



Chushingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers): A Puppet Play

By Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shoraku, Namiki Senryu

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Chushingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers), also known as the story of the Forty-Six (or Forty-Seven) Ronin, is the most famous and perennially popular of all Japanese dramas. Written around 1748 as a puppet play, it is now better known in Kabuki performances. In the twentieth century, cinema and television versions have been equally successful. Donald Keene here presents a complete translation of the original text, with notes and an introduction that increase the reader's comprehension and enjoyment of the play. The introduction also elucidates the idea of loyalty. This traditional virtue, as exemplified in Chushingura, has never completely lost its hold on audiences, in spite of twentieth-century changes in Japanese society and moral ideas. Moreover, as Professor Keene points out, the excitement, color and violence expressed in the play may be considered the counterpoint to the austere restraint and understatement which are more commonly thought to be "traditionally" Japanese.

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Review

"Through his graceful, resourceful translations and his elegant, exhaustive scholarly books, [Keene] is almost single-handedly responsible for the current popularity of Japanese literature in English-speaking countries." - "The New Yorker"

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About the Author

Donald Keene is Shincho Professor of Japanese Literature and University Professor Emeritus at Columbia University. He is also President of the Donald Keene Foundation of Japanese Culture.

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