

The Forty-seven Rōnin

The revenge of the 47 *rōnin* (masterless samurai), also known as the Akō incident, is a widely celebrated historical event that took place in the mid-eighteenth century. Enjoying a semi-legendary status, the story has been retold countless times in books, plays, films, and in animation. Forty-seven unique statues at Hōjūji pay tribute to the *rōnin* of Akō, who are considered the embodiment of loyalty, sacrifice, persistence, and honor. Although much of the history surrounding the incident is overshadowed by fictionalized lore, the connection with Hōjūji is real. Throughout the six months during which their leader Ōishi Kuranosuke (1659–1703) was in hiding in Yamashina east of Kyoto, the 47 visited Hōjūji several times. There, they could liaise covertly with their samurai supporters and gather the latest intelligence via sympathizers in the imperial court.