, *The Forty-Seven Ronin (Genroku Chûshingura)* (1941-2), Pt II.

Darrell William Davis, *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film* (Columbia UP, 1996), ch. 6, "Genroku Chushingura," 131-77 (skim p. 159 ff). [RDR]

**#25. *Mishima Yukio and the Samurai Legacy* (Wednesday, April 24)**

"Mishima Yukio (1925-1970)--The Man Who Loved Death," in Robert Jay Lifton, Shûichi Katô, and Michael Reich, *Six Lives/Six Deaths*, pp. 231-65. [RDR]

Mishima Yukio, *The Way of the Samurai: Yukio Mishimo on Hagakure in Modern Life [Hagakure nyûmon, 1967]*, trans Kathryn Sparling (Basic Books, 1977), pp. 3-29 [RDR]

**#26. *The 47 Samurai in Postwar Film* (Monday, April 29)**

VIDEO: Inagaki Hiroshi, dir., *Chûshingura: The Loyal 47 Retainers* (1962).

Keiko McDonald, "Hiroshi Inagaki's *Chûshingura*", in *Japanese Classical Theater in Films* (Associated University Presses, 1994), pp. 247-56. [RDR]

**#27. *Samurai and the Ronin in Contemporary American Culture* (Wednesday, May 1)**

**TO BE ASSIGNED**

**FRIDAY, MAY 3: Final research paper due by noon in EALAC office;  
OR: Final exam; time and place TBA.**

**#28. *Final Roundup and Critiques* (Monday, May 6)**