

The Trouble with Terasaka: The Forty-Seventh Rōnin and the Chūshingura Imagination

Henry D. SMITH II

Columbia University, New York, NY, U.S.A.

Most historians now agree that there were forty-seven rōnin of Akō who attacked and killed Kira Yoshinaka in Edo in the twelfth month of 1702, twenty-two months after their lord had been put to death for his own failed attempt on Kira's life. In the immediate wake of the attack, however, Terasaka Kichiemon—the lowest-ranking member of the league and the only one of *ashigaru* (foot soldier) status—was separated from the other forty-six, all of whom surrendered to the bakufu authorities and were subsequently executed. Terasaka provided rich material in the eighteenth century for playwrights and novelists, particularly in the role of Teraoka Heiemon in *Kanadehon Chūshingura* of 1748 (one year after the historical Terasaka's death at the age of eighty-three). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Terasaka became an increasingly more controversial figure in debates over his qualifications as a true "Gishi" (righteous samurai), and hence whether there were really "Forty-Seven Rōnin" or only forty-six. This essay traces both the literary transformations of Terasaka and the debates over his place in history, arguing that his marginal status made him a constant source of stimulus to the "Chūshingura imagination" that has worked to make the story of the Akō revenge so popular, and at the same time a "troubling" presence who could be interpreted in widely different ways. It is proposed finally that Terasaka's marginality may also hold the key to a reinterpretation of what really happened during those critical hours after the attack on Kira.

Keywords: TERASAKA KICHIEMON, TERAOKA HEIEMON, FORTY-SEVEN RŌNIN, AKŌ GISHI, AKŌ INCIDENT, CHŪSHINGURA, *KANADEHON CHŪSHINGURA*, *ASHIGARU*

In the early 1990s, a curious debate broke out in the small city of Akō 赤穂 on the Inland Sea, lasting for over seven years and breaking loose from its provincial venue on several occasions to win national attention in the popular weeklies and even on network television. The stakes were high, at least for the official tourist posture of Akō City, the home of the celebrated Forty-Seven Rōnin: was it really true, as charged by Yagi Akihiro

八木哲浩, professor emeritus of Japanese history at Kobe University, that there were in fact only forty-six rōnin? More specifically, did Terasaka Kichiemon 寺坂吉右衛門 (1665-1747), the lowest ranking of the forty-seven Akō retainers who attacked Kira Yoshinaka 吉良義央 (1641-1702) on the early morning of the fifteenth day, twelfth month, Genroku 15 (1702), really flee for fear of his life before the rest of his comrades surrendered peacefully to the bakufu authorities? Or, as Terasaka's defenders all believed, had he been dispatched on the orders of Ōishi Kuranosuke 大石内蔵助 (1659-1703), the leader of the league of revenge, as a secret emissary to take news of the success of the attack to Asano Daigaku 浅野大学 (1670-1734), the younger brother and heir of their lord Asano Naganori 浅野長矩 (1667-1702), whose vengeance they had at last consummated?

As it happens, this was only the latest chapter in a three-centuries-long back-and-forth competition among historians, ideologues, storytellers, and playwrights over the identity and significance of Terasaka, surely the single most contested figure in the complex history of the Akō revenge and its enduring cultural legacy as “Chūshingura 忠臣蔵” (after the puppet play *Kanadehon Chūshingura* 仮名手本忠臣蔵 of 1748). The reasons lie precisely in his status as the lowest-ranking of the forty-seven avengers, a foot soldier who straddled the line between samurai and commoner. As seen by the bushi elite, he was reduced to an expendable menial, but from the vantage point of the chōnin audiences who were the most ardent consumers of the Chūshingura legend, he could be a heroic striver, living proof that even the lowest could become an honorable hero through dedication and skill. Terasaka functioned as a literally pivotal character in both the history and legend, and as such helps to explain the enduring capacity of Chūshingura to appeal to so many Japanese over such a long period of time.¹ Since Terasaka could cut in different directions, he was thus a “troubling” figure who was often claimed and contested by rival audiences.

This essay attempts to delineate the pattern by which the various different conceptions of Terasaka emerged in different historical eras. I have adopted from Imao Tetsuya 今尾哲也 the notion of a Chūshingura “imagination” that worked to seize upon various themes in the story of the Akō revenge and reinterpret them in new media and in changing cultural contexts. Imao's theme was the severed head of Kira, the physical object that the avengers sought to acquire as their ultimate goal.² The foot soldier Terasaka Kichiemon by comparison occupied a far more marginal place within the overall story, but one that by its very marginality sheds much light on the changing structure of Chūshingura over three centuries.

THE SPECIAL PLACE OF TERASAKA KICHIEMON

The members of the Akō league of revenge were firmly united in their purpose to carry through on the intentions of their lord to kill Kira, a high bakufu official who had

insulted Asano in ways that remain unclear in the historical record. Asano attacked Kira in Edo Castle in the third month of 1701, but failed to kill him and was sentenced to death by seppuku the same day, while Kira himself was let off unpunished. The league considered this disposition an affront both to the honor of the Asano house and to their own personal honor as Asano retainers. But although the league was united in the goal of taking Kira's head, it was also an assemblage of disparate individuals who were often divided among themselves along complex lines that included family, personality, and particular ties with the late daimyo. Terasaka Kichiemon was set apart in two distinctive respects: he was of *ashigaru* 足輕 or foot soldier status, and he had a relationship with his commanding officer, Yoshida Chūzaemon 吉田忠左衛門 (1641-1703), that was different from that between any other members of the league.

The status of Terasaka as *ashigaru* sharply separated him from all the other Akō avengers. Even though his stipend was not much less than that of the other lowest-ranking members of the league,³ Terasaka lay below what Albert Craig has called the “fundamental cleavage” of the entire military estate into two distinct groups, those of “proper” samurai above (most commonly referred to as *shibun* 士分, or simply *shi* 士) and all those below, known generically as “*sotsu* 卒.”⁴ Just as the ranks of the *shi* were finely divided into many grades and stipend levels, so the large mass of *sotsu* (who outnumbered *shi* in most retainer bands) spanned a wide range, from hereditary warriors down to menial servants and guards hired on term contract. From the perspective of other *sotsu*, the *ashigaru* constituted a privileged elite, but within the military estate as a whole their place was highly ambiguous. Although in principle only *shi* could inherit their status, in fact some *ashigaru* inherited bushi status from their fathers, particularly in the late Edo period.⁵ In legal terms, *ashigaru* tended to be treated as urban commoners (*chōnin*), and were judged in the courts of the town magistrates (*machi bugyō* 町奉行) rather than those of the inspectors (*metsuke* 目付), but in practice there seem to have been many exceptions and blurring of lines.⁶ Differences by domain and by period were numerous.

In terms of military organization, *ashigaru* differed from proper *shi* in their organization into platoons under the command of a senior samurai known as the *monogashira* 物頭 or *ashigaru-gashira* 足輕頭. Terasaka's commanding officer Yoshida, age sixty-two, was the effective vice-chief of the league of revenge under Ōishi Kuranosuke and second in rank on the official list. Terasaka, however, who was age thirty-six at the time, was much closer to Yoshida than a normal *ashigaru* was to his platoon leader, in a relationship that approached that of personal servant or even quasi-family member. Terasaka served the Yoshida family from the age of eight in a purely personal capacity, and even after he formally entered Yoshida's *ashigaru* platoon, he continued to retain an intimate personal tie with Yoshida. (In later *kōdan* stories, it was even said that Yoshida found Terasaka as an abandoned baby, gave him a name, and raised him as if his own child.⁷) He was always by Yoshida's side, “like a shadow” according to one writer,⁸ serving as factotum and particularly as amanuensis, since he was a skilled writer. He was admitted to the league from an early point at Yoshida's request, and spent the final ten months before the attack in

Edo with Yoshida, leaving one of the key records of the league's preparations for the attack on Kira, with particular focus on the activities of Yoshida Chūzaemon and his son Sawaemon 沢右衛門 (1675-1703).⁹

One particular point of ambiguity about Terasaka's intimate relationship with Yoshida is whether he was indeed Yoshida's direct retainer, and consequently only a rear vassal (*baishin* 陪臣, *matamono* 又者) of Asano Naganori. This assertion was made first in the 1930s,¹⁰ and again by Yagi Akihiro in the debate of 1989-97, in which Yagi implied that since Terasaka had no direct personal loyalty to Asano, it was to be expected that he would flee after the attack on Kira.¹¹ In purely formal terms, however, Terasaka was clearly a full member of the Akō retainer band and a direct vassal of Asano. In this he was entirely different from personal servants (*komono* 小者) of the sort that some of the league members are known to have retained.¹² It might best be said that his status as an Asano retainer was strongly qualified by his place under Yoshida; in fact, such a sub-status was actually attached to his name (as a *katagaki* 肩書, to the upper right) on various of the lists of league members.¹³ It is also reasonable to assume that both his low rank and his personal tie to Yoshida resulted in a sense of personal obligation to the daimyo that was weaker than that of the more senior members of the league, and particularly of those who served Asano in a direct personal capacity. This does not mean, however, that such a sense of obligation was absent, or that it was not complemented, as with other league members, by a strong sense of individual honor as well as loyalty to the retainer band itself. Still, Terasaka was clearly in a special position because of his close subordinate tie to Yoshida.

Terasaka's first and most obvious claim to full membership in the league is his inclusion on the list of forty-seven names on the declaration of intentions (*kōjōsho* 口上書) that the Akō attackers left in a box on a pole in the Kira mansion when they attacked early in the morning on 1702.12.15.¹⁴ His name was also on the copy of the same declaration that was handed over later in the morning by the two of the rōnin, Yoshida Chūzaemon and Tomimori Sukeemon 富森助右衛門 (1670-1703), who were dispatched to report the attack to the bakufu chief inspector (*ō-metsuke* 大目付), Sengoku Hisanao 仙石久尚 (1655-1735). It was on the basis of this list that the bakufu allocated the forty-seven names among the four daimyo mansions into whose custody the rōnin were to be remanded pending a decision on their fate. The leadership group of seventeen was assigned to the mansion of the Hosokawa domain of Kumamoto, and ten each of the remaining thirty were assigned to three lesser domains. The even distribution is clear evidence that the authorities were working from a total of forty-seven rather than forty-six, and documentary evidence confirms that Terasaka was in fact assigned to the lowest-ranking group in the mansion of the Mizuno 水野 domain of Okazaki 岡崎.¹⁵

In the meantime, the others had marched on to the Asano family temple of Sengakuji 泉岳寺 in the Shiba 芝 area of Edo and offered the head of Kira before the grave of their master. When bakufu officials were dispatched by Sengoku to Sengakuji to request the rōnin to appear at his mansion in Atagoshita 愛宕下, they discovered that there were in

fact only forty-four rōnin at the temple and not the forty-five that they had expected (since Yoshida and Tomimori had remained at the Sengoku mansion). When told that the missing rōnin was Terasaka, the bakufu simply deleted his name from the Mizuno group, which as a result was reduced to only nine. When the rōnin arrived at the Sengoku mansion that evening, they were interrogated by Sengoku about various details of the attack on Kira. From this point on, from the official bakufu point of view, there were only forty-six rōnin, and only those forty-six were executed by seppuku forty-eight days later, on 1703.2.3.

The starting point of the Terasaka “problem” lies in the discrepancy between these two numbers, of forty-seven rōnin listed on the league manifesto and formally reported to the bakufu, and of the forty-six who were actually taken into custody and eventually sentenced to death. The problem was greatly complicated, however, and matters much confused by various statements of the league leaders that Terasaka had in fact not participated in the attack on Kira. In particular, this was what Yoshida Chūzaemon reported directly to Sengoku when the forty-six rōnin gathered at the chief inspector’s mansion that evening before being taken to the four places of custody. Sengoku interrogated Ōishi and Yoshida, the two league leaders, about a variety of matters concerning the attack on Kira. Near the end of the interrogation, Yoshida explained that Terasaka Kichiemon, whose name was on the list, “went together with us as far as the gate (*monzen made* 門前迄), but then he was nowhere to be seen (*aimie-mōsazu* 相見え不申); when we asked inside the gate whether anyone had seen him, all forty-six said that no one had.”¹⁶

It is today universally accepted by all who study the Akō incident, of no matter what persuasion, that Yoshida was not telling the truth, and that for whatever reason, the league leaders had agreed to a common position denying that Terasaka took part in the attack and claiming that he simply disappeared. Today we have far more plentiful evidence than was available to any of the various private individuals who took it upon themselves to stitch together the story of the Akō revenge in the months and years immediately following the seppuku of the forty-six. Since all discussion of contemporary political matters in print was strictly prohibited throughout the Tokugawa period, these accounts could only be circulated in manuscript form. The earliest of these accounts were by samurai writers, and were circulated largely through personal networks. Such chronicles are today often referred to as *jitsuroku* 実録, or “true account,” a term that invites confusion, however, since it most often refers to a later stage of evolution, that of the “*jitsuroku*-style novels” that grew rapidly in the last century of the Edo period and circulated primarily through commercial booklenders (most often peddlers) known as *kashihon'ya* 貸本屋. These latter-day *jitsuroku* were not “true accounts” at all, but historical novels that were rooted in particular political incidents of the Edo period and constantly embellished and expanded in successive manuscript renditions. Although a clear historical lineage may be traced from these early chronicles (best termed “*kiroku* 記録” in Japanese)¹⁷ to the later *jitsuroku*, it is best to draw a line between them here, and to stress

that these first private histories of the Akō incident had few if any literary pretensions, and almost no overall narrative structure. The early chronicles were composed within several years of the spring of 1703, while the events were still of recent memory, and numerous witnesses available for testimony. The pardon of Asano Daigaku and the heirs of the Akō rōnin following the death of the shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 in early 1709 led, as we shall see, to a “boom” in stage and literary productions about the Akō incident, and it was only after this point that the true “*jitsuroku*” style of historical fiction evolved, based on the earlier chronicles but now consciously adding fictional embellishments and functioning more as entertaining literary works than as first-hand compilations of historical records.¹⁸

Ten early chronicles of the Ako incident have survived until the modern period, of which the latest with a clear date is from 1708.¹⁹ Some of these were quite widely known, circulating in multiple copies, while others were virtually unknown until made available with the publication of *Akō gijin sansho* 赤穂義人纂書 in 1910-11, making it very difficult to trace their mutual influences. Only five of the ten authors are known, but almost all appear to have been members of the samurai elite with some sort of stake or personal interest in assembling evidence about the Akō revenge. Two are in a class that might be called “quasi-official,” compiled by those with some access to official documents. The more valuable of the two is *Kōseki kenmonki* 江赤見聞記 (“A Chronicle of Things Heard and Seen in Edo and Akō”), which although anonymous is clearly by a source close to the Asano family (as suggested by a common alternative title of *Kabishō* 家秘抄, “Digest of Family Secrets”), and includes numerous primary documents that are clearly authentic; it is now generally assumed to have been compiled by Ochiai Yozaemon 落合与左衛門, the chamberlain of Asano Naganori’s widow Yōzeiin 瑤泉院 (1674-1714). In addition, the anonymous author of *Ekisui renbeiroku* 易水連袂録 appears to have been a hata-moto retainer of the bakufu, with some access to government materials. All of the rest were written by outsiders, and tend to be lists of discrete pieces of information, sometimes quoted documents, sometimes rumors reported from elsewhere, all arranged in rough chronological order but often contradictory in content. They are of wildly erratic reliability as historical sources, but cannot be overlooked, if only as evidence as to what people of the time thought had happened.

Meanwhile, however, we do know of the limited availability to these early chroniclers of two primary documents that are especially relevant to the controversy over Terasaka. Most important was the testimony of the league leaders as set forth in a letter that was reproduced in *Kōseki kenmonki*, book 5. It is dated 1702.12.24, just nine days after the attack on Kira, and addressed to Terai Genkei 寺井玄溪 (1622-1711), an Akō domain doctor residing in Kyoto whom Ōishi trusted deeply and had designated as spokesman for the league after their deaths. The letter is signed by Ōishi, Hara Sōemon 原惣右衛門 (1648-1703), and Onodera Jūnai 小野寺十内 (1643-1703); the surprising omission of Yoshida has been explained as a way of assigning him personal responsibility for the failings of Terasaka that are cited in the letter.²⁰ The main body of the letter is short, report-

ing the success of the attack on Kira, and offering assurances that they are awaiting their fate calmly. A postscript then asks Genkei to keep relatives of the league informed, and adds this crucial statement about Terasaka: “he was there until dawn of the fourteenth but did not come [into] the [Kira] mansion, but he is of menial status, so it is of no particular concern” (*jūyokka akatsuki made kore aru tokoro kano yashiki e wa aikitarazusōrō, karokimono no gi zehi ni oyobazusōrō* 十四日暁迄在之処彼屋敷へハ不相来候、かろきものゝ義不及是非候).²¹ This document clearly confirmed what rumors must have spread about the content of Yoshida’s report to Sengoku on the Terasaka problem.

The other document that was known to at least one of the early writers was Terasaka Kichiemon’s own written account of the Akō revenge.²² The earliest version of the Terasaka report went only up until shortly before the attack on Kira, detailing the preparations in Edo.²³ Half a year after the attack, however, in the fifth month of 1703, Terasaka updated the report and sent a copy to Haneda Hanzaemon 羽田半左衛門 and Tsuge Rokurōzaemon 柘植六郎左衛門, both of whom were younger brothers of Yoshida’s wife Orin おりん (1646-1710) and retainers of the Kurume 久留米 domain in northern Kyushu. In the updated section, Terasaka gave a detailed description of the attack on Kira, focusing as always on the activities of Yoshida Chūzaemon, to whom Terasaka probably stuck closely throughout.²⁴ Terasaka described the aftermath of the attack in one brief sentence: “From there, we went to Shin-Ōhashi 新大橋 bridge, passed from Hatchōbori 八丁堀 to Tsukiji 築地, and proceeded to Sengakuji temple.”²⁵ At this point, Terasaka abruptly changed the subject and back-tracked to a summary account of Yoshida’s central role in making the preparations in Edo for the attack on Kira. Then in the final paragraph, Terasaka made this last crucial remark: “I also entered the mansion of Kōzuke-no-suke and fought there; during the withdrawal there were certain circumstances, so I parted company (*hikiharai no setsu, shisai sōrōte hikiwakaremōshisōrō* 引払の節、子細候て引別申候).”²⁶ Clearly Terasaka felt unable to explain those circumstances, for reasons about which we can only speculate. But assuming that the other elements of his account are accurate, this constitutes persuasive evidence that he participated in the attack and made it as far as Sengakuji.

Obviously one or the other was not telling the truth: three top leaders of the league writing to their closest confidant or the *ashigaru* Terasaka writing to trusted relatives of his master Yoshida. For samurai chroniclers, it was instinctive to assume that the elite samurai were truthful, and the lowly *ashigaru* mendacious. Seen now after three hundred years of debate, however, the reality of the situation seems plain to all: the leaders had agreed to cover up for Terasaka by saying that he did not take part in the attack—perhaps for his own sake, perhaps for their own, an issue to which I will return at the end. But in the first years after the Akō revenge, the evidence was fragmentary and the issue did not seem one of great moment, although the simple contradiction of forty-six versus forty-seven required some sort of comment on the part of all the chroniclers. Note, however, that the only early chronicler who had access to reliable information from both sides of the story—the author of *Kōseki kenmonki*—clearly came out on Terasaka’s side.

After first making parenthetical note of an odd rumor that Terasaka had stolen a haori jacket that another member of the league had taken off,²⁷ the author relates the account of Orin, the wife of Yoshida Chūzaemon, who must have heard the story from Terasaka himself. She said that after the attack on Kira, Terasaka was told that “it was all right to withdraw from the scene (*sonoba yori tachinokisōrōte kurushikarazaru no mune* 其場より立退候て不苦之旨),”²⁸ and so was given a copy of a document (presumably the manifesto of the league, which included Terasaka’s name), and returned to the family of Chūzaemon in Himeji 姫路, later accompanying them when the Honda 本多 daimyo changed domains, remaining with them in Murakami 村上 (Echigo 越後 province).²⁹ Even today, this seems the most straightforward and plausible account of Terasaka’s dismissal: he was simply told that it was “all right” to leave. But this does still not explain *why* he was asked to leave, and alternative legends quickly emerged to provide an answer.

IMAGINING TERASAKA’S SECRET MISSION IN EARLY CHRONICLES

Of the early chronicles that recorded the Akō incident, fully seven gave sparse or negative characterizations of Terasaka’s role in the incident, generally reflecting the official position of the league leadership (and presumably that of the bakufu, for which we have no direct evidence), that Terasaka was not involved in the attack on Kira and that he simply disappeared from the scene, for reasons that are never even broached in these accounts.³⁰ This suggests that the Terasaka “problem” in the years immediately after the incident was not even a problem, and that most agreed with the opinion that “he is of menial status, so it is of no particular concern.” In sharp contrast, however, the other three early accounts provided an entirely different perspective on Terasaka, presenting him not as an expendable *ashigaru*, but as an essential league member who was entrusted with a special mission—to carry word of the success of the revenge to relatives and supporters. The most modest form of the story, which is probably close to the historical truth, is that Terasaka was simply asked to return to the Akō-Himeji area, and to inform the various immediate relatives of the league members who lived there.

It was a much grander and more heroic mission, however, that ultimately became the single most widespread version of Terasaka’s tale, and remains alive and well today. It is essentially a single integrated narrative that takes Terasaka to Hiroshima 広島 to tell the story of the night attack to Asano Daigaku in person, and then back to Edo to surrender himself to the bakufu inspector Sengoku. There are reports of the time that Terasaka was dispatched somewhere as a messenger, but only one source—of dubious authenticity—proposes Hiroshima as a destination.³¹ The story appeared in its full-blown and probably original form in *Akō shōshūki* 赤穂鍾秀記, one of the first of the early chronicles of the Akō revenge. It was written by a samurai from the Kaga 加賀 domain named Sugimoto Yoshichika 杉本義鄰 and bears a preface date of 1703, the year of the seppuku of the Akō rōnin. Sugimoto had been in Edo throughout the period of the incident, and is known

to have supplied much information to Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢(1658-1734), a Confucian scholar for the Kaga domain who was compiling his own account (of which more shortly), in the castle town of Kanazawa 金沢.

Sugimoto dealt with Terasaka in three separate entries, of which the first related that when the rōnin gathered at Sengakuji to offer Kira's head before their master's grave, Ōishi Kuranosuke made a special request to the spirit of the late lord that Terasaka be admitted to "the ranks of the samurai (*samurai no retsu* 侍の列)," and that from that day on, in all matters he receive the same treatment as the others.³² This astonishing scenario—which is highly unlikely to have actually occurred—confirms what was likely a widespread sentiment that Terasaka had to be relieved of his *ashigaru* status and promoted to a proper samurai in order to be a true member of the league. This was the first step in the work of the "Chūshingura imagination" to transform Terasaka beyond his humble reality. Sugimoto's second mention of Terasaka was simply a brief remark that he had initially been assigned to the Mizuno mansion, but later removed from the list when Ōishi Kuranosuke ordered him at Sengakuji to go to Akō as a messenger. It was rather in the third and much longer passage that Sugimoto related the Terasaka story in full and elaborate detail. It began near the end, early in the fourth month of 1703, just two months after the seppuku of his forty-six comrades, when Terasaka appeared in Edo at the office of chief inspector Sengoku in order to turn himself in for his participation in the attack on Kira. He related what had happened in the meantime, explaining that he had been sent by Ōishi Kuranosuke as a courier (*hikyaku* 飛脚) to Akō and then on to Hiroshima to report to Asano Daigaku. He had been detained in Hiroshima by Daigaku (who according to later versions of the tale wanted to hear the story of the night attack told over and over, and even managed to get Terasaka an official post with the Hiroshima domain³³), but finally managed to make his way to Edo.

Terasaka then insisted to Sengoku that since he was guilty of the same crime as the other forty-six, he should also be sentenced to death by seppuku. Sengoku refused, saying that the case was closed, and asked him to leave. Terasaka persisted, even threatening suicide on the spot. Sengoku finally persuaded Terasaka to abandon his request for seppuku, and arranged to get him a job at Sengakuji tending the graves of the other forty-six. Out of worry that many people would come asking Terasaka to tell his story if they knew he were at the temple, the Sengakuji priests denied his presence there and he passed from public view. This story, which would be elaborated by others over the years with varying details, is surely apocryphal. It is highly unlikely that a mere *ashigaru* like Terasaka, who from all evidence was a modest and obedient type, could have mustered the effrontery to call upon chief inspector Sengoku with what was basically an impudent request. In addition, reliable historical evidence of Terasaka's later activities shows that he remained in the service of Yoshida's son-in-law for over two decades after the attack on Kira, and was never employed at Sengakuji, a tale that Sugimoto obviously invented. It makes for a wonderful story, however, which together with the ceremony of his promotion to full samurai before Asano's grave presented him as a full and respectable member

of the league.

The other important early account to depict Terasaka as an honorable member of the league was *Akō gijinroku* 赤穂義人録, completed in the tenth month of 1703, by the Confucian scholar Muro Kyūsō. As mentioned, Kyūsō was in Kanazawa in the employ of the Kaga daimyo, and one of his chief informants was none other than Sugimoto Yoshichika. Kyūsō, however, had other informants and different priorities from Sugimoto, so the two accounts differ in many ways. Kyūsō's work was a far more self-consciously integrated narrative, and would prove highly influential in the long run, particularly among Confucian scholars who could read the Chinese prose with ease, and appreciate the lofty eulogistic tone. The work was divided into an overall account of the Akō revenge, followed by a second volume of individual biographies of the league members, among whom Kyūsō included Terasaka. He made it clear that he considered Terasaka a full member of the league, describing how he had pleaded with Yoshida even before the surrender of Akō castle, that even though he was of low status, he had enjoyed much favor from their late lord and wished to join the league of revenge; Ōishi was impressed by Terasaka's sincerity and permitted him to participate. From this point, Kyūsō's version closely followed that of Sugimoto in *Akō shōshūki*, claiming that Terasaka joined in the attack on Kira and fought courageously, and then proceeded to Sengakuji, where Ōishi first promoted him to full samurai before the grave of Asano and then dispatched him to travel to Hiroshima to report the success of the mission to Asano Daigaku. He then returned to Edo and pleaded with Sengoku for a sentence of death, but was refused and instead provided a job as grave tender at Sengakuji. (In revising this account for his final 1709 version, however, Kyūsō had seen Terasaka's "Hikki" diary, which led him to delete both the graveside promotion and the appointment as grave tender, reporting that he had simply disappeared and returned to the Akō region after being rejected by Sengoku.)³⁴

The one other early chronicle to include details of Terasaka's special mission was *Chūsei gokanroku* 忠誠後鑑録, written by Ogawa Tsunemitsu 小川恒充 and completed in 1708.11, fully five years after those by Sugimoto and Muro Kyūsō. Ogawa was a Tsuyama 津山 domain samurai stationed in Edo, and evidently had a consuming interest in the Akō incident, collecting a huge amount of information to compile the longest of all the early chronicles.³⁵ In the eight volumes of the main body of his work, however, Ogawa only mentioned Terasaka once in passing, when describing Sengoku's interrogation of the league leaders; he provided essentially the same explanation that we saw in *Kōseki kenmonki*, reporting Yoshida to have replied that Terasaka was with them until they arrived at the Kira mansion the previous night but that when a roll call was taken later, he had disappeared. In a separate appendix, however, of "alternate stories" (*wakuse-tsu* 或説), Ogawa gave a detailed account of Terasaka's special mission to west Japan. According to this account, Terasaka was specifically instructed in advance of the attack to report back to the families of the other members in west Japan when the mission was over. He is said to have first ascertained that the other forty-six were all safe, and then

traveled to Yamashina, Kyoto, and Fushimi to report to families and supporters, and then on to Kameyama 亀山 (a small settlement near Himeji where a number of ex-Akō retainers had resettled) and finally in great secrecy to Hiroshima. After this, he is said to have returned to Edo shortly after the seppuku of the others to ask Sengoku that he be punished in the same manner, but Sengoku refused such a request to be treated as “proper samurai” (*rekireki no samurai* 歴々の侍).³⁶

These three early accounts clearly established the story of Terasaka’s mission to Hiroshima and subsequent return to Edo to beg that he be executed as a central theme in his evolving legend. It was essentially a story that emerged out of both a need to explain his apparent exclusion from the league by according him an essential and honorable mission, and to demonstrate his willingness to die for his lord. It is also very much a bushi type of imagination at work, keeping Terasaka in his place (he is after all firmly denied the privilege of seppuku by Sengoku) while allowing him to remain within the league. It remains uncertain, however, how widely this story spread in the early eighteenth century, even though the three accounts in which it appeared seem to have been among the most influential of the early histories of the Akō incident. It is particularly revealing to consider the way in which Terasaka’s story was told in *Sekijō gishinden* 赤城義臣伝, a substantial history of the Akō incident that was compiled by a samurai named Katashima Takenori (Shin’en) 片島武矩(深淵) and published as a woodblock-printed book in Osaka in 1719 on the seventeenth death memorial of the forty-six rōnin. Since it was strictly forbidden to publish printed accounts of the incident, the book was quickly banned, but not before a large number of copies had been sold simultaneously in several cities.³⁷ It was the first time that the real names of the Akō rōnin had appeared in a printed book, and would be the last time until the 1850s.

Considering that Katashima included both Sugimoto’s *Akō shōshūki* and Muro Kyūsō’s *Akō gijinroku* (but not *Chūsei gokanroku*) among the twenty-odd sources that he consulted (of which only five are extant today), it is remarkable that he made no mention whatsoever of the report of Terasaka’s mission to Hiroshima, or of his return to Edo to confess to Sengoku.³⁸ He rather introduced an episode found nowhere else in the surviving chronicles, in which Terasaka arrives late at the house of Horibe Yahei 堀部弥兵衛 (1627-1703)—in reality that of his son Yasubei 安兵衛 (1670-1703)—one of the three gathering points for the attack, having been delayed while attending to personal business of his master Yoshida Chūzaemon. Horibe’s wife insists that he have some celebratory sake and bird meat as a send-off to battle—from a pun on “*tori* 鳥” (bird) and “taking a head to win a reputation” (*kubi o torite na o toritamau* 首をとりて名をとり玉ふ). This delays Terasaka even more, so that by the time he reaches the Kira mansion, all his comrades are inside fighting and the gates are shut tight, while various night guards of the city government are milling about. Fearing he looks suspicious, Terasaka leaves and wanders around Ryōgoku Bridge 両国橋 before he disappears, no one knows where.³⁹ This sad tale turned Terasaka into a pathetic victim of fate rather than a heroic messenger.

In a later episode in Katashima’s work, the matter of Terasaka came up again when

Yoshida and Tomimori reported the attack to chief inspector Sengoku; when asked if any of the members had left the group, they said that by the time of the attack on Kira, Terasaka had already been sent off on personal business of his superior Yoshida Chūzaemon, so that only forty-six entered the Kira mansion.⁴⁰ This version basically combined the official position of the league leadership with a highly attenuated form of mission. In a still later passage, Katashima admitted his own confusion over the whole matter of Terasaka in a long note about whether there were really forty-six or forty-seven samurai.⁴¹ He noted that some say forty-six, some say forty-seven, and there seems to be no consensus on the matter. He observed that the evidence was conflicting; for the first time, given a wide range of contradictory evidence, the matter of Terasaka was coming to be seen as a troubling historical problem. But in the end, the most notable feature of Katashima's account is that Terasaka appeared as he does in most of the early chronicles, as someone who simply disappeared, and for no special reason. The heroic tale of a special mission to Hiroshima would become dominant only a century later.

A quick “reality check” may be in order at this point. Is it possible that the historical Terasaka Kichiemon really went to Hiroshima to relate the events of the night attack to Asano Daigaku, and then back to Edo to ask chief inspector Sengoku that he be put to death? I will return finally to the matter of what most likely did in fact happen, but suffice it to say that while not impossible, this scenario is highly implausible, and no direct evidence for it has ever been discovered. As a story, however, it is a key early example of the “Chūshingura imagination.”

THE “AKŌ-MONO BOOM” OF 1710: TERASAKA ON STAGE

A dramatic leap in the popular imagination of the Akō incident occurred in a remarkable burst of popular culture that culminated in the latter half of 1710. This boom in “Akō-mono” (works on the Akō incident),⁴² particularly on the kabuki and puppet stages in the Kamigata 上方 region (of Kyoto and Osaka), came in the wake of the death of Tsunayoshi in 1709.1 and the subsequent pardon of the heirs of the rōnin and of Asano Daigaku, whose restoration to his former post as a bakufu retainer on 1710.9.14 signaled the effective end of the entire incident.⁴³ These circumstances resulted in a new freedom to talk about the Akō incident, if only in the highly indirect form of literary and theatrical works in which the setting was displaced back in time three or four centuries, and the names of the protagonists changed (albeit in ways so transparent as to fool no one). Whereas the Akō incident itself had occurred in the shogunal capital of Edo, and had produced manuscript chronicles authored by samurai, this new burst of cultural imagination was rather the product of Kamigata chōnin culture, representing an entirely new lineage and one that would prove critical to expanding the “capacity” of Chūshingura.

The play that triggered the boom was a kabuki entitled *Onikage Musashi abumi* 鬼鹿毛武藏鑑, which opened at the Shinozuka Shōmatsu 篠塚庄松 theater in Osaka at the

beginning of the sixth month in 1710 and ran for fully 120 days, five times as long as usual.⁴⁴ Details of the content of the play do not survive, but like the jōruri of the same name to which we will turn shortly, it was set in the “world” (*sekai* 世界) of Oguri Hangan 小栗判官, a semi-legendary military hero of the fifteenth century whose tale was familiar from earlier legends and plays.⁴⁵ It was followed by two successive kabuki productions in Kyoto that were set in the world of the *Taiheiki* 太平記, the military chronicle of the Nanbokuchō era of the fourteenth century. The first was *Taiheiki sazureishi* 太平記さずれ石, followed by a sequel *Sazareishi go Taiheiki* 碓後太平記, probably in about the seventh to the ninth months.⁴⁶ From a surviving summary of the contents, we know that a character derived from the historical Terasaka Kichiemon played a major role in the latter play.⁴⁷ Known as “Kodera Kichizaemon 小寺吉左衛門,” he was played by Kataoka Nizaemon 片岡仁左衛門 (1656-1715), one of the leading Kamigata kabuki actors of the day—a good indication of the importance of the role.

In *Sazareishi go Taiheiki*, Kodera Kichizaemon participates in the attack on the enemy, Kō no Moronao 高師直, after which he leaves to report the news back to Lady Izumo



Figure 1. In the final scene of the kabuki play *Sazareishi go Taiheiki* (1710), Kodera Kichizaemon presents the head of Ōta Taizen before the other rōnin as they prepare for seppuku, in the hope that he will be permitted to die with them. From Nishizawa 1851, p. 252.

出雲の前, the widow of their lord En'ya Hangan 塩谷判官, who remained in the provinces. Before returning to the eastern capital (here Kamakura, standing in for the historical Edo), he slays a treacherous En'ya retainer named Ōta Taizen 太田大膳 (modeled on the historical Ōno Kurobei 大野九郎兵衛, and in turn the prototype of the later Ono Kudayū 斧九太夫 in *Kanadehon Chūshingura*) who had been making advances on Lady Izumo. Hurrying back east, Kichizaemon appears at the daimyo mansion where his comrades have already assembled to perform seppuku, and asks the official in charge that he be sentenced to die with them. The official consults the league leader “Ōgishi Kunai 大岸宮内,” who says he thought Kichizaemon had run away and hence seppuku is out of the question. Kichizaemon replies that he did indeed retreat to the provinces to report the news, but realized that his honor as a samurai would not be fulfilled unless he died with the rest, so he had returned. He then opens the straw bundle under his arm and presents Kunai with the trophy head of Ōta Taizen, repeating his request to join them in suicide (see illustration in Figure 1). Kunai continues to refuse, saying that Kichizaemon will have a chance to die another time.

Just as Kichizaemon is getting huffy about the matter, a messenger brings news of the pardon of the heirs of the league members and the transfer of En'ya's fief to his younger brother—a clear reference to the recent restoration of Asano Daigaku.⁴⁸ In this moment of joy, the league members manage to dissuade Kichizaemon from his wish to join them in death, urging that “Life is difficult and death easy, so please remain alive” (*Shō wa katashi, shi wa yasushi, hira ni todomaritamae* 生はかたし死は易しひらにとゞまりたまえ).⁴⁹ And so the play ends. The implication is that by failing to join the league in death, the lowest-ranking member has actually chosen the more courageous option. Denied dying like a samurai, he is encouraged to live as a samurai. It is a clever calculus for dealing with the troublesome *ashigaru*, who thus emerges as a hero on the popular stage. In this early stage version of *Terasaka*, we see the direct influence of *Akō shōshūki* story of his mission to take the news of the revenge to Asano kin in the provinces (here replacing the younger brother with the widow), and of his subsequent frustration in seeking to join the league in seppuku. In the kabuki production, however, *Terasaka* is made into a climactic starring role at the height of the 1710 *Akō*-mono boom, so that his historical marginality is transformed into a dramatic centrality.

A curious twist is added to the story of Koderu Kichizaemon by combining *Terasaka*'s life with elements from the biography of an entirely different member of the league, Fuwa Kazuemon 不破数右衛門 (1670-1703). When traveling west to report the success of the revenge, Kichizaemon encounters his father “Kichinai 吉内,” who calls him a coward for fleeing the scene of the attack. Learning that Kichizaemon in fact plans to return east, Kichinai commits seppuku to encourage his son to do the same. This seems clearly to be taken from the life of Fuwa, who as we shall see continued to overlap with *Terasaka* in subsequent plays as well.⁵⁰ Fuwa had a unique profile in the *Akō* league of revenge, in that both he and his father Okano Jidayū (岡野治太夫, later taking the name Sakura Shinsuke 佐倉新助) had left the *Akō* retainer band and become a *rōnin*.⁵¹ Hearing the

news of the palace attack, Okano had rushed to Akō with two other ex-retainers of Asano and asked to join Ōishi and the others in defending the castle, but all were refused. His son Kazuemon (who had been adopted into the Fuwa family) persisted in trying to gain admission to the league despite his preexisting rōnin status, as a way of making up for his previous misbehavior. Ōishi finally relented, admitting him into the league, and he performed as one of the most ferocious fighters during the attack on Kira.⁵² In *Sazareishi go Taiheiki*, however, the traces of Fuwa are faint, appearing only in the figure of his defiant father.⁵³

Fuwa's father comes through much more clearly in another crucial play of the Akō boom of late 1710, a jōruri by the already-famous playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653-1724) entitled *Goban Taiheiki* 碁盤太平記.⁵⁴ The Terasaka character, here named "Teraoka Heiemon 寺岡平右衛門" (which would be revived almost four decades later in *Kanadehon Chūshingura*) but usually addressed by the familiar nickname of "Okahei 岡平" (itself a mark of his subservient status) here plays a truly pivotal role, perhaps the single most important character, dominating the entire first third of the play. As the play opens, he appears as a servant in the household of "Ōboshi Yuranosuke 大星由良之介" (another name that would reappear in *Kanadehon*), and receives a succession of letters, all from members of the league of revenge. He plays dumb and hands the letters over to Yuranosuke's son Rikiya 力弥 (also retained in *Kanadehon*, for the historical Ōishi Chikara 大石主税 [1688-1703]), claiming "As you know, I grew up illiterate, so I'm as good as blind when it comes to reading names." Then still another messenger comes, this time from their mortal enemy Kō no Moronao. Okahei suddenly turns furtive, and when the messenger asks for a receipt, Okahei writes it out in bold calligraphy. After the messenger leaves, he carefully reads the long and densely written letter by the light of a window, and then destroys it. Rikiya, who has been watching from the shadows, concludes that Okahei has not only lied about being illiterate, but that he must be a spy for the enemy, Moronao, so he draws his dagger and inflicts a mortal wound on the hapless servant. At this point, Yuranosuke returns home and reveals that he knew Okahei was a spy, but he had let him live in order to send back false reports to Moronao. Okahei, who has been listening in agony, tells his true story, which begins, significantly, with his father:⁵⁵

My father served our former lord as an archer. His name was Teraoka Heizō 平蔵. I am Teraoka Heiemon. Years ago, when I was nine, my father was deprived of his stipend through an error in the survey of the clan salt flats. We were left without roots but became foot soldiers out of a sense of duty, never swerving from the path of loyalty. . . . Then last year, as soon as we heard that our lord had died, my father and I stationed ourselves at the front gate of his castle. We had raced there to show the Teraokas' loyalty as Lord Enya's archers. We hoped that by dying on the spears of the enemy we would earn a name for ourselves and repay our debt to our lord. We begged the clan not to surrender the castle but were driven away. . . . The

hopes of my father Heizō, an old man of seventy, were dashed. He said, “Let’s go to the other world and serve our master. But we’ll have nothing to say for ourselves if we meet him empty-handed. Take Moronao’s head and bring it afterwards as an offering.” This was the dying wish of my father who cut open his belly a year ago this month. I resolved that I alone would avenge our lord.

This is a rough approximation of the story of Fuwa and his father, except that here the son seems blameless of any misconduct, and the father takes his own life. In this way, two distinctive types of marginality within the samurai class were fused into a single character, the vertical status marginality of the low-ranking *ashigaru* Terasaka, with the more horizontal marginality of those dismissed from the retainer band for past malfeasance. What the two have in common is a desperate desire to overcome their marginality through super-loyalty and superior performance. In the case of the historical Fuwa, the performance was proven by his aggressive swordsmanship in the attack on Kira, taking more lives than any other member of the league. The attribution of advanced skills in reading and writing to the lowly Okahei in *Goban Taiheiki*, whether so intended, is in fact testimony to the historical importance of Terasaka as Yoshida Chūzaemon’s amanuensis, leaving one of the most detailed and informative records of the preparations for the attack on Kira.

In *Goban Taiheiki*, there remains one last critical function for the dying Okahei to perform, namely the provision of crucial information about the plan of the enemy’s mansion that would be essential to the success of the attack. As Okahei explains in his death agony, he had first become a servant in Moronao’s mansion in order to gain information, but was forced to become a counter-spy against his own secret leader, Yuranosuke, taking advantage of the situation to feed false information to the enemy. This opportunity for such ingenious espionage is something that was obviously never afforded to the historical Terasaka, confirming the message that those of low birth must be particularly clever in order to get ahead. The final contribution of the dying Okahei, who can no longer speak, is to trace out the plan of the enemy’s mansion on the grid of a go board (the “*goban*” in the title of the play) that Rikiya conveniently supplies. After Okahei’s death, Yuranosuke recognizes the significance of his contribution:⁵⁶

Thanks to what you told us just now, many will achieve their goal. In this respect you are worth a thousand soldiers. You may be a foot soldier, but in the next world you will stand with us before Lord En’ya as our equal. . . . You may not be able to join us in the actual vendetta, but I shall add you and your father to our number, and we shall leave to posterity our names as forty-seven loyal samurai. Take this as commendation in the other world and announce it to your father. How hard it is to lose a good man!

This inclusion of Terasaka in the league despite his death prior to the attack was neces-

sary to counting him as one of the “forty-seven men,” a number that quickly came to have an almost magical power in literary works on the Akō revenge, even before it was finally established by *Kanadehon Chūshingura* as unshakable through the linkage with the forty-seven characters of the kana syllabary.⁵⁷

The final work from the 1710 Akō boom in which a version of Terasaka played a major role was the jōruri *Onikage Musashi abumi* by Ki no Kaion 紀海音 (1663-1742), the chief rival of Chikamatsu as a writer for the puppet theater at the time. Presumably modeled to some extent after the kabuki of the same name that had launched the wave of Akō productions in the sixth month, Kaion’s play used the same world of Oguri Hangan, and bears no resemblance to Chikamatsu’s *Goban Taiheiki*.⁵⁸ In particular, the Terasaka-derived character is utterly different, and provides evidence of the wide possibilities offered by this ambiguous and marginal figure. Here he appears as “Terai Kichizaemon 寺井吉左衛門” in the second act, in which the retainers of Oguri Hangan, who has just committed suicide following his confrontation with Yokoyama 横山, gather at his gravesite at Fujisawa temple 藤沢寺 (Yugyōji 遊行寺 in the legend) awaiting the arrival of Oguri’s widow Terute 照手の姫 bearing his corpse.⁵⁹ Just before they arrive, a furtive figure named Fujino Kajiemon 藤野梶衛門 appears to worship at the grave.⁶⁰ Fujino was modeled after none other than Fuwa Kazuemon, as soon becomes clear when he asks to speak to Terai Kichizaemon, a league member with whom he is friendly. They speak, and Kichizaemon agrees to intercede by delivering to league leader Ōgishi Kunai a petition from Kajiemon to be admitted to the league. The petition explains that Kajiemon had earned his lord’s displeasure and been dismissed as retainer. He had begged to be pardoned, but now that their lord was dead, his only hope was to die with the league of revenge, and take his plea to their lord in the netherworld.

Kichizaemon takes the petition to Ōgishi, who is reluctant to add any more members to the league, particularly one dismissed by the lord, whereupon Kichizaemon asks if he might intercede and proceeds to tell a strange story. The true reason for Kajiemon’s dismissal from the domain, he reveals, began five years ago, after Kichizaemon’s older brother “Kichizō 吉蔵” had just died of illness and been buried. Kajiemon had recently acquired a new sword that he was anxious to try out on a real body, but he could not find an appropriate corpse. So he began searching among temple cemeteries for fresh graves and unwittingly came across that of Kichizō, whose corpse he dug up and cut to pieces with his new sword. Just as Kichizaemon was about to take his revenge on Kajiemon for this atrocious insult to his brother, Kajiemon was dismissed by the lord and set adrift. Kichizaemon realized that although Kajiemon was his brother’s enemy, his behavior was also perhaps the sign of true samurai spirit. And now several years later, he is beginning to understand Kajiemon’s feelings, and would not want his own grudge to exclude Kajiemon from the league. Now able to see that his own shame has become Kajiemon’s deep regret, Kichizaemon is filled with compassion, and urges that Kajiemon be admitted even if he himself has to give up his own place in the league. Ōgishi Kunai is pleased by this mutual accord, and asks the two to work together. Kajiemon kneels

before the grave to beg forgiveness, and when he raises his head, the response comes from the world beyond: the lord is pleased, and Kajiemon is forgiven and restored to his post of 200 koku.

In this wonderfully imaginative story, Ki no Kaion did not insert isolated elements from Fuwa's life into the Terasaka character as Chikamatsu had done in *Goban Taiheiki*, but he rather kept the two characters wholly separate while interlocking their fates in a provocative way. For Fuwa, he drew directly on existing tales, starting with the dramatic scene of forgiveness by his lord from the grave, which appears from an early point in Muro Kyūsō's *Akō gijinroku*. But Fuwa was also known as a bold and skilled swordsman who enjoyed testing new swords on dead bodies, and the story that he had been dismissed by his lord for digging up a grave to find a fresh corpse may have recently appeared in print.⁶¹ The twist that the corpse was none other than the brother of Terasaka (now Terai) was entirely the playwright's ingenuity. Kichizaemon here is never described as low of rank—indeed, he would seem to be one of the league leaders. But he is in a strange dilemma, torn between the hatred that he should feel for Kajiemon as the defiler of his brother's corpse, and admiration for his prowess as a warrior. Kichizaemon's mediating role in getting Kajiemon admitted to the league is a grand gesture of forgiveness, much like that of Ogishi Kunai himself. Rather than loyal or heroic, Kichizaemon stands for the wholly different qualities of compassion (*nasake* 情け) and mutual support (*aimi tagai* 相身互い) that were also often touted as bushi virtues in the Edo period. It is another example of the versatility of the Terasaka model at the hands of imaginative playwrights.

NAMIKI SŌSUKE AND THE APOTHEOSIS OF TERASAKA ON STAGE

The culmination of the various formations of Terasaka on stage came at the hands of the jōruri playwright Namiki Sōsuke (並木宗輔, “Senryū 千柳” after 1745; 1695-1751), in two successive jōruri on the Akō incident, *Chūshin kogane no tanzaku* 忠臣金短冊 of 1732 and *Kanadehon Chūshingura* of 1748.⁶² In the two decades following the Akō-mono “boom” of 1710, there had appeared a number of novels and kabuki that dealt with the Akō incident, but none of them had any real staying power, and in the case of the kabuki, little documentation of their contents survives. Sōsuke, who had been a teenager at the time of the 1710 productions, turned mainly to the jōruri of that year in fashioning his new plays, suggesting that little of interest had appeared in the intervening decades.

For *Chūshin kogane no tanzaku*, the “world” chosen was that of Oguri Hangan, following the precedent of *Onikage Musashi abumi*, and the plot drew on both of the earlier jōruri by Chikamatsu and Ki no Kaion to create a wholly new and original work. The Terasaka character, now named “Terasawa Shichiemon 寺沢七右衛門,” appears in Act 2, eager to join the league, but denied because of his low rank. In need of money to travel

east, he feigns illness and persuades his wife to sell her daughter (his step-daughter) to the Shimabara 島原 brothel in Kyoto in order to buy medicine for him. (This will be recognized as the prototype for the sale of Okaru お軽 by her father in *Kanadehon* to enable her husband Kanpei 勘平 to join the league of revenge.) The wife and daughter catch him sneaking from his sickbed to steal the money and accuse him of deceit, whereupon he reveals his true intentions and wins their understanding.

Shichiemon then travels east and manages to make his way into the enemy's mansion (just as Okahei in *Goban Taiheiki* had done), posing as a lowly sandal-tender (*zōritori* 草履取). He aids the escape of Hayano Kanpei 早野勘平 (a character who appears for the first time in this play, and would go on to star in *Kanadehon*), a member of the league who has foolishly burst into the mansion and tried to kill the enemy on his own. At the time of the attack on the enemy at the end of the play, Shichiemon draws on his experience as a spy to provide the crucial information on the enemy's hiding place, just when all seems lost. These pivotal contributions to the success of the mission echo the role of Okahei in *Goban Taiheiki*, with the crucial difference that Shichiemon survives to fight in the attack and presumably to go on to join the rest in honorable seppuku—although we cannot be absolutely sure, because the final seppuku is omitted from the play itself, as it would be in *Kanadehon* as well. In these ways, Shichiemon is largely the successor of Okahei, relying on his resourcefulness and level-headedness but meeting with a much less tragic end. Note also that the Terasaka character has now completely broken away from the Fuwa motif of atonement for past misconduct, except that this role has now been allocated to the new character of Hayano Kanpei. In this sense, Shichiemon's role in saving Kanpei has a parallel in Kichizaemon's efforts to get Kajiemon admitted to the league in *Onikage Musashi abumi*.⁶³

The stage was thus set for the final transformation of Terasaka Kichiemon on stage, which would take still another sixteen years, in *Kanadehon Chūshingura* of 1748—one year after the historical Kichiemon, as we will see, died in Edo at the ripe old age of eighty-three. His name is again Teraoka Heiemon, as it had been in Chikamatsu's *Goban Taiheiki*, although parts of that earlier role had been parceled out to others, not only the Fuwa motif that was yielded to Hayano Kanpei, but also the provision of the vital plan of the enemy's mansion before dying, which went to Kakogawa Honzō 加古川本蔵 in Act 9 of *Kanadehon*. What we are left with is a more ordinary and genial Heiemon, whose essence is now boiled down to one of low status who must first prove his sincerity and valor to join the league—a role that is much closer to his historical reality, or at least as it was told, for example, by Muro Kyūsō in *Akō gijinroku*. Heiemon is an important figure in Act 7, which has long been the most popular in the entire play. Particularly as the role has been polished over two and a half centuries on the kabuki stage, Heiemon is depicted as a distinctively lower samurai, more like a servant than an *ashigaru* in his ingratiating manner, sharply set off from the sternly formalistic and mechanical “three samurai” who appear at the start of the act to challenge Yuranosuke for his dissipation at the Ichiriki teahouse. Where the others are severe and detached, Heiemon is outgoing and emotional.

Heiemon tells his tale to Yuranosuke and begs for permission to join the league, but is put off by the drunken leader, who refuses to reveal his true intentions. When the three samurai become indignant at Yuranosuke's dissipation, it is left to Heiemon to play the role of a peacemaker with good common sense, just as Kichizaemon had functioned in Kaion's *Onikage Musashi abumi* and Shichizaemon in *Chūshin kogane no tanzaku*. Heiemon resolves to prove his loyalty to the cause by trying to kill his sister Okaru, who has become privy to the plans of the league in the famous scene in which she secretly uses a mirror to read a letter to Yuranosuke from his wife that details the plans for revenge. As Heiemon poignantly observes, "The sad thing about being of the lower ranks is that unless you prove to the other samurai your spirit is better than theirs, they won't let you join them."⁶⁴ This is the mentality of the Terasaka character in a nutshell. Just as Okaru is about to take her own life so that Heiemon can take credit and join the league, Yuranosuke stops them both. Impressed by Heiemon's dedication to the cause, Yuranosuke admits him to the league. Heiemon he goes on to perform valiantly in the attack on Moronao—and presumably to join in seppuku with the rest.

Kanadehon Chūshingura emerged rapidly as the single most popular play in the repertory of both the puppet theater and kabuki, not only in the Kamigata region where it began, but in Edo as well, where over the course of the ensuing century it became even more deeply entrenched than in the area of its origin. In the process, Teraoka Heiemon became established as the ultimate stage incarnation of Terasaka Kichiemon in Kamigata and Edo alike. Whereas all the other plays that we have considered were performed only once (although the jōruri versions survived as printed texts), *Kanadehon* was performed again and again, as it has continued to be until the present. The final message of Terasaka on stage was the simple but all-important idea that even those of marginal status can overcome that disadvantage by demonstrating not only the sincerity and bravery that were considered essential to a true samurai, but also competence and resourcefulness, qualities valued by the Kamigata chōnin culture that was responsible for the creation of Heiemon but also qualities admired among Edo commoners as well.

It was ultimately the fusion of the military values of the east with the practical merchant values of the west that worked effectively to make Teraoka's marginality so pivotal. During the four decades over which he took shape, Teraoka Heiemon also shed some of his most basic historical and quasi-historical features. His subordination to a superior member of the league (historically Yoshida Chūzaemon) was absent from the start, and his special mission to carry news of the successful revenge back west has completely disappeared. Most importantly, he is no longer excluded from seppuku with the other members of the league. While remaining low in rank, Terasaka on stage was in crucial ways liberated, emerging as a far more independent and autonomous individual, marginal in rank but a full and honorable member of the league. This transformation helps explain the enduring appeal of Heiemon to some ten generations of Japanese kabuki fans.

TERASAKA IN LOCAL LEGEND

The historical Terasaka was alive and well during the years that he was emerging on stage, which would culminate in Teraoka Heiemon in *Kanadehon Chūshingura*. Did he know that he was being transformed into an icon of the common man in popular culture? We will never know, since he left no direct record of his life during these years. The facts of his life after 1703 are much less in dispute than his activities in the several months after the attack on Kira. We know that he quickly settled down with the family of Itō Haruoki 伊藤治興 (1677-1741), the son-in-law of his superior Yoshida Chūzaemon and at the time a retainer of the Honda lord of Himeji. Over the next several years, the fortunes of the Honda spiraled downwards as the family was transferred in succession to three other domains, ending up in Koga in 1712 with a kokudaka of 50,000, only one-third of what it held in Himeji.⁶⁵ At some point after this, the Itō family used connections in Edo to put Terasaka in touch with the abbot of Sōkeiji 曹溪寺 temple in Azabu 麻布, who in turn found him a stipend with a hatamoto retainer of the bakufu, Yamanouchi Shuzen 山内主膳, from a branch of the Yamanouchi clan of Tosa 土佐.⁶⁶ After his death in 1747 at eighty-three, Terasaka was buried at Sōkeiji, where the graves of him and his wife remain today; his descendants continued as retainers of the Yamanouchi until the end of the Edo period. Two stone monuments recording his life were available to public view at Sōkeiji in the later Edo period for all to consult, one of which survives today.⁶⁷

Perhaps because the real Terasaka lived the rest of his life so little noticed, legends began to spring up—some of them probably within his lifetime—that he had visited widely different parts of Japan after the seppuku of the other league members as a traveling priest, sometimes to settle down in that particular area. An amateur historian and retired medical doctor from Kumamoto 熊本 by the name of Eshita Hirohiko 江下博彦 assiduously tracked down the six different “Kichiemons” who left graves or memorials in provincial Japan. The locations are widely scattered, showing the power of the Akō story to reach the furthest corners of Japan. Going from north to south, they are: Jisshōji 実相寺 temple north of Sendai 仙台 city (Miyagi 宮城 prefecture) in the Tōhoku region; Jigenji 慈眼寺 in the southern part of the Izu 伊豆 peninsula (Shizuoka 静岡 prefecture); the “Nobuyuki Hermitage 信行庵” in Masuda 益田 city on the Japan Sea coast (Shimane 島根 prefecture); the temple of Ichinenji 一念寺 in Yame 八女 city near Kurume 久留米 (Fukuoka 福岡 prefecture); Ekenji 恵剣寺 temple on the isolated island of Hisakajima 久我島 in the Gotō 五島 island group west of Nagasaki 長崎; and a communal burying ground in Izumi 出水, on the western coast of Kagoshima 鹿児島 prefecture, south of Minamata 水俣.⁶⁸

The basic narrative of these legendary Kichiemons explains that he became a priest after the seppuku of the forty-six rōnin, traveling throughout the country to pray for the souls of his comrades and to help the local people with good works. He often came incognito, revealing his identity only on his deathbed (Hisakajima) or in his will (Sendai,

Izumi). In some cases, he settled down and died there (Sendai, Izu, Hisakajima, Izumi), and in other cases he merely stopped by to make some sort of contribution. In the Sendai area, as the priest “Rikai 理海,” he donated a Buddhist image, built a pond, and opened a school. In southern Izu, he donated a bell to a temple, and in Masuda, he constructed a small chapel. Sometimes, his contributions were military: he left weapons at Ichinenji temple, and his armor was buried in a “helmet mound” on Hisakajima, while in Izumi, he taught the local youth kendo. In the three cases where his date of death is specified (not long after 1710 on Hisakajima, in 1726 in Izumi, and in 1742 in Sendai), it was before the death of the historical Terasaka, suggesting that the legends probably began while he was still alive.

These legends reveal that a distinctive type of imagination was at work on Terasaka in provincial Japan, wholly apart from the bushi-oriented imaginings of the early chronicles and the chōnin-inclined re-creations on the Kamigata stage. It is by no means clear why Terasaka legends emerged in these scattered provincial backwaters. Of the various ingenious explanations proposed by Eshita, only two seem really to have any plausibly direct connection: Ichinenji was located in the Kurume domain, which was the birthplace of Yoshida Chūzaemon’s wife, while Masuda was said to be the home of Terasaka’s mother. A completely different explanation was put forth by Kitagawa Tadahiko, who proposed that these were the graves of actual storytellers who claimed to be Terasaka himself, and who made a living by narrating the tale of the Akō revenge.⁶⁹ It is a provocative hypothesis, although Kitagawa admitted that he could find no direct evidence for it. It might be more useful to see these provincial Terasaka tales as a type of *ochūdo* 落人 legend, a long-established pattern whereby noble aristocrats (commonly high-ranking bushi from the center, most typically defeated Heike 平家 warriors) are said to have settled in poor and isolated villages. The pattern fits both the evidence of Eshita and the speculations of Kitagawa. This is a particularly revealing example of the way in which Terasaka’s identity could cut in still a new and different way in remote provincial settlements, as the one who lived to tell the tale as a sacred representative of the inspiring power of the league of revenge as a whole. It was a striking contrast with the existing versions of Terasaka, which functioned among elite samurai as a way of keeping the marginal members in their place while maintaining their honor, and among urban commoners as a model of one striving to prove and improve himself through ingenuity and dedication.

TERASAKA IN THE NEW HISTORICISM OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the imaginative reworking of Terasaka Kichiemon seemed to have reached its limits: his place on the stage had stabilized in the figure of Teraoka Heiemon in Act 7 of *Kanadehon Chūshingura*, and he had been safely buried in graves scattered in remote corners of provincial Japan. Just at this point, how-

ever, a newly invigorated historical imagination began to work on the “real” Terasaka in the last decades of the Tokugawa period as a source of speculation and concern on the part of the scholarly elite. Confucian scholars, to be sure, had been interested in the Akō incident from immediately after the seppuku of the forty-six rōnin, and the resulting “Akō Gishi 赤穂義士 debates” (after the now-standard epithet of “righteous samurai” for the Akō Rōnin) have been thoroughly studied by modern scholars.⁷⁰ These debates focused, however, purely on the pros and cons of the Akō revenge as a whole and on the validity of the bakufu judgment of the forty-six who surrendered and were sentenced to death, so the issue of Terasaka was of no interest. The great majority of the Confucian writers on the issue referred only to the “forty-six samurai” (*shijūrokushi* 四十六士); those who exceptionally wrote of “forty-seven samurai,” such as Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728), did so not in order to include Terasaka as a “Gishi,” but simply to refer to the number who signed the public manifesto of the league. The Confucian debaters treated the entire league as a single indivisible unit, and were not concerned about the righteousness or unrighteousness of any given individual, particularly not a low-ranking type like Terasaka.

The Confucian debate over the “righteousness” of the Gishi had tapered off by the end of the eighteenth century, and in its place emerged a heightened curiosity about the details of the historical narrative of the actual incident. In large part, this reflected the pervasive spread of historical studies in general in nineteenth-century Japan, encouraged by the influence of Qing textual studies (*kōshōgaku* 考証学) and Japanese national learning (*kokugaku* 国学). In popular culture at the same time, *kōdan* storytelling (then usually called “*kōshaku* 講釈”) about the Akō Gishi purported to tell the real story, using the historical names of the participants, and stimulating a more general interest in the actual history of the revenge. The political authorities had also become increasingly unconcerned about open discussion of the historical incident: after all, by 1803 a full century had passed since the seppuku of the Akō rōnin, and in the 1850s it actually became possible to publish printed works that discussed the historical revenge in great detail, without disguising the names, places, or historical era in which it took place.

At the same time, the historical documents most relevant to the Akō revenge had become more widely available by the late Edo period, thanks to assiduous hand-copying by many interested scholars and intellectuals. Of these documents, one in particular had a powerful influence on all new discussions of the Akō incident, and of the Terasaka issue in particular. This was the “memorandum” (*oboegaki* 覚書) of Horiuchi Den’emon 堀内伝右衛門 (1645-1727), one of the most revealing surviving documents of the Akō incident.⁷¹ Horiuchi was a senior retainer in the Hosokawa mansion in Edo where the seventeen members of the leadership group of the Akō league were held in custody after surrendering to the bakufu. At 59, Den’emon was close in age to the three key senior leaders—Yoshida Chūzaemon (63), Onodera Jūnai (60), and Hara Sōemon (56)—and clearly respected them. In return, they trusted him and spoke to him with relative openness. On the matter of Terasaka, however, the conversation seemed always constrained, result-

ing in a record that is filled with complex nuance and not easy to interpret. Most straightforward was the opinion offered by Hara Sōemon when asked by Den'emon to provide a copy of the league manifesto. Hara willingly obliged, and copied the document including the list of signatories—until he reached the name of Terasaka Kichiemon, which he replaced with four short lines of text, explaining that “he was there until before we broke into the mansion in the early morning of the fifteenth, and at that time he fled and was not seen again” (*kono mono jūgonichi no akatsuki kano yashiki e oshikomisōrō mae made kore aru tokoro, sono jikoku chikuten itashi, aimiezusōrō* 此者十五日之曉彼屋敷へ押込候前迄在之処、其時刻致逐電、不相見え候).⁷² Unlike the official explanation put forth by Yoshida to Sengoku, or in the leaders' letter to Terai Genkei—both of which simply said that Terasaka “disappeared”—Hara here took a more critical tone by the use of the word *chikuten*, “flight.”

More difficult to interpret was Horiuchi's account of a conversation that he had with Yoshida Chūzaemon, probably sometime in the first month of 1703.⁷³ This passage has been cited widely and debated endlessly as a key to the “Terasaka problem,” so it is worth quoting in its entirety. Horiuchi begins by describing a visit that he had made (at Yoshida's request) to Itō Haruoki, Yoshida's son-in-law who was then in Edo on *sankin kōtai* duty from Himeji:⁷⁴

[Itō] asked me to please speak [to Yoshida] and convey the message that he had received a letter yesterday from his wife [in Himeji] saying that both their sons had a light pox which was treated with hot water, and that Chūzaemon's son and others were all well, and that Terasaka Kichiemon also returned west safely and visited their place [that is, the Itō's place in Himeji]. When I returned [to the Hosokawa mansion] and spoke to Chūzaemon about these various matters, he was very pleased and said “Well, I can't thank you enough for your great good will.” When I spoke of Kichiemon, he said, “That person is a miscreant (*futodokimono* 不届者); please do not mention his name again.” It had been said before by all that Kichiemon had gone together with the group that evening and had then left the scene, but it was also variously said that he had been ordered as a messenger to take the news that the enemy had successfully been struck down. But now when I heard the words above, I had doubts [about such a mission], and thought that perhaps he really had run away (*jitsu no kakeochi ka to mo zanjisōrō* 実の欠落かとも存候).

It should be evident from this passage that Horiuchi and Yoshida were engaged in a delicate process of communication that left much unsaid, and even misunderstood. The nuances have been debated at considerable length; for example, when Yoshida said “please do not mention his name again,” did he mean “I am so angry at Terasaka that I cannot bear to hear his name spoken anymore,” or did he mean “I just can't talk about this matter of Terasaka openly, so please be so kind as not to bring it up again”? Why did Yoshida use such a strong term as “*futodokimono*,” used for those who engage in improp-

er or insolent behavior, when he had just expressed joy at hearing the news of his family in Himeji, including the detail that Terasaka had obviously been welcomed back without prejudice? Did Horiuchi in the end think that there were only two alternatives, either that Terasaka had absconded, or that he had been sent on a special mission? Did he not consider that he might have actually been ordered to leave without any mission in mind?

At any rate, the increasing diffusion of the Horiuchi memorandum in manuscript form in the late Edo period meant that these many uncertainties came more strongly to the fore among those interested in the Gishi. And indeed, the influence of the document is strongly evident in the two most important new histories of the Akō incident that appeared in this era. Both shared the crucial feature of being legally published and widely circulated, working to spread a consistent version of the tale of Terasaka to far more people than in the past. The two texts were very different. The earlier of the two was *Akō shijūshichi-shi den* 赤穂四十七士伝, by a Confucian scholar of the Mito 水戸 domain, Aoyama Nobumitsu 青山延光 (1803-71). Composed in 1829 (the date of the preface), the work was not published until 1851, perhaps the first book on the Akō incident to make its way legally into print (the one previous case, of Katashima's *Sekijō gishinden* in 1719, having resulted in immediate suppression).⁷⁵ This was perhaps eased by the fact that it was written in kanbun (Chinese), and hence aimed at an intellectual audience. It may also have been favored because of the prestigious Mito connections of the author, and it is worth noting that this work marks an important development in the linkage of the Akō revenge with Mito school thought, paving the way for the popularity of the Akō Gishi among imperial loyalists in the late Edo period, of whom the Chōshū 長州 activist Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830-59) is perhaps the best-known example. Aoyama's work would be their primary inspiration.

Aoyama structured his book as a collection of biographies of the individual members of the Akō league, following an example set by Muro Kyūsō in the second part of his classic *Akō gijinroku* of 1703—a work to which Aoyama frequently referred. This format had not been perpetuated among Confucian scholars in the intervening period of well over a century, and its adoption by Aoyama was probably encouraged rather by the growing popularity of *kōdan* storytellers, whose tales tended to focus more on individuals than the group, in the format known as *meimeiden* 銘々伝, “individual biographies.” This meant that Aoyama, in compiling a collection of biographies for the entire league, had to make a crucial choice between forty-six or forty-seven in deciding on the title of his book. By opting for the latter in his title “Lives of the Forty-Seven Samurai of Akō,” he committed himself not only to including Terasaka but also to justifying that choice.

Aoyama's biography of Terasaka was conventional, drawing largely on Kyūsō's *Akō gijinroku* and on the two stone memorials at Sōkeiji. He related that Terasaka participated in the attack, that he was sent from Sengakuji to carry the news to Asano Daigaku in Hiroshima, and that he returned to Edo in an effort to persuade Sengoku to sentence him to seppuku. After detailing his later life according to the Sōkeiji memorials, Aoyama then appended a revealing comment, reasoning that if Terasaka had really fled from the

scene as implied by Ōishio, Hara, and Onodera in their letter to Terai Genkei (which was included in the Horiuchi memorandum), then he would surely have gone into hiding and never again revealed his name to anyone. Ōishi's words must have had some hidden "deeper meaning" (*shin'i* 深意), Aoyama claimed, since they were contrary to the facts. While other high-ranking Akō retainers had defected from the league, the low-ranking Terasaka had performed righteously, so Aoyama concluded that he too would follow the consensus of public opinion (*kōron* 公論) that there were "forty-seven samurai." In this way, Confucian scholarly opinion was brought into accord with the popular theatrical and *kōdan* traditions. In his final lines, however, Aoyama noted disapprovingly that Terasaka had received a stipend from another person (that is, Yamanouchi Shuzen) later in life, violating the principle that a samurai should not serve two masters (a principle in fact widely violated in the Edo period). Although on the one hand Aoyama acknowledged that the leaders had not told the truth, he could not bring himself completely to affirm the righteousness of Terasaka.⁷⁶

Far more popular and influential than Aoyama's dry and scholarly kanbun account was the ten-volume *Akō gishiden issekiwa* 赤穂義士伝一夕話 (1854) of the prolific Edo chōnin scholar Yamazaki Yoshishige 山崎美成 (1796-1856). Like Aoyama's work three years earlier, it was legally published in woodblock print, with attractive illustrations by Hashimoto Gyokuran (Sadahide) 橋本玉蘭貞秀 (1807-70s) [see Figure 2]. Written in Japanese in a lively narrative style that resembled contemporary Edo fiction in the ample use of direct conversation, it served as a grand collation of much existing lore about the Akō vendetta, both history and legend. Yamazaki's approach was to narrate an episode, and then to append his own critical thoughts about the relevant sources and their reliability, set off and prefaced "In considering this matter, . . ." (*anzuru ni* 按ずるに). For Terasaka, he narrated first the overall biography, and then three alternate episodes. The main biography followed the same standard storyline as that of Aoyama, including the mission to Hiroshima and the attempted surrender to Sengoku, but Yamazaki drew out the narrative to make it more dramatic. Terasaka was admitted to the league only after long and drawn-out efforts, including at one point the threat of suicide, and when Ōishi finally relented, he felt obliged to take the step of escorting Terasaka to Asano's grave at Sengakuji the day before the attack and ask that he be promoted to full samurai status with right of audience (*omemie* 御目見)—a variant of the *Akō shōshūki* version in which a similar graveside promotion was conducted, but after the attack. Yamazaki went on to relate the episode that had appeared in Katashima's *Sekijō gishinden*, that Terasaka arrived late for the attack on Kira, and then, in the form of a separate story, the above-quoted passage from the Horiuchi memorandum in which Yoshida called Terasaka a "*futodoki-mono*" and asked that his name not be repeated.⁷⁷

In his separate "*anzuru ni*" comments, Yamazaki in every case cited the evidence of the Horiuchi memorandum, concluding that the leaders were in various ways obscuring the truth about Terasaka, and offering his own explanations of what they were hiding. One must remember, Yamazaki insisted, that the rōnin were often acting in secrecy and

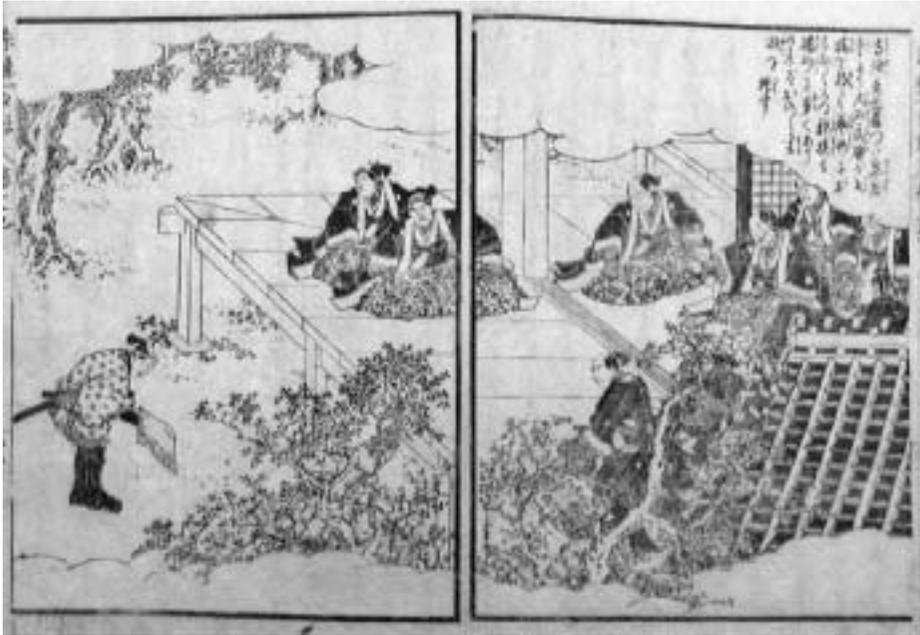


Figure 2. Terasaka Kichiemon bids farewell to the other members of the league of revenge at Sengakuji, where he is given a message by Ōishi Kuranosuke to carry to Hiroshima as well as letters for relatives of league members in the Akō region. Illustration by Hashimoto Gyokuran, from Yamazaki Yoshishige, *Akō gishiden issekiwa* (1854), vol. 9. Courtesy of C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

fearful of spies, so they could not say things directly. For example, he suggested that they could not really say that they sent Terasaka on a mission to Hiroshima (as Yamazaki was convinced they had), because this might get Daigaku in real trouble. As for Yoshida Chūzaemon's apparent rejection of Terasaka for having fled, Yamazaki said that he must have said this for some particular reason (*tame ni suru koto arite no kotoba* 為にすることありての詞), and that he really had deep empathy for Terasaka. Similar to Aoyama Nobumitsu's detection of a "deeper meaning" in the leaders' words, Yamazaki argued that these statements must have been a way of protecting others, whether Asano Daigaku or Terasaka or their own special secrets. He never said in so many words that the leaders were lying, but this is clearly what he understood to be the case.

THE MEIJI CONSOLIDATION OF THE TERASAKA STORY

For the first two decades of the Meiji period, the Akō incident was out of fashion. Revenge itself was outlawed by the new regime in 1873 and the values represented by the avengers were considered outmoded. No serious books on the history of the incident were published, and certainly nothing about Terasaka. With the accommodation of the Akō “Gishi” to the ideology of the modern nation-state, however, which reached a peak in the great “Gishi boom” of late Meiji following the victory over Russia in 1905, the history of the affair received new scrutiny. Three factors encouraged this new historical interest, each of them an extension of trends already seen in late Edo period. First was the diffusion of the available historical documents about the incident, particularly with the publication in 1910 of the extensive collection assembled by Nabeta Shōzan 鍋田晶山 (1778-1858) in late Edo; the two volumes of the main collection were followed in 1911 with a supplementary volume containing documents that had not been available to Nabeta.⁷⁸ Second, the rapid progress since the 1880s in methods of historical research and the establishment of the modern historical profession on the German model encouraged new critical scrutiny of the available source materials. And finally, it was no longer prohibited to talk about the historical Akō incident, or to use the real names of the participants, a shift that had actually already begun under the Tokugawa regime in the 1850s with the publication of works like those by Aoyama and Yamazaki.

Beyond this, however, was a broader and more fundamental continuity with the Edo culture of the Akō rōnin, in which the avengers had come universally to be considered as “Gishi,” righteous samurai, whose essential virtue could never be in doubt, and who even by critical historians were prejudged by essentially moralistic criteria. In the first half of the eighteenth century, such strict moralism did not preclude harsh attacks on the Akō rōnin by Confucian scholars like Satō Naokata 佐藤直方 (1650-1719) and Dazai Shundai 太宰春台 (1680-1747), but in time such doubts were overcome by overwhelming approval, particularly with the growth of the popular culture of *kōdan* storytelling from the late eighteenth century. Beyond this lay the pervasive influence of *Kanadehon Chūshingura*, which most Japanese realized was more fantasy than history, but in the end it became difficult to see the Akō revenge as ordinary history.

As a result, an essentially moralistic and idealistic approach to the Akō rōnin continued strong in the Meiji period, even as a new generation of historical practitioners preached their adherence to the new and more “modern” methods of historical research. A prime example is Shigeno Yasutsugu 重野安繹 (1827-1910), considered the father of the modern profession of academic historian in Japan, who prided himself on dethroning famous historical figures as the creation of legend. He turned to the case of the Akō incident in his *Akō gishi jitsuwa* 赤穂義士実話 of 1889, which revealed that he himself still remained under the influence of legend. He posited his primary task as separating the historical protagonists from the stage fantasy of *Kanadehon Chūshingura*—a fairly simple matter. On the matter of Terasaka, after noting that he was the model for the

ashigaru Teraoka Heiemon in *Kanadehon*, Shigeno turned to the historical record, first making note of the position of the league leadership in its letter of 1702.12.24 to Terai Genkei that claimed Terasaka to have fled the scene before the attack.

Shigeno, however, exactly like Aoyama and Yamazaki before him, observed that there was something going on between the lines here, “some special circumstances” (*dōmo shisai arisō ni omowareru* どふも仔細ありさうにおもはれる). As proof that Terasaka had actually participated in the attack, Shigeno cited the account by Tomimori Sukeemon and Isogai Jūrōzaemon 磯貝十郎左衛門, which described a roll call at the back gate at which all on the list (which included Terasaka) were accounted for.⁷⁹ And as with Aoyama and Yamazaki, he turned to Horiuchi Den’emon’s report of his conversation with Yoshida Chūzaemon, singling out the information that Terasaka had visited Itō Haruoki’s family in Himeji.⁸⁰ Judging that Terasaka was deliberately sent back to care for Yoshida’s family, Shigeno then made a sudden leap, offering none of his customary primary evidence, to the conclusion that there was “no doubt” that Terasaka had been sent under secret orders to report the success of the mission to Yōzeiin (in Edo) and Asano Daigaku in Hiroshima. He went on to support even the story of Terasaka’s return to Edo to ask Sengoku that he also be executed; Shigeno’s source here was *Rōshi goroku* 老士語録, a third-hand compilation of 1731 with no special authority. In short, when it came to evidence of the Hiroshima mission and Sengoku confession, Shigeno abandoned his vaunted standards and chose to defend Terasaka from what he claimed to be the “popular gossip” (*seken no uwasa* 世間の噂) that claimed him to have “run away out of fear for his life” (*inochi ga oshiku natte kakedashita* 命が惜しくなって駆け出した).⁸¹

Two decades would pass before the next major effort to write a serious history of the Akō incident, with the publication in 1909 of *Genroku kaikyōroku* 元禄快挙録 by Fukumoto Nichinan 福本日南 (1857-1921). This monumental work, which Nichinan extensively revised as *Genroku kaikyō shinsōroku* 元禄快挙真相録 (1914) following the publication in *Akō gijin sansho* (1910-11) of many documents he had not previously seen, remains even today the single most exhaustive study of the Akō incident. Nichinan was scarcely an impartial chronicler; he was a dedicated proponent of Japanese expansion on the continent and in the South Seas and a member of the right-wing Gen’yōsha 玄洋社 in northern Kyushu. *Genroku kaikyōroku* was first serialized for thirteen months from August 1908 in *Kyūshū nippō* 九州日報, the Gen’yōsha-affiliated daily of which Nichinan was then chief editor. One would assume that Nichinan’s revisions in response to the documents in *Akō gijin sansho* would have resulted in a version that was more solidly grounded in primary evidence, but at least in his account of Terasaka Kichiemon, this was not the case. In *Genroku kaikyōroku*, Nichinan affirmed that Terasaka participated in the attack, and arrived at Sengakuji. He was then asked by Ōishi to deliver the account book of the league expenses to Asano’s widow Yōzeiin in Edo. Nichinan firmly rejected the notion that Terasaka had been sent on a special mission to Hiroshima, claiming rather that it was then at his own initiative that he returned to the west and reported the success of the mission to the families of the rōnin. He did return to Edo, Nichinan

relates, but he arrived before the seppuku of his comrades, and once they had died, he realized that all was over for him, and that his only remaining duty was to care for the family of his master, Yoshida Chūzaemon, so he returned west again.

In his revised version in *Shinsōroku*, Nichinan offered a very different account, one far more consistent with the late Edo mainstream that we have seen in Aoyama and Yamazaki. He now rejected the notion of a mission to Yōzeiin (based on the evidence in *Kōseki kenmonki* that the account book was delivered to her *before* the attack, by Ochiai Yozaemon), but he wholeheartedly accepted the mission to Hiroshima that he had rejected before, as well as the subsequent confession to Sengoku in Edo. This abrupt change probably reflects the influence on Nichinan of the accounts of Terasaka in *Akō shōshūki* and *Chūsei gokanroku*, two crucial early chronicles that he apparently saw first only in *Akō gijin sansho*. It should be noted that Nichinan was generally trusting of the early chronicles, and specifically criticized Shigeno Yasutsugu for disparaging them—although his differences with Shigeno were as much from Nichinan’s general hostility to official academe as from issues of historical method. At any rate, Nichinan’s final position was in strong support of Terasaka’s secret mission to Hiroshima and the confession to Sengoku, which thereby became the official stance of the lineage of “Gishi scholars” (*gishi kenkyūka* 義士研究家) that Nichinan spawned and that remain strong today in the membership of the Chūō Gishikai 中央義士会, the national organization of Gishi devotees that he founded in 1916.

WAS TERASAKA KICHIEMON A COWARD?

From Aoyama Nobumitsu and Yamazaki Yoshishige in the 1850s, on to Shigeno Yasutsugu and Fukumoto Nichinan in the late Meiji period, there had evolved a strong and stable consensus about Terasaka Kichiemon, essentially affirming the story that first appeared in *Akō shōshūki* within months after the culmination of the Akō incident in 1703, that Terasaka had been sent by the league leaders on a special mission to report the success of the attack to Asano Daigaku in Hiroshima, and then returned to Edo in the spring of 1703 to beg that he himself be sentenced to seppuku as a full member of the league. Even as this consensus was being established, however, there emerged a provocative counter-thesis that this story was all wrong, and that Terasaka had fled from the scene of the attack out of abject fear for his life. He was in short a coward and as such unqualified for the prestigious title of “Gishi.” As a consequence, the deeply entrenched tradition of the “forty-seven samurai” was in error: there were really only forty-six.

The potential for charging Terasaka with cowardice was built into the claim of the league leadership that he had simply disappeared from the Kira mansion even before the attack began. And yet in all the various comments at the time, none of the league members ever seem to have specifically charged Terasaka with cowardice—with a single exception that may prove the rule. This was in a document that emerged relatively late in the

modern Terasaka debates, a farewell letter of Hara Sōemon to his younger brother Wada Kiroku 和田喜六, written the day before Hara's seppuku. In it, Hara wrote that Terasaka was with them until before the attack on Kira, but that afterwards, "perhaps out of cowardice (*kokorookure mōshisōrō ka* 心おくれ申候か), he fled (*chikuten*) without entering the [Kira] mansion." This was almost identical to what he had written on the copy of the league manifesto for Horiuchi—except for the single speculative phrase about cowardice. Since we know that Hara was lying about Terasaka's absence from the attack, perhaps we can simply conclude that he was trying to provide an even more convincing version of the same cover story. Still, if the intent of the cover story was ultimately to protect Terasaka himself, the charge of cowardice seems gratuitous. It must be borne in mind that no more serious accusation could be made against a samurai than cowardice, a charge used generously by the Akō rōnin themselves to condemn defectors from the league. So if in fact Terasaka was not a defector, why should Hara have made the charge as his last testament? This remains a perplexing problem, and one that Yagi was to use to the hilt in pressing his own charges of cowardice against Terasaka.⁸² Other than this single qualified phrase in a private letter that was not known until the twentieth century, however, the specific charge of cowardice does not appear in any known documents of the eighteenth century. One may claim, of course, that the term "flight" (*kakeochi* was used by Horiuchi and by Yoshida himself, and *chikuten* by Hara) is tantamount to a charge of cowardice, but this is not quite the case; these terms could be used for honorable retreat in the face of insuperable force, and at any rate such an action in the case of an *ashigaru* was probably considered wholly normal and not necessarily cowardly.

The situation changed only in the nineteenth century, for reasons that remain obscure. The pivotal text seems to have been written by Ōkura Kensai 大蔵謙斎 (1757-1844), a Confucian scholar who lived in Edo. In the 1830s, Kensai undertook to inscribe comments on four texts concerning the Akō incident.⁸³ One of these was the "Terasaka Nobuyuki hikki" that Terasaka had sent to Yoshida Chūzaemon's sons-in-law in the fifth month of 1703. For reasons not entirely clear but probably related to the influence of the Horiuchi memorandum, Kensai was very hostile to Terasaka, and considered his account to be fabricated and his behavior to have been unacceptable. He made petty complaints about what he claimed to be inconsistencies in the text, such as Terasaka's claim that each rōnin took a small torch (*tama-taimatsu* 玉松明, an impregnated ball in a metal enclosure that could be ignited) with him to the attack, which Kensai claimed made no sense because it was a bright moonlit night and the torches would give them away. (As Terasaka's defenders would later argue, however, the torches were clearly not lit at the time, but were intended for use inside the mansion if necessary.⁸⁴)

Kensai's most substantial charges against Terasaka were condensed into a long post-script that he added to his comments, basically accepting the official position of the leaders that Terasaka had fled from the scene just before the attack. Kensai concluded that Terasaka had never been sent on any special mission, and must have left without permission of his own accord. He also rejected the story that Terasaka returned to Edo to ask

Sengoku to sentence him to seppuku. This was just a tale cooked up later, he claimed, to give Terasaka a good name. If Terasaka had really wanted to join the group in seppuku, he should have returned to Edo immediately, rather than some six months later, in which case he would probably have gotten his wish. And if for whatever reason, he did not make it back in time to join the other forty-six, he should have gone straight to Sengakuji and committed suicide right there on the grave of Ōishi Kuranosuke (not, revealingly, the grave of Asano, suggesting that Terasaka's disloyalty was to the leader of the league and not to the lord). Rather he clung to life, content to enjoy the favors of others and live to a ripe old age. It is revealing, however, that Kensai never used a specific word for "cowardice" to explain Terasaka's motivations, but instead leveled indirect charges that he did not have the iron will to "think lightly of death and honor righteousness" (*shi o karonji gi o omonzuru* 死ヲ軽ンジ義ヲ重ズル), and "clung to life" (*sei o oshimu* 生ヲ偷む, a phrase used at least three times).

Kensai's harsh attack on Terasaka reveals an important shift in ways of thinking about his behavior. Earlier judgments, as we have seen, tended to ascribe Terasaka's behavior simply to his status as an *ashigaru*: as the leaders themselves wrote to Terai Genkei, it was simply "of no particular concern" because of his menial rank. Kensai's critique, by contrast, treats Terasaka not as a subservient *ashigaru* but as a fully autonomous samurai who should have been free to take his life into his own hands. While harsh and moralistic, Kensai's attack on Terasaka also ironically reveals a respect for the *ashigaru's* individuality that was not current at the time of the Akō incident. It remains unclear how widely Kensai's opinions were shared in the late Edo period, for there is no evidence that anyone had read his comments until they were put into print in *Akō gijin sansho* in 1910. It seems likely, however, that other writers were spreading the word of Terasaka's cowardice, judging from Shigeno Yasutsugu's assertion in 1889 that "popular gossip" (*seken no uwasa* 世間の噂) declared that he became "suddenly fearful for his life" (*kyū ni inochi ga oshiku natte* 急に命が惜しくなって) and fled.⁸⁵

By the end of the Meiji period, however, thanks to the spirited defenses of Terasaka as a heroic secret messenger put forth by Shigeno and Nichinan, such charges of cowardice seem to have been a distant memory. Suddenly, however, this happy consensus was shattered abruptly on December 7, 1924, by a shocking claim of Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (1863-1957) in a single *Kokumin shinbun* 国民新聞 newspaper installment of his monumental serialized history of modern Japan, *Kinsei Nihon kokuminshi* 近世日本国民史. Entitled "Forty-Seven Samurai or Forty-Six Samurai?," Sohō's article (part of his ongoing history of the Akō Gishi) argued that Terasaka had fled before the attack on Kira out of sheer cowardice.⁸⁶ In fact, Sohō did little more than replicate the arguments of Ōkura Kensai's annotations to the Terasaka diary published in *Akō gijin sansho*. Sohō was grinding out the chapters of his history at the pace of one a day, and he probably wrote this one brief installment (only one out of a total of 103 chapters on the volume on the Akō Gishi, and a mere six pages in the book version of 1925) in casual haste, excited by the claims of Kensai that few had noticed before.

It appears, however, that the backlash from Gishi devotees must have been considerable, because when his volume on the Akō Gishi was published in book form in September 1925, Sohō devoted almost the entire introduction to expanding and refining his arguments about Terasaka, almost double the length of his original account. As a good journalist, Sohō obviously realized that he had struck a nerve. Sohō's arguments in the book preface offered nothing new, as he stuck stubbornly to the official statements about Terasaka that were made by the leaders. He refused to consider the evidence presented by Shigeno and Nichinan (neither of whom he seems to have consulted in any detail) that Terasaka had in fact participated in the attack on Kira. Sohō returned insistently to Terasaka's own statement in the account that he sent to Yoshida's sons-in-law, claiming simply that there were "circumstances" to his departure. For Sohō, this could be nothing more than a cover-up for having "fled for his life when seized by an attack of cowardice" (*okubyōfū ni owarete, ichimei ga oshiki bakari ni tōbō shita* 臆病風に襲われて、一命が惜しき許りに逃亡した).⁸⁷ Here Sohō went markedly beyond Kensai in directly accusing Terasaka of cowardice. And yet at the same time Sohō displayed a certain sympathy for Terasaka, accepting the conventional judgment of his character as loyal and diligent, and noting that it was only human to hesitate at the last minute; Sohō suggested that he was not nearly as contemptible as Mōri Koheita 毛利小平太, for example, a higher-ranking league member who defected just shortly before the attack.

Perhaps it was only because Sohō chanced upon Ōkura Kensai's critique that he branded Terasaka a coward, or perhaps, as one commentator has suggested, he felt a sense of journalistic rivalry with Fukumoto Nichinan and took pleasure in undercutting Nichinan's own commitment to a league of forty-seven Gishi.⁸⁸ In the end, however, Sohō and Nichinan were not fundamentally different in broader perspective: both were conservative journalists of the same generation that came of age in the nationalistic era of the Meiji 20s, and both were great admirers of the Akō Gishi in general. In light of Sohō's crusade against Western-style individualism after the death of the emperor Meiji, it is ironic that his view of Terasaka accorded him much more individuality and autonomy than did the mainstream view of Nichinan, but he would have shared the general position of the Chūō Gishikai that the Akō avengers stood above all for a spirit of self-sacrifice. This perhaps explains the lack of any immediate reactions to Sohō's views on Terasaka, which constituted a very small part of his entire volume on the Gishi.

The most aggressive counter-attacks on Sohō came at a considerable delay, from two men who had close ties to the Akō region. The critical figure was Fukushima Shirō 福島四郎 (1874-1945), who was born and raised in the same part of the Akō domain (Katō county 加東郡) where Yoshida Chūzaemon had a fief. Fukushima had begun his career as a school teacher, and came to espouse the cause of women's education and social elevation by founding the *Fujo shinbun* 婦女新聞 in 1900, a weekly journal that he edited until it was forced to close in 1942. At some point, he became aware of the influence of Sohō's account of Terasaka, which he considered to be a slanderous attack on his own native region, and after Sohō failed to answer letters demanding a retraction, Fukushima

wrote his own counterattack in an article in the January 1931 issue of *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* 日本及日本人, declaring Sohō's theory to be a "baseless accusation" (*mōdan* 妄談).⁸⁹ He opened by observing that because of Sohō's tremendous popularity, his views of Terasaka were now making their way into the schools, with some teachers pronouncing that there were actually only forty-six Gishi. Fukushima proceeded to outline the standard evidence that Terasaka had in fact been present during the attack on Kira. The article took a sudden and surprising turn, however, when Fukushima turned to what he considered to be the true reasons for Terasaka's departure following the attack, an issue to which I will return shortly.

Meanwhile, Fukushima provided encouragement for another Akō native, by the name of Itō Takeo 伊藤武雄 (1872-1939), a descendant of the same Itō family from which Yoshida Chūzaemon's son-in-law had come. Takeo's branch had served the Mori 森 family, which replaced the Asano as the daimyo of Akō. Itō Takeo grew up in Akō, served as a teacher in local schools, and took a keen interest in the history of the Gishi. In the early 1930s, he discovered in the branch of the family that had followed the Honda lords after Himeji, ending up in Okazaki, a rich trove of documents relating to Yoshida Chūzaemon and to Terasaka. Thanks to an introduction from Fukushima, Itō was able to publish his research about Terasaka in two successive issues of *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* in 1934, and in the following year as a book published locally in Akō. Of these, two documents were of particular relevance to the question of Terasaka's fate. One was a farewell letter from Yoshida Chūzaemon to his son-in-law Itō Haruoki, written the day before his seppuku, which revealed a clearly sympathetic attitude towards Terasaka. Yoshida urged Itō to be discreet, observing that he had already told Sengoku that Terasaka had fled, but he basically asked Itō to take care of Terasaka, clear evidence that Yoshida did not consider him a traitor who fled of his own accord.⁹⁰

Even more important was Itō's inclusion of the original text of a document that actually seems to have circulated in the late Edo period under the title of "Terasaka dan 寺坂談," although no historian of the Akō incident seems ever to have taken advantage of it.⁹¹ It is an extended account of the Akō revenge recorded in 1743 by Itō Haruyuki 伊藤治行 (1698-?), the son of Haruoki (and hence the grandson of Yoshida Chūzaemon), on the basis of both his own research and from direct testimony from Terasaka himself. The latter part of the document constitutes Terasaka's only known personal account of exactly what happened to him after the attack on Kira, far more detailed than the single line in his diary and the cryptic mention of unspecified "circumstances." Terasaka essentially claimed that he made it as far as the front gate of Sengakuji, where he was dismissed by the leaders and told to return west; nothing is said of any mission. It is, to be sure, hearsay evidence compiled years after the incident, but I personally consider it reliable, and will return to the details momentarily. Suffice it to note here that this evidence, together with the text of Yoshida's farewell letter to Itō, seemed only to bolster the consensus of chroniclers of the Akō incident that Terasaka did indeed take part in the attack on Kira, and that he left not of his own accord but at the command of his superiors. The

attacks by Fukushima and Itō Takeo on Sohō (who never once deigned to answer his critics) and on Ōkura Kensai before him (whom Itō referred to contemptuously as a *shiremono* 痴れ者, or “nut”) appeared finally to secure the recognition of Terasaka as a full-fledged Gishi.

With this, the Terasaka “problem” seemed to have been solved for once and for all, until it abruptly surfaced again over half a century later. Once again, the primary venue was the city of Akō, which in the mid-1980s had completed a seven-volume city history, and decided to continue with a multi-volume compilation of source materials of the Akō incident and its cultural legacy, under the simple title of *Chūshingura*. To oversee the volumes on the historical Akō incident, the city selected Yagi Akihiro, a professor emeritus of Kobe University who had already served as general editor for the city history. A volume of basic documents on the incident appeared in 1987, followed in March 1989 with Yagi’s own secondary account.⁹² Yagi’s métier was economic history and he produced his narrative in considerable haste, resulting in a number of mistakes and omissions, but it was nevertheless a fresh and original approach, and a rare effort by a professional academic historian to deal with the Akō incident in any detail. One of his most original and elaborately argued ideas concerned Terasaka Kichiemon, whom he conceded to have participated in the attack on Kira, but insisted to have fled on his own for fear of his life immediately afterwards.⁹³

The real trouble began in June 1989, shortly after the publication of Yagi’s history, when the mayor of Akō announced at a meeting of city officials discussing the plans for a series of Gishi-related events later that year that Yagi Akihiro had declared Terasaka to be unworthy of the title of Gishi, and that the city should therefore consider changing the number from forty-seven to forty-six. This provoked an outraged response among Gishi loyalists in Akō, above all Iio Kuwashi 飯尾精, the chief priest of Ōishi Shrine 大石神社, where Terasaka had been enshrined as one of the forty-seven resident deities when it was founded by Iio’s father in 1912. For five years, from January 1990 through December 1994, Iio mounted a sustained attack on Yagi and the city history office in the pages of *Gishikon* 義士魂, the irregular journal of the local Akō Gishikai 赤穂義士会 that he controlled.⁹⁴ Yagi for his part replied in more scholarly journals, in three articles that repeated and enlarged on his earlier arguments, and gained national press attention in December 1990 by claiming to have discovered new evidence that Terasaka had run away.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Iio found an ally in “Hiroi Kei 広井桂,” the pen name of Senba Keiko 千場京子, an indefatigable Gishi scholar from Tokyo who was incensed by Yagi’s attack on Terasaka and sought to defend his reputation in a series of closely argued pieces, culminating in a 109-page point-by-point rebuttal of Yagi in late 1994.⁹⁶

In the meantime, the issue of “forty-six or forty-seven” became a local political brouhaha when a member of the Akō city assembly demanded in March 1990 that the new mayor officially declare forty-seven to be the “correct” number of Gishi. Others worried (rightly) about the threat to free speech if the city of Akō simply decreed Yagi to be in error, and a compromise of sorts was at last reached in December 1991 with a reso-

lution by the city assembly that Akō would continue to commemorate forty-seven samurai for the purposes of official ceremonies and touristic events, while the historical issue of whether there were in fact forty-six or forty-seven would be left for scholars to continue debating. The latter issue was finally brought to a close when Akō City published a pamphlet in March 1997 in which Iio and Yagi each offered his own version of history, the one forty-seven and the other forty-six.⁹⁷

BREAKING THE DEADLOCK: THE SAD TRUTH ABOUT TERASAKA

In the end, each side in the “debate” of the 1990s had settled on its own position from the start, and the opponents simply argued past each other. Without even agreeing to a definition of what constituted a “Gishi,” it was obviously impossible to come to terms on how many Gishi there were. The confrontation in the end was one of culture and not of rational debate, with an academic historian from an elite national university taking an obstinate stand against the equally obstinate local forces of Akō tourism and Gishi worship. In the end, it was difficult to say which side in this unedifying spectacle was the more distasteful, the abandonment of intellectual rigor by Yagi in pressing arguments that violated the standards of his profession, or the ad hominem insults of Iio and various of his allies. It became painfully apparent to me as I slogged through the endless exchanges between Yagi Akihiro and his opponents that the entire Terasaka “problem” had become locked into a set of moralistic assumptions that had only become more rigid over three centuries, and that had worked to foreclose any deeper understanding of the Akō incident on its own historical terms.

It is worth noting that the three most vocal participants in the controversy were all products of the prewar system of moral education, in which the Akō Gishi were treated more as ethical paragons than as real historical actors. Iio Kuwashi was born in 1920, Yagi Akihiro in 1922, and Senba Keiko in 1925, so all came of age in the later 1930s when the prewar cult of the Gishi was at its peak.⁹⁸ Even Yagi, the elite academic, was reduced to the simplistic moral proposition that Terasaka had behaved in a cowardly manner that violated the moral code of the samurai, and hence was not qualified as a Gishi. The evidence that Yagi offered was meager in the extreme, based only on the claim that Terasaka’s own brief description in his “Hikki” of the march to Sengakuji was skimpy and may have contained trivial errors. Therefore, Terasaka must have lied, Yagi argued, and the only reason could be cowardice. It was precisely the same sort of intemperate argument made by Ōkura Kensai in the 1830s and Tokutomi Sohō in the 1920s, and was ultimately rooted, I came to understand, in a simple elitist contempt for Terasaka as a low-ranking *ashigaru*.

This elitist contempt for Terasaka, however, was simply the other side of the coin of the populist argument that Terasaka was a hero for obeying the orders of his superiors to travel to Hiroshima as a secret messenger. I would propose the metaphor of a “moral

magnet” to describe the way in which all concerned were inevitably drawn to one pole or the other, but ultimately connected by an iron bond of devotion to the Gishi. On the one hand were those who championed the theory of a special mission to Hiroshima and a return to Edo to beg for seppuku only to be denied—a story that had been proposed by Sugimoto in *Akō shōshūki* and followed by Muro Kyūsō and Ogawa Tsunemitsu in their influential early works. On the other side was the idea that took clear shape only in the nineteenth century, promoted as much from mischievous spite as genuine commitment, that Terasaka had fled from the scene of the attack as an abject coward. In this polarization, all sight was lost of what I would simply call the “sad truth” that was evident to the majority of the early chroniclers, that Terasaka had been dismissed from the league by the leaders purely because of his low rank, and that it was “of no particular concern.”

The evidence for this sad truth is incontrovertible, and much of it was available from an early date. There was the testimony of Terasaka himself, in the detailed description of the attack that he left in his “Hikki,” even as he refrained from detailing the precise “circumstances” that led to his dismissal. Then there was the evidence of several of the rōnin who clearly described the roll call taken when all assembled in the Kira mansion after the success of the mission, in which all of those on the list of forty-seven were accounted for. And there was the testimony of *Kōseki kenmonki* by way of Yoshida’s wife, affirming that Terasaka was simply dismissed because it was “all right.” Most telling of all was the obvious support of Yoshida and his family for Terasaka following the revenge, and the incontrovertible fact that Terasaka continued to serve that family for many years later. There can be absolutely no doubt that the claim of the leadership that Terasaka had “disappeared” *before* the attack was simply a red herring to distract the attention of the authorities.

I would like here to provide Terasaka’s own vantage point on exactly what happened to him that morning, at the front gate of Sengakuji, as described in Itō Haruyuki’s account. Terasaka’s most ardent defenders, even Itō Takeo who first publicized the account in 1934-35, have been unwilling to take seriously the poignant story that it tells, while disbelievers like Yagi Akihiro simply dismiss it as self-serving propaganda. Here is the sad truth as related by Terasaka to Itō. He accompanied the entire group up to the front gate of Sengakuji, where he was told by a number of senior leaders that he could not enter, and that his master Yoshida Chūzaemon had left instructions that he was to return quickly to Harima 播磨 province (that is, the Akō-Himeji area). Yoshida’s two relatives in the league—his heir Sawaemon and his younger brother Kaiga Yazaemon 貝賀弥左衛門 (1650-1703)—confirmed that this had been ordered by Ōishi and approved by Yoshida in advance, so that Terasaka had no choice but to obey, and to do otherwise would be disloyal. As proof of what he had done, he was given a copy of the league manifesto. So having no choice, Terasaka parted with the rest at about 10 a.m. on the morning of the fifteenth. But he was worried about the safety of his comrades, so he hung around in the area until he knew that the custody arrangements had been decided, and

the other forty-four had left for the Sengoku mansion. He left Edo that evening, and arrived in Kameyama, where Yoshida's wife and daughter were then staying, on the twenty-ninth, fourteen days later.

Clearing the air on these basics, however, still explains nothing about the motives of the leadership in dismissing Terasaka on that fateful morning. The task of explanation has not even begun among Japanese who write about the matter, and I would like here to try to open the discussion of an issue that goes well beyond the problem of Terasaka himself. Let me begin by introducing the single most heretical and neglected discussion of the Terasaka problem to date, Fukushima Shirō's 1931 article in *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin*. It is important to recall that Fukushima's motivation in defending Terasaka was not one of ideological commitment to the righteousness of the Gishi, but of offended local pride as one who came from the small part of the Akō domain inhabited by Yoshida Chūzaemon. Ideologically, Fukushima as the editor of a journal dedicated to women's rights was well to the left of the mainstream of Gishi supporters. His distinctive way of thinking emerged in his article when, after demonstrating that Terasaka must have participated in the attack on Kira, it came to explaining "The Reasons for Terasaka's Departure" ("Terasaka no taikyo riyū" 寺坂の退去理由), an intriguing section in which he first raised the "secret emissary theory" (*misshi setsu* 密使説), only to dismiss not only the notion that Terasaka delivered the account book to Yōzeiin (as Nichinan had argued in 1909), but also the far more widely accepted theory of a Hiroshima mission. On this particular point, Fukushima made it clear that he was in complete agreement with Sohō, who had argued that it could only cause great trouble to Daigaku to send even a secret messenger, and that Ōishi himself had taken great pains in the past to avoid any direct contact with him.

After this, Fukushima proceeded to offer three sets of other reasons for which Terasaka might have been dismissed, all of which were in fact quite closely related. Essentially, he proposed that Terasaka was dismissed because of his uniquely low rank, as an *ashigaru* rather than a proper samurai and as a direct vassal of Yoshida but only a rear vassal of Asano. Fukushima noted that the Tokugawa system of justice treated those of different status in different ways, and that it would have been improper and insulting to the bakufu to include a single *ashigaru* with the forty-six *shi*. This was all the more so because the target of the revenge had ranked so high within the bakufu hierarchy (as the league itself recognized in its statement by deferring to the status of Kira as *o-rekireki* 御歴々, "exalted person"). And from the standpoint of the honor of Asano Naganori as well, Fukushima noted that Ōishi had confided to Horiuchi Den'emō that he was personally disappointed that so many of the league were of low rank, and so few of higher status (*taishin no mono* 大身の者).⁹⁹ It would surely reflect poorly on Asano and his domain, Fukushima suggested, to have a lowly *ashigaru* as part of the league. And finally, Fukushima proposed that Terasaka himself was probably well aware of his own precariously low position, and may well have withdrawn of his own volition, out of deference to those above him, and particularly because his primary loyalty was to Yoshida, not Asano.

Echoing a point made by Nichinan in 1909, Fukushima suggested it was a mark of magnanimity on the part of Ōishi and the others to spare the *ashigaru* the penalty of death that the rest expected.

In short, Fukushima proposed, Terasaka was dismissed simply because he was an *ashigaru* and as such unworthy of being judged together with proper samurai and dying with them. In his concluding sentence, he posed a question that he was unfortunately unable to answer: if it was so convenient to dismiss Terasaka from the league, then why was he ever admitted in the first place? Fukushima could only answer that “this becomes too much a matter of speculation and separate from the main issue, so I will not deal with it here.” And yet this remains the single most relevant remaining mystery to the Terasaka problem, to which I would now like to turn by examining more closely the ways in which the league leaders chose to act in the immediate aftermath of the successful attack on Kira.¹⁰⁰

DYING WITH THE REST

The leaders of the Akō league of revenge made careful plans for their attack. Terasaka Kichimon's own “Hikki” gave details of all the elaborate array of weapons and tools that they planned to take with them, while a sixteen-article set of instructions was provided by the leaders at a meeting in a Fukagawa teahouse on 1702.12.3. The final item on this list reminded all that they must attack expecting to die, and should not let their attention be distracted by concerns of what might come after. Some small provision was made for immediate contingencies, such as the arrival of bakufu police while the attack was in progress (in which case they would refuse to come out until the mission was complete), or if their withdrawal from the mansion were obstructed by neighboring daimyo (in which case they would announce their mission, and declare their intentions to enter the adjacent temple of Ekōin 回向院 and await the authorities). Beyond this, they were instructed only that they would assemble at Ekōin before proceeding to Sengakuji, or if they were refused entrance, to proceed to the public plaza at the east end of Ryōgoku bridge. The one eventuality for which they made no provision, however, was the possibility of mass suicide. This was the unspoken choice that they would have been obliged to take if they had failed to find Kira or take his head. But as it happened, the mission was a stunning success, with none of the expected opposition either during or after the attack, whether from the forces of the Uesugi 上杉 domain of Yonezawa 米沢 (of which Kira's son was the daimyo), or from the bakufu inspectorate. All was calm and quiet as they emerged at sunrise from the back gate of the Kira mansion bearing the head of its chief inhabitant wrapped in his own robe.

Surviving accounts of the aftermath of the attack, however, suggest that the option of seppuku remained very much on the minds of the league members. Following the roll call at the Kira mansion that showed all forty-seven to be alive with only a few minor

injuries, they seem to have discussed their options. Even with no pursuers in sight, they apparently weighed the option of committing seppuku at Ekōin, already designated as a place of assembly after the attack. The priests at Ekōin refused them entry, however, perhaps on the pretext that it was still too early in the morning, but probably for fear of the consequences should the planned seppuku take place within the temple.¹⁰¹ The Sengakuji monk Gekkai 月海 (1684-1755) reported that Ōishi and the rest had proceeded moment by moment (*nennen nari* 念々なり) up to the attack on the enemy, and that after that point, “they seemed to take measures one step at a time, with no evidence of planning very far ahead (*dandan shochi suru yō ni miete, saki no saki made hakaritaru yōsu ni wa miezaru nari* 段々処置する様に見えて、さきのさき迄はかりたる様子には見へざるなり).”¹⁰²

It was at this critical juncture that a further and momentous decision was made, to surrender themselves voluntarily to the bakufu authorities, an option that never seems to have been openly discussed in advance. Effectively, it was a choice between two quite different types of death, the one voluntary and self-inflicted, and the other decreed as a formal sentence and carried out in a ritual (and usually painless) manner by the authorities. Evidence suggests that voluntary seppuku at Sengakuji remained an option at this point. Hara Sōemon in a farewell letter to his brother-in-law the day before his death clearly stated that they had all intended to commit seppuku immediately at Sengakuji, implying that he differed with Ōishi on the matter of surrender.¹⁰³ Other sources mention plans for seppuku at Sengakuji, and one source even relates that Ōishi Chikara, the fifteen-year-old son of Kuranosuke, urged that they prepare for seppuku after arriving at the temple, arguing that if they surrendered to the authorities, it might seem that they were in search of an official post; his father replied that there was no reason to rush things, and that it would be best to report themselves to the authorities. (Kuranosuke of course had already committed the league to surrender before arriving at Sengakuji, but it is conceivable that the rank and file were not informed until later.)¹⁰⁴ These various contemporary reports would be echoed later by the criticisms of Satō Naokata and of Yamamoto Tsunetomo 山本常朝 (1658-1721; in *Hagakure* 葉隠) that the Akō rōnin should in fact have committed suicide at Sengakuji, with Naokata even suggesting that they were in fact hoping to gain employment by surrendering.¹⁰⁵

Evidence that the decision for direct surrender was actually made on the way to Sengakuji is provided by a letter of Fuwa Kazuemon to his father, claiming that he had personally urged the course of surrender on Ōishi “on the occasion of the withdrawal” (*hikitorimōshisōrō setsu* 引取申候節) to Sengakuji.¹⁰⁶ The decision was finalized by the dispatch, probably from around Shinbashi 新橋 bridge (about halfway to Sengakuji), of Yoshida and Tomomori to report the deed to chief inspector Sengoku in his mansion at Atago-shita and hand over a copy of their manifesto. With this, Ōishi committed the fate of the league to the bakufu, a gesture of not only of political submission but arguably even one of fealty to the very authorities who had sentenced their lord to death. Conceivably the bakufu could have taken the harshest of reprisals against the Akō rōnin for what were eventually judged to be the crimes of conspiracy and disturbing the peace

of the city of Edo, and sentenced them to the dishonorable penalty of death by beheading like a common criminal (*zanshu* 斬首). In such an event, their names would be sullied, and all that they had fought for in terms of personal honor would have been seriously compromised, if not negated. Ōishi must have had total confidence that the bakufu would in fact accord them the sentence of seppuku that was essential to their honor as samurai. Possibly he even thought that they might be pardoned, as Satō Naokata would later charge, although all the evidence suggests that he and the others never expected anything other than death.

I would argue that it is precisely within the context of these calculations, worked out in real time somewhere between the Kira mansion and Shinbashi bridge that chilly morning, that the decision to dismiss Terasaka Kichiemon from the league must be understood. As Fukushima Shirō argued in 1931, it might well have presented the bakufu with an untidy situation if the group that surrendered consisted of forty-six men of proper *shibun* status plus one lone *ashigaru*. It remains unclear whether an *ashigaru* could in fact be legally sentenced to seppuku; doubtless they could if circumstances warranted, but normally *ashigaru* were dealt with by the town magistracy, not the inspectorate. Of course, Terasaka could perhaps have received a separate punishment, indeed the leaders themselves might have been punished separately from the rest. Nevertheless, it is plausible that the circumstances now argued for Terasaka's exclusion where it had not been a matter of real concern before. Psychologically, Ōishi and his comrades had prepared for the worst, not the best, and had left to the particular circumstances any calculations beyond the immediate goal of taking Kira's head. Now that Ōishi was faced with the luxury of planning beyond that immediate goal, new considerations were clearly in order. One of these may well have been the conclusion that the *ashigaru* was expendable. It was likely within the frame of such calculations that Terasaka was asked to leave before entering the Sengakuji compound.

Looking more broadly at the many accounts over three centuries of Terasaka's fate that morning, both historical and imaginary, it is striking how frequently the issue becomes focused on whether he was qualified to die together with the rest. The often told story of his attempted surrender to Sengoku after the seppuku of the others, precisely because it is surely apocryphal, conveys the common sense that on the one hand, Terasaka himself desperately wished to die like the others as a mark of proper samurai status, and on the other, the cold reality that he would never be allowed to do so. In the harshest telling of this story, Sengoku was outraged that an *ashigaru* should have the temerity to request the same seppuku accorded to Kuranosuke and others of high rank (*o-rekireki*), and chastised Terasaka severely for even proposing the idea.¹⁰⁷ The same mentality was conveyed from a different angle by the dramatic conclusion of the kabuki *Sazareishi go Taiheiki* in 1710, in which Terasaka begged his comrades to let him commit seppuku with them, but they managed to persuade him that this would not be appropriate. In these and many other accounts, the crucial factor in Terasaka's fate had nothing to do with a secret mission, and everything to do with whether or not he should die with

the rest. All the evidence works to conclude that his exclusion from the league was in essence a denial of the honorable sentence of seppuku.

TERASAKA KICHIEMON IN MODERN POPULAR CULTURE

The single most revealing transformation of Terasaka Kichiemon in modern popular culture has been in the “Gishi tales” (*gishiden* 義士伝) storytelling tradition of *kōdan* and *naniwabushi*, in which there had emerged by the late nineteenth century a distinctive version of his life story. Since few records survive of actual *kōdan* texts until they were transcribed and printed as “shorthand books” (*sokkibon* 速記本) from the late 1880s, it is difficult to tell exactly how and when the tale emerged, but it can be found in its full form as told by Momokawa Enrin III 三代桃川燕林 (1846-1905) and included in an 1896 *sokkibon* edition of his Gishi tales.¹⁰⁸ It was told in many variations by later storytellers, reaching a classic form as performed by Ichiryūsai Teizan VI 六代一龍齋貞山 (1876-1945) in the Taisho period, but the essential plot remained the same; it goes as follows.¹⁰⁹

An abandoned infant boy was discovered by Yoshida Kanetsugu 金継, a 200-koku retainer of the lord of Sasayama 篠山 in Tanba 丹波, who took him in and named him Kichiemon, with a family name Terasaka after the hill near a temple where he was found.¹¹⁰ He was given training in scholarship and the military arts, and raised as a samurai. Kanetsugu died, and was succeeded by his heir Kanesuke 金亮 [the proper name of Chūzaemon, the future Akō rōnin], who was slightly younger than Kichiemon [although historically much older]. One day Chūzaemon discovered that Kichiemon had been having an affair with his wife’s maid. Both Kichiemon and the pregnant maid were dismissed almost naked, each with a single piece of clothing, he with the baby gown in which he had been discovered, and she with a sleeveless vest. On the verge of suicide, they discovered that Yoshida and his wife out of compassion had stitched 50 gold pieces into the back of her skimpy garment, which enabled them to leave Sasayama and go to Edo, where they were taken in and adopted by an elderly greengrocer, shortly after which Kichiemon’s wife gave birth to a lovely daughter named Okaru お軽. Thirteen years later, after somehow surviving in Edo as a vegetable peddler, Kichiemon one day chanced to see Yoshida’s wife through the window of a hatamoto barrack, and he and his wife deemed this a perfect opportunity to get back in touch and repay their debt of gratitude. They met with Yoshida, who in the meantime had become a rōnin as a result of slander and moved to Edo to eke out a living making umbrellas in a rented barrack. It also turned out that an offer had been made by the Asano daimyo of Akō to hire Chūzaemon as a military expert at a stipend of 50 koku, but he did not have enough cash to retrieve his swords and armor from the pawnshop. Kichiemon decided he must somehow help out his former master, and as he and his wife were trying to come up with some scheme to raise the money, their daughter Okaru, now age thirteen, proposed that she herself be

sold into prostitution at the Yoshiwara for 50 gold pieces. This was done, and with the money, Yoshida Chūzaemon was hired by Asano. Kichiemon himself was rewarded with a job as an Asano *ashigaru*, and Okaru was redeemed. The rest is history.

This simple plot summary does little justice to the elaborate detail and subplots that characterize the full form of the story, which took one to two hours to tell, but it is enough to reveal what is going on. Basically, it is a back-formation from *Kanadehon Chūshingura*, providing the “true story” of the sale of Okaru into prostitution in Acts 5 and 6. The “real” Terasaka was not Okaru’s brother (Teraoka Heiemon in the play), it turns out, but her father, and the money earned by selling her was intended not to enable her husband (Kanpei) to join the league of revenge, but rather to enable her father to redeem his own benefactor and take a position with the Akō clan—all prior to the actual incident. Of course, all of this is pure fantasy, but one that differs in revealing ways from the versions of the Terasaka character that we saw in eighteenth-century jōruri and kabuki. One striking contrast is that Terasaka’s subordination to Yoshida, which had disappeared on the Kamigata stage, now reappears as the fundamental axis of his life story. Indeed, Kichiemon’s debt to Yoshida is all the more profound, since he is taken in as a near-naked baby rather than as a child servant. As in the early Gishi dramas, the role of Fuwa Kazuemon is blended with that of Terasaka, who is dismissed from his domain for misbehavior. Wholly in contrast to the eighteenth-century Kamigata stage creations, however, we are now in the world of lower-class chōnin in late Edo, where Terasaka becomes an ordinary vegetable peddler—a quintessential Edokko 江戸っ子 trade. He is marginal as always, but as in the stage character of Heiemon, it is a marginality that invites familiarity and affection on the part of the audience. This version of Terasaka Kichiemon may be taken as his modal character in popular culture from late Meiji until the Pacific War; it has wholly disappeared today.

The great medium of Chūshingura in twentieth-century popular culture has been film (including television), which in the prewar heyday of Gishi cinema drew heavily on *kōdan* stories for its basic plots. The chronology of prewar Gishi cinema lists four films of the *meimeiden* variety that treat Terasaka’s story alone: two entitled *Terasaka Kichiemon* 寺坂吉右衛門 in 1912 and 1916, and two as *Ashigaru Kichiemon* 足軽吉右衛門 in 1930 and 1932.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, none of these survive, so we cannot be sure what stories they told, but they most likely followed the *kōdan* version described above. The character of Terasaka appeared in many of the all-star productions of Chūshingura that were created by the major studios from the 1930s until the early 1960s, but always as a bit part. The one exception, and one that is likely to be familiar to Western audiences, is the striking vignette in Inagaki Hiroshi’s 稲垣浩 (1905-80) 1962 *Tōhō* 東宝 production, which was the last of the great all-star Chūshingura films and remains widely available in a version with English sub-titles.¹¹² Terasaka was played by veteran actor Katō Daisuke 加東大介 in a role that was condensed almost entirely into a single dramatic scene of less than two minutes. While all of the other forty-six have gathered to prepare for the attack on Kira, we see Kichiemon staggering through the snowy night, falling once, rising and

then falling again with his face in the snow. He reaches out and grabs at two street types who chance by, and tries to explain, “Help me, I’ll miss the appointed time; they’ll think that my humble status means I’m a weak-willed coward (*mibun no iyashii mono wa yap-pari kokoroashikute* 身分の卑しい者はやっぱり心悪しくて), and call me a runaway. . . . Please tell them Kichiemon’s sick. He’s ill and . . .” When asked who they should tell, and where, he can only reply in desperation, “I can’t tell you, I can’t.” The other two jeer at him and leave him to his misery. It is unclear where the screenwriter Gōda Toku 郷田 恵 found the inspiration for this pathetic role, but the closest parallel from the past would probably be the version described in Katashima Shin’en’s *Sekijō gishinden* of 1719, in which Terasaka arrived late for the attack and then simply disappeared.

CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR THE HISTORIAN’S REVENGE

The trouble with Terasaka all began with his borderline status as an *ashigaru* foot soldier, one who was of the bushi estate but not a proper *samurai*. The serious trouble came, however, only when the discrepancy of numbers emerged on the morning after the attack on Kira, between the forty-seven names on the official manifesto of the league and the forty-six rōnin who surrendered to the bakufu at Sengakuji. And the greatest trouble of all began when the league leadership agreed to lie to the authorities about what really happened to the missing Terasaka, claiming that he had disappeared before the attack, when in fact he had been present within the Kira mansion and responded to the roll call when the attack was over. The mendacity of Ōshi Kuranosuke and the others was not obvious to most at the time, however, and would become seriously troubling only a century and more later. For the time being, rumors emerged to tell a much more palatable alternative story about Terasaka, relating that he had been sent on a special secret mission to take news of the successful attack on Kira to their lord’s younger brother in Hiroshima. If the leaders were less than truthful, it could be excused as an expedient tactic to protect the mission. In the process, Terasaka was salvaged as a full league member—and even promoted to full samurai status in the prototypical version in *Akō shōshūki*. The ensuing narrative of Terasaka’s return to Edo to confess his guilt after the seppuku of the forty-six others further enhanced his now-legendary stature.

While this early work of the “Chūshingura imagination” among samurai chroniclers in Edo served to maintain the honor of both Terasaka and the league leaders, a wholly different sort of imagination began to brew among novelists and playwrights for bourgeois audiences in the Kamigata region, resulting in the boom in “Akō-mono” puppet and kabuki plays in late 1710 that re-cast Terasaka as an autonomous individual, seeking by ingenuity and dedication to rise above his humble station. In his final stage incarnation as Teraoka Heiemon in *Kanadehon Chūshingura* in 1748, he became a likable striver who was palatable to both Kamigata and Edo audiences, and found an enduring place in popular culture. Throughout the eighteenth century, the potential of Terasaka’s anom-

alous status worked to stimulate still further lineages of the imagination. In one variant, he moved outward to remote corners of Japan in the persona of a traveling priest, the lone survivor who lived to tell the story and to dedicate himself to assuaging the spirits of his forty-six comrades while helping out the local people. Within the city of Edo where it all began, still another version of Terasaka emerged in the course of the later Edo period in the *kōdan* tale that skillfully synthesized elements of *Kanadehon* with the historical fact of his subordination to Yoshida Chūzaemon, turning Terasaka into a vegetable peddler in Edo with whom the lower-class artisanal culture of the Edokko could identify. In all these ways, his troubling ambiguity and marginal status were transformed into positive assets and an inspiration for creative storytelling.

At the same time, however, the tale of the Forty-Seven Rōnin became locked into a didactic moralizing framework capsulized by the term *Gishi*, “Righteous Samurai,” which by the end of the eighteenth century had come to be used almost exclusively to refer to the Akō avengers. In the extended Confucian debates over the righteousness of their cause and of the punishment accorded them, the voices of such critics as Satō Naokata and Dazai Shundai were in the end drowned out by the rising chorus of defenders of the *Gishi*. In this way, elite intellectual opinion and the imagination of popular culture reinforced one another in ways that discouraged any criticism of the motives of the rōnin, above all of the leader Ōishi Kuranosuke. This made it all the more troubling when a variety of serious historians in the nineteenth century came to review the documentary evidence of the Akō incident, and found themselves confronting anew the incontrovertible fact that the leaders had not been truthful in explaining what happened to Terasaka. This dilemma was solved not by looking more closely and critically at the behavior of the leaders themselves, but rather in falling back on the now well-established story of Terasaka’s secret mission to Hiroshima and his subsequent confession to chief inspector Sengoku, however implausible this may have seemed and however sparse the evidence. This story line became even more ardently propagated in the later Meiji period as there emerged a distinctive modern cult of the *Gishi* that envisioned their feudal loyalty as wholly congruent with loyalty to the modern emperor. In this context, the periodic recrudescence in the twentieth century of charges that Terasaka was actually a coward who had fled for his life was nothing more than a perpetuation of the fundamental assumption of the unassailable righteousness of the league of revenge as a whole. Whether one included Terasaka in the league as a loyal retainer, or excluded him as a coward, the end result was simply to reaffirm the essential virtue of Ōishi Kuranosuke and the others.

What was lost in the course of all these imaginative ways of dealing with the troubles of Terasaka’s marginal status and the contradictory accounts of what happened that morning has been the historical imagination itself—the effort to strive to imagine what it was like on the ground at the time, and to reconstruct the thinking of the various diverse individuals involved. Such efforts have been consistently discouraged for three centuries by the impulse to defend and protect the *Gishi* from all criticism as the story of their

revenge was crafted into the national legend of the Japanese people. It is perhaps time for historians to take their own revenge, and to look more closely at the “sad truth” of the fate of Terasaka. I may be wrong in speculating that he was dismissed as a possible impediment to an honorable sentence of seppuku by the bakufu, but I am convinced that Ōishi and his comrades behaved in a calculating and deliberately political manner in choosing their options after they had taken Kira’s head. The author of *Hagakure* charged that “these Kamigata types are clever (*chie kashikoshi* 知恵かしこし) and good at doing things that earn them praise, . . . but they are unable to act directly without stopping to think.”¹¹³ But it is as fatuous to blame them for being realistic and thoughtful as it is to praise them for thinking of nothing but righteous loyalty to their lord. The trouble with Terasaka Kichiemon in the aftermath of the attack on Kira can be explained only by recognizing the leaders of the league as calculating and deliberate, attentive to the political consequences of their actions and to the way in which they would be judged by others. Only by dislodging the Gishi from the pedestal of righteousness can the historical imagination recover their story in all its rich human complexity.

REFERENCES

Akō Gishi Jiten Kankōkai 1972

Akō Gishi Jiten Kankōkai 赤穂義士事典刊行会, ed. *Akō gishi jiten* 赤穂義士事典. Kōbe: Akō Gishi Jiten Kankōkai, 1972.

Akō-shi 1987

Akō-shi Sōmubu Shishi Hensanshitsu 赤穂市総務部市史編さん室, ed. *Chūshingura* 忠臣蔵. 7 vols. Akō: Akō-shi, 1987-.

Akō-shi 1997

Akō-shi Sōmubu Shishi Hensanshitsu 赤穂市総務部市史編さん室, ed. *Akō gishi ron: Terasaka Kichiemon o megutte* 赤穂義士論：寺坂吉右衛門をめぐって. Akō: Akō-shi, 1997.

Akō seigi

Misumi Kan 三角寛, ed. *Akō seigi* 赤穂正義. Bonenji, 1970.

Aoyama 1851

Aoyama Nobumitsu 青山延光. *Akō shijūshichi-shi den* 赤穂四十七士伝. Edo: Suharaya Ihachi, 1851. Reprinted in *Nihon kyōiku bunko* 日本教育文庫 (Dōbunkan, 1910), vol. 6, pp. 714-61.

Asakichi ichiranki

Asakichi ichiranki 浅吉一覽記. Manuscript, n.d. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 1, pp. 370-406.

Asano adauchi ki

- Asano adauchi ki* 浅野仇討記. Manuscript, n.d. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 118-59.
- Bitō 1975
 Bitō Masahide 尾藤正英. “Akō gishi” 赤穂義士. In *Genroku jidai* 元禄時代, vol. 19 of *Nihon no rekishi* 日本の歴史 (Shōgakukan, 1975), pp. 297-323. For an English translation, see Bitō Masahide, “The Akō Incident, 1701-1703,” trans. Henry D. Smith II, *Monumenta Nipponica* 58:2 (Summer 2003), pp. 149-69.
- Chūshin kogane no tanzaku*
 Namiki Sōsuke 並木宗輔, Ogawa Jōsuke 小川丈助, and Yasuda Abun 安田蛙文. *Chūshin kogane no tanzaku* 忠臣金短冊. 1832. In Akō-shi 1987, vol. 4, pp. 61-120.
- Chūō Gishikai 1931
 Chūō Gishikai 中央義士会, ed. *Akō gishi shiryō* 赤穂義士史料. 3 vols. Yūzankaku, 1931.
- Craig 1959
 Albert Craig. “The Restoration Movement in Chōshū.” *Journal of Asian Studies* 18:2 (February 1959), pp. 187-97.
- Ejima 1710
 Ejima Kiseki 江島其磧. *Keisei denju-gamiko* けいせい伝受紙子. In *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系, vol. 78. Iwanami Shoten, 1989.
- Ekisui renbeiroku 1703
Ekisui renbeiroku 易水連袂録. Manuscript, preface dated 1703.3. In Chūō Gishikai 1931, vol. 3, pp. 449-528 (books 1-4) and Saitō 1974 (books 1-10).
- Eshita 1999
 Eshita Hirohiko 江下博彦. *Shichinin no Kichiemon* 七人の吉右衛門. Sōbunsha, 1999.
- Fukumoto 1909
 Fukumoto Nichinan 福本日南. *Genroku kaikyōroku* 元禄快擧録. Keiseisha, 1909.
- Fukumoto 1914
 Fukumoto Nichinan 福本日南. *Genroku kaikyō shinsōroku* 元禄快拳真相録. Tōadō Shoten, 1914.
- Fukushima 1931
 Fukushima Shirō 福島四郎. “Tokutomi Sohō-shi no Terasaka tōbō setsu wa mōdan nari” 徳富蘇峰氏の寺坂逃亡説は妄談也. *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* 日本及日本人 218 (1 February 1931), pp. 35-45.
- Hasegawa 1994a
 Hasegawa Tsuyoshi 長谷川強. “Kanadehon Chūshingura kō: Sono seiritu to ukiyo-zōshi” 「仮名手本忠臣蔵」考：その成立と浮世草子. *Gakuen* 学苑 650 (February 1994), pp. 1-13.
- Hasegawa 1994b
 Hasegawa Tsuyoshi 長谷川強. “Ukiyo-zōshi to jitsuroku, kōdan: Akō jiken, Ōoka seidan no baai” 浮世草子と実録、講談：赤穂事件、大岡政談の場合. *Kokugakuin*

- zasshi* 国学院雑誌 95:12 (no. 1053), December 1994, pp. 60-72.
- Hiroi 1994
Hiroi Kei 広井桂. "Terasaka Kichiemon ni kansuru Yagi ronbun ni taisuru hanron" 寺坂吉右衛門に関する八木論文に対する反論. *Gishikon* 義士魂, no. 51 (December 1994), pp. 18-126.
- Ichiryūsai Teizan 1928
Ichiryūsai Teizan 一龍齋貞山. "Terasaka Kichiemon Nobuyuki" 寺坂吉右衛門信行. In Noma Seiji 野間清治, ed., *Kōdan zenshū* 講談全集 (Dai-Nihon Yūbenkai Kōdansha, 1929), pp. 942-76.
- Iio 1997
Iio Kuwashi 飯尾精. "Shijūshichi-shi ron" 四十七士論. In *Akō-shi* 1997, pp. 1-37.
- Imao 1987
Imao Tetsuya 今尾哲也. *Kira no kubi: Chūshingura to imajinēshon* 吉良の首：忠臣蔵とイメージネーション. Heibonsha, 1987.
- Inagaki 1962
Inagaki Hiroshi, dir. *Chūshingura: Hana no maki, Yuki no maki* 忠臣蔵：花の巻、雪の巻. Color film. Tōhō, 1962.
- Ishii 1974
Ishii Shirō 石井紫郎, ed. *Kinsei buke shisō* 近世武家思想. *Nihon shisō taikai* 日本思想大系, vol. 27. Iwanami Shoten, 1974.
- Ishikawa 1977
Ishikawa Ryō 石川了. "Gishi jōruri nisan no saikentō: Futatsu no Yatsuhanagata oyobi Goban Taiheiki" 義士浄瑠璃二三の再検討：二つの「八花形」及び「碁盤太平記」. *Kokugo kokubungaku* 国語国文学 58 (1977), pp. 28-37.
- Itō 1934
Itō Takeo 伊藤武雄. "Terasaka Nobuyuki setsuenroku" [赤穂義士] 寺坂信行雪冤録. *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* 日本及日本人 291 (February 11, 1934), pp. 65-72, and 292 (March 1, 1934), pp. 75-86.
- Itō 1935
Itō Takeo 伊藤武雄. [*Akō gishi*] *Terasaka Nobuyuki setsuenroku* 寺坂信行雪冤録. Akō: Kōkoku Shifūkai, 1935.
- Kabuki nenpyō* 1956-63
Ihara Toshirō 伊原敏郎, ed. *Kabuki nenpyō* 歌舞伎年表. 8 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1956-63.
- Kaisekiki*
Kaisekiki 介石記. Manuscript, n.d. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 378-416.
- Katashima 1719
Katashima Takenori (Shin'en) 片島武矩(深淵). *Sekijō gishinden* 赤城義臣伝. Osaka: Kawachiya Genshichirō, 1719. Reprinted as Miyazaki Sanmai 宮崎三昧, comp., *Kiseki taikan* 奇籍大観, vol. 2 (Hiyoshimaru Shobō, 1909).
- Katayama 1970

- Katayama Hakusen 片山伯仙, ed. *Akō gishi no tegami* 赤穂義士の手紙. Akō: Akō Gishi no Tegami Kankōkai, 1970.
- Keene 1971
Donald Keene, trans. *Chūshingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers): A Puppet Play by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shōraku and Namiki Senryū*. Columbia University Press, 1971.
- Kitagawa 1985
Kitagawa Tadahiko 北川忠彦. “Teraoka Heiemon no seiritsu” 寺岡平右衛門の成立. *Geinōshi kenkyū* 芸能史研究 90 (July 1985), pp. 16–30.
- Kokusho sōmokuroku*
Kokusho sōmokuroku 国書総目録. 8 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1963-76.
- Kōseki kenmonki*
Ochiai Yozaemon 落合与左衛門 (attrib.). *Kōseki kenmonki* 江赤見聞記. (Also known as *Kahishō* 家秘抄). In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 272-362.
- Mainichi shinbun* 1990
“Akō 46-shi” ni yūryoku shōko” 『赤穂46士』に有力証拠. *Mainichi shinbun* 毎日新聞, morning edition, Hyōgo 兵庫 local section, 5 December 1990.
- Marcon and Smith 2003
Federico Marcon and Henry D. Smith II. “A *Chūshingura* Palimpsest: Young Motoori Norinaga Hears the Story of the Akō Rōnin from a Buddhist Priest.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 58:3 (Autumn 2003), pp. 1-25.
- Miyake
Miyake Kanran 三宅観瀾. *Resshi hōshūroku* 烈士報讐録. Manuscript, n.d. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 1, pp. 513-24.
- Miyazawa 2001
Miyazawa Seiichi 宮澤誠一. *Kindai Nihon to ‘Chūshingura’ gensō* 近代日本と「忠臣蔵」幻想. Aoki Shoten, 2001.
- Momokawa 1896
Momokawa Enrin 桃川燕林. *Akō gishi shijūshichi-shi den* 赤穂義士四十七士伝. Bunjidō, 1896.
- Mueller 1986
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.
- Muro 1703
Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢. *Akō gijinroku* 赤穂義人録. Manuscript, preface dated 1703.10. Published as facsimile reproduction by Iktoku Zaidan, 1935, from copy by the author in the Sonkeikaku 尊経閣 collection of the Maeda 前田 family. Revised edition, n. d. (1709?) appears in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 363-409, and in annotated *yomikudashi* transcription in Ishii 1974, pp. 271-370.

Nabeta 1910-11

Nabeta Shōzan 鍋田晶山, ed. *Akō gijin sansho* 赤穂義人纂書. 3 vols. Kokusho Kankōkai, 1910-11.

Nakamura 1982-89

Nakamura Yukihiko 中村幸彦. *Nakamura Yukihiko chojutsushū* 中村幸彦著述集. 15 vols. Chūō Kōronsha, 1982-89.

Nishizawa 1851

Nishizawa Ippō 西沢一鳳. *Kyakushoku yoroku* 脚色余禄. 1851. In *Shin gunsho ruijū* 新群書類従, vol. 2. Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906.

Ogawa 1708

Ogawa Tsunemitsu 小川恒充. *Chūsei gokanroku* 忠誠後鑑録. Manuscript, postscript dated 1708. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 410-553, including undated supplement *Chūsei gokanroku wakusetsu* 忠誠後鑑録或説.

Onikage Musashi abumi

Ki no Kaion 紀海音. *Onikage Musashi abumi* 鬼鹿毛武蔵鑑. In *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 4, pp. 26-60.

Saitō 1974

Saitō Shigeru 斉藤茂, ed. *Ekisui renbeiroku: Genroku 16-nen chojutsu (zen)* 易水連袂録: 元禄16年著述(全). Nihon Sakimori Kyōkai Hotta Bunko Hanpubu, 1974.

Sasama 1970

Sasama Yoshihiko 笹間良彦. *Ashigaru no seikatsu* 足軽の生活. Yūzankaku, 1969.

Sato 1995

Hiroaki Sato. *Legends of the Samurai*. The Overlook Press, 1995.

Sekijō shiwa

Sekijō shiwa 赤城土話. Manuscript, n.d. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 1, pp. 196-258.

Shigeno 1889

Shigeno Yasutsugu 重野安繹. *Akō gishi jitsuwa* 赤穂義士実話. Taiseikan, 1889.

Shively 1982

Donald H. Shively. "Tokugawa Plays on Forbidden Topics." In James R. Brandon, ed., *Chūshingura: Studies in Kabuki and the Puppet Theater* (University of Hawaii Press, 1982), pp. 23-57.

Smith 2003

Henry D. Smith II. "The Capacity of Chūshingura." *Monumenta Nipponica* 58:1 (Spring 2003), pp. 1-42.

Sugimoto 1703

Sugimoto Yoshichika 杉本義鄰. *Akō shōshūki* 赤穂鍾秀記. Manuscript, 1703. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 417-86.

Sugimoto 2001

Sugimoto Kazuhiro 杉本和寛. "Akō jiken kyokōka no hōhō to imi" 赤穂事件虚構化の方法と意味. In *Edo bungaku to shuppan media: Kinsei zenki shōsetsu o chūshin ni* 江戸文学と出版メディア: 近世前期小説を中心に, ed. Fuji Akio 富士昭雄. Kasama Shoin, 2001.

Suzuki 1992

Suzuki Tōzō 鈴木棠三, ed. *Shinpen koji kotowaza jiten* 新編故事ことわざ辞典. Sōtakusha, 1992.

Tahara 1978

Tahara Tsuguo 田原嗣郎. *Akō shijūrokushi ron: Bakuhansei no seishin kōzō* 赤穂四十六士論：幕藩制の精神構造. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1978.

Takahashi 2002

Takahashi Keiichi 高橋圭一. *Jitsuroku kenkyū: Suji o tōsu bungaku* 実録研究：筋を通す文学. Seibundō, 2002.

Tanaka 2002

Tanaka Mitsurō 田中光郎. “Fuwa Kazuemon to Okano Jidayū no chishi” 不破数右衛門と岡野治大夫の致仕. <http://homepage1.nifty.com/longivy/note/li0053.htm>. Posted 8 August 2002.

Tokutomi 1924

Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰. “Shijūshichi-shi ka shijūroku-shi ka” 四十七士乎四十六士乎. *Kokumin shinbun* 国民新聞, 7 December 1924, p. 5.

Tokutomi 1925

Tokutomi Iichirō (Sohō) 徳富猪一郎(蘇峰). *Kinsei Nihon kokumin shi* 近世日本国民史. Vol. 18: *Genroku jidai chūkan: Gishi hen* 元禄時代中巻：義士篇. Min'yūsha, 1925.

Uchida 1792

Uchida Shukumei 内田叔明. *Terasaka Nobuyuki itsuji hi ki* 寺坂信行逸事碑記. In Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 1, pp. 119-21.

Utsumi 1933

Utsumi Teijirō 内海定治郎. *Shinsetsu Akō gishiroku* 真説赤穂義士録. Kōbe: Shidō Kyōiku Kenkyūkai, 1933.

Yagi 1991

Yagi Akihiro 八木哲浩. “Terasaka Kichiemon, sono jitsuzō” 寺坂吉右衛門、その実像. *Hyōgo-ken no rekishi* 兵庫県の歴史 27 (March 1991), pp. 38-49.

Yagi 1993a

Yagi Akihiro. “Terasaka Kichiemon, sono jitsuzō (ni)” 寺坂吉右衛門、その実像 (二). *Hyōgo-ken no rekishi* 兵庫県の歴史 29 (March 1993), pp. 17-27.

Yagi 1993b

Yagi Akihiro. “Terasaka Kichiemon, sono jitsuzō saietsu” 寺坂吉右衛門、その実像再説. *Nihon rekishi* 日本歴史 541 (June 1993), pp. 1-19.

Yagi 1997

Yagi Akihiro. “Shijūroku-shi ron” 四十六士論. In *Akō-shi* 1997, pp. 39-93.

Yamazaki 1854

Yamazaki Yoshishige 山崎美成. *Akō gishiden issekiwa* 赤穂義士伝一夕話. Edo: Yamatoya Kihei, 1854. Reprinted in *Nihon rekishi zue* 日本歴史図会, vol. 11 (Kokumin Tosho KK, 1922).

Yoshida 1912

Yoshida Ippei 吉田一平. “Terasaka Kichiemon Nobuyuki” 寺坂吉右衛門信行. In Nakamura Sōjirō 中村惣次郎, ed., *Akō gishi meimeiden* 赤穂義士銘々伝 (Hiyoshidō, 1912), pp. 260-84.

Yūda 1967

Yūda Yoshio. “*Kanadehon Chūshingura no seiritsu*” 「仮名手本忠臣蔵」の成立. *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to kanshō* 国文学：解釈と鑑賞, December 1967. Reprinted in Yūda Yoshio, *Jōruri shi ronkō* 浄瑠璃史論考 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1975), pp. 359-370.

NOTES

- ¹ On the “capacity” of Chūshingura, see Miyazawa 2001, p. 5, and Smith 2003, p. 1 and *passim*.
- ² Imao 1987.
- ³ Terasaka’s stipend is difficult to compare directly with those of the two other lowest-ranking league members, Kanzaki Yōgorō 神崎与五郎 and Mimura Jirōzaemon 三村次郎左衛門, since different units were used and different sources give different figures, but each of these three received between one and two percent of the income of Ōishi Kuranosuke, who at 1500 koku far outstripped all other members of the league. For a chart listing the stipends of the Akō rōnin, see Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, pp. 746-47.
- ⁴ Craig 1959, pp. 188-89. Craig notes that the English “samurai” tends to include the entire bushi estate, while the Japanese “*samurai* 侍” is typically limited to the upper levels of *shi*, and also includes court and temple warriors not in the bushi estate.
- ⁵ It is revealing that when the early Meiji government used the *shi-sotsu* distinction to create two new groups for former bushi, “*shizoku* 士族” and “*sotsuzoku* 卒族,” it soon became apparent that local uses were too varied to make it consistent, so it was decided to eliminate the *sotsuzoku* and to incorporate all *ex-sotsu* whose position was hereditary into the *shizoku* group. Terasaka’s father appears to have been a proper retainer of Asano, but it is unclear in the historical record whether he was an *ashigaru*, or if so, whether Kichiemon was the proper heir to this status.
- ⁶ Sasama 1969, p. 155, states unequivocally that *ashigaru* in the daimyo domains were judged by magistrates rather than inspectors, no different from chonin or peasants, and that in most domains, *seppuku* was not included among the possible punishments.
- ⁷ Momokawa 1896, pp. 93-4.
- ⁸ Fukushima 1939, p. 108.
- ⁹ Three forms of Terasaka’s account survive. “Terasaka Nobuyuki jiki 寺坂信行自記” covers the period up until immediately before the attack; see Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, pp. 224-41. “Terasaka Nobuyuki hikki 寺坂信行筆記,” which was sent to two of Yoshida Chūzaemon’s brothers-in-law in 1703.05, was expanded to include an account of the attack on Kira; see Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 223-42 (which is interspersed with critical later comments by Ōkura Kensai). “Terasaka shiki 寺坂私記” was copied by Terasaka’s grandson Nobunari 信成 after Terasaka’s death and is generally the same as the

“Hikki,” with various minor changes. (These changes in the “Shiki” are misrepresented by Yagi Akihiro in *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 1, pp. 223-24, as consciously deceptive efforts to preserve Terasaka’s reputation; Yagi seems to have been specifically upset by Nobunari’s postscript asserting that Terasaka was sent to Hiroshima after the attack on Kira, but this is not part of the diary itself.)

- ¹⁰ Fukushima 1931, p. 41.
- ¹¹ Yagi in *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 1, p. 229; for a detailed rebuttal, see Hiroi 1994, pp. 37-40.
- ¹² The most famous of these servants, both in fact and legend, was Jinzaburō 甚三郎, the servant-retainer of Chikamatsu Kanroku 近松勘六 (1670-1703) who brought oranges and rice cakes for the rōnin after the attack on Kira. Ōishi Kuranosuke was also accompanied to Edo by two personal retainers, Saroku 左六 and Kōshichi 幸七, whom he dismissed shortly before the attack; see Ōishi’s letter of 1702.12.10 to Onodera Tan 小野寺丹, in *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 3, pp. 371-72.
- ¹³ See for example the copy of the league manifesto (*kōjōsho*) in *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 3, pp. 395-96, where eleven members are given a qualification, nine as heir or younger son of a senior member, plus Mimura as “kitchen official” (*daidokoro yakunin* 台所役人, suggestive of his own borderline position) and Terasaka as “Yoshida Chūzaemon kumi *ashigaru* 吉田忠左衛門組足輕.”
- ¹⁴ By modern reckoning, the actual attack on Kira took place in the early pre-dawn hours of the 15th day of the month, but in Edo usage, the change from one day to the next was considered to come at dawn rather than midnight, so that the date of the night attack is usually given as the 14th.
- ¹⁵ A document of the Chōfu 長府 domain (Mōri 毛利 house) that held the third of the four groups, dated 1702.12.15, clearly records the original assignment of ten each to the three smaller domains; *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 3, p. 559. In addition, a later record of the Okazaki domain specifically states that Terasaka had been assigned to them; *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 3, p. 616; see Yagi Akihiro in *Akō-shi* 1997, p. 46, for this issue.
- ¹⁶ This is the version of the Sengoku interrogation given in both in *Kōseki kenmonki*, 6 (Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, p. 319), and in *Ekisui renbeiroku*, 5 (Saitō 1974, p. 115). Both are second-hand accounts, but the language is strikingly similar in each, with no differences in the basic content. Yoshida Chūzaemon himself confirmed in a farewell letter of 1703.2.3 to his son-in-law Itō Haruoki that he had reported to Sengoku on the 15th of the twelfth month of the previous year that Terasaka had left the scene (*kakeochi itashimōshisōrō* 駆落いたし申候), although he did not specify whether before or after the attack; *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 3, p. 414. Yagi in *Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 1, p. 216, cites a different account of the Sengoku interrogation in which it was reported that Terasaka joined in the attack until Kira was killed, and then disappeared (*Akō-shi* 1987, vol. 3, pp. 471-2); this is a highly unreliable document, however, far less credible than *Kōseki kenmonki*, and in using it, Yagi conspicuously violated his insistence (for example in *ibid.*, p. 356) on using only the most reliable primary materials.
- ¹⁷ It is revealing that the genres (*ruī* 類) to which the early chronicles are assigned in the *Kokusho sōmoku* are quite diffuse: the ten works mentioned in note 19 are referred to by terms that variously mean biography, chronicle, or miscellany: *denki* 伝記 (1), *kiroku* (2), *jitsuroku* (3), *zakki* 雑記 (2), and *zasshi* 雑史 (2). The works are highly diverse in content, style, and approach, and should not be conceived as a unified genre beyond the broad category of historical chronicle.
- ¹⁸ Even in the Edo period, the term “*jitsuroku*” was not commonly used for such manuscript works of historical fiction, which would rather be known by their content (which was largely tales of revenge

or daimyo succession quarrels) or perhaps as *kakihon* 書本, or “manuscript books.” It was mostly in the Meiji period, when such works appeared in print for the first time, that the term *jitsuroku* came into common use. From the late Meiji period, literary historians came to use the term “*jitsuroku*-style novels” (*jitsuroku-tai shōsetsu* 実録体小説)—or just “*jitsuroku*” for short—to refer to such works. See Nakamura 1982-89, vol. 10, pp. 19-55, and Takahashi 2002, pp. 1-9.

- ¹⁹ There are at least ten surviving early chronicles of the Akō incident; two of these—*Resshi hōshūroku* and *Akō gijinroku*—were composed in Chinese by Confucian scholars. The following list is alphabetical by title and shows pages with passages relevant to Terasaka; all except *Ekisui renbeiroku* were included in Nabeta 1910-11. 1) Muro Kyūsō, *Akō gijinroku* (Muro 1703, no pagination; for 1709 edition, see Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 403-04 and Ishii 1974, pp. 335-36, 367); 2) Sugimoto Yoshichika, *Akō shōshūki* (Sugimoto 1703, pp. 438, 451, 480-81); 3) *Asakichi ichiranki* (pp. 380-81); 4) *Asano adauchi ki* (no mention of Terasaka); 5) Ogawa Tsunemitsu, *Chūsei gokanroku* (Ogawa 1708, pp. 488, 543-44); 6) *Ekisui renbeiroku* (*Ekisui renbeiroku* 1703, in Chūō Gishikai 1931, vol. 3, p. 504, and Saitō 1974, pp. 113, 119; Terasaka is twice listed erroneously as “Teraoka,” suggesting that the manuscript used here post-dates Chikamatsu’s *Goban Taiheiki* of ca. 1710 and probably *Kanadehon Chūshingura* of 1748); 7) *Kaisekiki* (p. 401); 8) *Kōseki kenmonki* (pp. 271-72, 276, 319); 9) Miyake Kanran, *Resshi hōshūroku* (Miyake, p. 523); and 10) *Sekijō shiwa* (p. 229).
- ²⁰ Katayama 1970, p. 285.
- ²¹ Letter of Ōishi Kuranosuke, Hara Sōemon, and Onodera Jūnai to Terai Genkei, 1702.12.24, in Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 409. For the *Kōseki kenmonki* version, see Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 312-13.
- ²² The writer was Muro Kyūsō, who acquired the Terasaka “Hikki” at some point before making substantial revisions of his *Akō gijinroku* for the final version of about 1709 (Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 403-04, and Ishii 1974, pp. 322-23), although it was not available to him when he composed the original 1703 version (for which see the Sonkeikaku manuscript in Muro 1703).
- ²³ See note 9 for the various versions of the Terasaka account.
- ²⁴ See Yagi Akihiro in Akō-shi 1987, vol. 1, pp. 216-17, for a comparison of the separate descriptions of the attack by Terasaka and by Yoshida himself. Yagi concluded that the two accounts shared key details but were written separately, constituting proof that Terasaka must have been in the attack.
- ²⁵ Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, p. 241. Yagi Akihiro placed great emphasis on this single line as evidence that Terasaka was lying here to cover up the fact that he did *not* reach Sengakuji, having already fled out of fear shortly after the attack on Kira. Yagi claimed that the passage is suspiciously lacking in detail (particularly in the absence of any mention of the dispatch of Yoshida Chūzaemon en route to Sengakuji to report to chief inspector Sengoku), and that the bridge actually crossed was Eitaibashi 永代橋, not Shin-Ōhashi 新大橋 (Akō-shi 1987, vol. 1, p. 219). As pointed out by Hiroi Kei, however, other accounts also gave Shin-Ōhashi as the actual route (Hiroi 1994, pp. 20-27), and the lack of detail surely reflects Terasaka’s reluctance to describe the particulars of his dismissal.
- ²⁶ Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, p. 242.
- ²⁷ Kitagawa Tadahiko speculates that this rumor may have resulted from a confusion of Terasaka with Oyamada Shōzaemon 小山田庄左衛門 (1678-1721), who is said to have stolen a kimono and some cash when he defected from the league. Kitagawa also notes other (and more sympathetic) stories that

Terasaka was provided with clothing in order to set out on his secret mission to carry news of the success of the mission to others; see Kitagawa 1985, pp. 18-19, 20.

- ²⁸ Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 270-71. It is unclear whether “*sonoba*” refers to the Kira mansion, to Sengakuji, or possibly just to Edo in general. Yoshida’s wife is not likely to have been much concerned about the exact location of Terasaka’s dismissal.
- ²⁹ The Honda were in Murakami from 1704-10. For further changes in the Honda domain, see note 65 below.
- ³⁰ The only one of these seven accounts that even suggests that Terasaka actually participated in the attack on Kira is *Kaisekiki*, which briefly mentions that he was missing en route to Sengakuji, implying that he was in the attack but not clearly saying so; nor does it include any mention of a further mission. *Kaisekiki* seems to have been a widely available manuscript, known to the authors of both *Chūsei gokanroku* and *Sekijō gishinden*.
- ³¹ The only report by one of the Akō rōnin themselves of the possibility of a mission for Terasaka is that of Kaiga Yazaemon, the younger brother of Yoshida Chūzaemon, who told his keepers at the Matsuyama domain mansion that he thought Terasaka might possibly have been sent to take news of the successful attack to Asano’s widow Yōzeiin or her older brother Asano Nagateru 浅野長照 (1652-1705), daimyo of Miyoshi 三次. He further speculated that Terasaka might also have been sent to inform the families of the league members in the Kamigata region; Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, p. 103. In addition, Horiuchi Den’emon of the Hosokawa mansion reported in the context of a conversation with Yoshida Chūzaemon about Terasaka (Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 527) that there had been reports of a Terasaka mission to take the news of the attack to others—but he did not indicate where, or whether these reports came from the league members in the Hosokawa mansion, or simply from other sources in Edo. Finally, an account of the events when all the Akō rōnin gathered at the Sengoku mansion on the evening after the attack claims that some of the bakufu officials there speculated that Terasaka had been sent as a messenger to take the news to Asano Daigaku; this account, however, is the same one that reported Yoshida to have told Sengoku that Terasaka had participated in the attack on Kira, which is contrary to the far more reliable accounts in *Kōseki kenmonki* and *Ekisui renbeiroku*; see Akō-shi, vol. 3, pp. 471-2. I suspect that this was written under the influence of such chronicles as *Akō shōshūki*.
- ³² Sugimoto 1703, p. 438.
- ³³ Yamazaki 1854, p. 329 (reprint ed.).
- ³⁴ See note 21.
- ³⁵ In his preface, Ogawa lists fully five other accounts—which he refers to as chronicles (*kiroku* 記録, *shūroku* 集録)—that he knew of, of which only two were among those that survive today (*Ekisui renbeiroku* and *Kaisekiki*), revealing how many such accounts have been lost. Neither *Akō shōshūki* nor *Akō gijinroku* are mentioned by Ogawa, suggesting the extent to which many of these chroniclers worked independently.
- ³⁶ Ogawa 1708, pp. 488, 543-44. Ogawa reports that he heard all this from a member of the Ōishi family who had heard it from Terasaka himself, but obvious errors in the account encourage skepticism. The most suspicious error is the claim that Terasaka went to Kameyama to pay respects to the family of Hara Sōemon. In fact, Hara lived in Osaka, and Kameyama was rather the residence of the

family of Terasaka's own superior, Yoshida Chūzaemon. Anyone who had real knowledge of Terasaka would not have made this error, which had appeared in earlier chronicles, most notably in the first version of Kyūsō's *Akō gijinroku* (Muro 1703, later corrected in 1709, for which see Ishii 1974, p. 323). This was probably the result of a confusion of Terasaka with Yano Isuke 矢野伊助, an *ashigaru* under Hara Sōemon who had defected from the league several days before the attack; see Kitagawa 1985, p. 20, who notes that the same error was made in *Sekijō shiwa*.

- ³⁷ For details on the publication of *Sekijō gishinden*, see Akō Gishi Jiten Kankōkai 1972, p. 479, and Smith 2003, p. 23.
- ³⁸ Katashima carefully listed all of his sources in the preface to his work; Katashima 1719, p. 10 (reprint ed.). For more detail on Katashima's sources, see Marcon and Smith 2003, pp. 11-12.
- ³⁹ Katashima 1719, pp. 303-4.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 336.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 360-61.
- ⁴² The term "Akō-mono" and the characterization of a "boom" are from Sugimoto 2001, p. 240.
- ⁴³ See Hasegawa 1989, p. 526, and Smith 2003, p. 20, for these developments. One correction should be made to the latter account: the adult heirs of the executed rōnin were not "returned from exile" in 1709: only four were actually exiled (to Izu Ōshima 伊豆大島), and those (with the exception of one who died on the island) were pardoned of exile on 1706.8.12 on the first memorial of the death of Tsunayoshi's mother. For details, see Akō-shi 1987, vol. 1, pp. 302-08.
- ⁴⁴ *Kabuki nenpyō* 1956-63, vol. 1, p. 394.
- ⁴⁵ See Shively 1982, pp. 38-39, for a brief summary of the Oguri legend.
- ⁴⁶ Hasegawa 1994a, pp. 2-7, engages in a detailed discussion of the possible sequence and dating of these and various other works of late 1710, but most of this remains speculation, since firm dates exist for none of the plays after *Onikage Musashi abumi*. Akō-shi 1987, vol. 5, p. 5, gives dates of the seventh and ninth months, respectively, for these two plays, but the authority for this is unclear.
- ⁴⁷ Summaries, illustrations, and casts of both plays appear in Nishizawa 1851, pp. 215-41 (*Taiheiki sazareishi*) and 250-72 (*Sazareishi go Taiheiki*). *Taiheiki sazareishi* has no character that appears to be modeled after Terasaka; for discussions of *Sazareishi go Taiheiki*, see Kitagawa 1985, p. 24, and Hasegawa 1994a, p. 7.
- ⁴⁸ Hasegawa 1994a, pp. 7-8, argues that the restoration of the younger brother must date this play to after the middle of the ninth month, when Asano Daigaku was restored, although he admits in note 15 that the restoration had already been anticipated since the time that Daigaku had an audience with the shogun three months earlier.
- ⁴⁹ Nishizawa 1851, p. 272. This expression seems to have acquired proverbial status by this time; a dictionary of Japanese proverbs gives citations for it from works of Edo fiction of 1702 and 1732; see Suzuki 1992, p. 789.
- ⁵⁰ I am indebted to Kitagawa 1985, p. 23, for his analysis of the importance in many Gishi plays of the figure of the "disowned samurai" (*kandōsha* 勘当者) as derived from Fuwa and his father, and of the ways in which it was combined with the Terasaka character in *Goban Taiheiki* and *Onikage Musashi abumi* (of which more below). Kitagawa did not, however, mention the same pattern in *Sazareishi go Taiheiki*.

- ⁵¹ The true nature of Fuwa's offense, for which he left the domain is 1697, remains obscure; he himself claimed that he was slandered, and the father left after the son (see Tanaka 2002), but a variety of more colorful legends grew up to explain the circumstances of the departure of both father and son from the domain.
- ⁵² These basic facts of Fuwa's life would have been available as of 1709 in Muro Kyūsō's *Akō gijinroku*; see Ishii 1974, pp. 322-23.
- ⁵³ The notion that Fuwa's father committed suicide is contrary to historical fact, since Fuwa wrote a letter to his father not long after the attack on Kira, for which see below at note 106.
- ⁵⁴ See Mueller 1986 for a commentary and English translation. The date of this play is disputed; it was traditionally thought to date from 1706.12, after an entry in the Meiwa 明和 edition of the *Gedai nenkan* 外題年鑑, but Yūda 1967 argued for a date of 1710, as part of the Akō-mono boom late that year. Ishikawa 1977 argued for a possible date of 1709, but more recently Hasegawa 1994a has held firmly to 1710; the evidence is inconclusive, hinging on the interpretation of a mention at the end of the play to the restoration of the son of Enya Hangan.
- ⁵⁵ Mueller 1987, pp. 239-40.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242.
- ⁵⁷ Kitagawa 1985, p. 23, notes the importance of the number forty-seven as the key to enabling the participation of marginal members, although on occasion (as in Ejima Kiseki's 江島其碩 novel of 1710, *Keisei denjugamiko* けいせい伝授紙子) it could be increased to forty-eight in order to include one more. In addition to Terasaka as the lowest-ranking, it became common to include within the forty-seven some version of Kayano Sanpei 萱野三平(1675-1702), a historical rōnin who committed suicide on 1702.1.14 when caught between obligation to family and to the league; he was the model for Hayano Kanpei in *Chūshin kogane no tanzaku* and *Kanadehon Chūshingura*. This logically required dropping one of the historical members of the league, but no one ever seems to have noticed. For the evolution of Kanpei, see Hasegawa 1994a, pp. 9-10.
- ⁵⁸ *Onikage Musashi abumi* was long considered to post-date Chikamatsu's *Goban Taiheiki*, since the Meiwa edition of *Gedai nenkan* gave a date of 1713.12 for the former and 1706.6 for the latter, but Yūda 1967 argued that these dates were in error, and that both must have been produced in late 1710, with no clear evidence as to which came first.
- ⁵⁹ *Onikage Musashi abumi*, pp. 34-37.
- ⁶⁰ As noted by Kitagawa 1985, p. 23, a similar character named "Kaji no Haemon 梶の葉右衛門" appeared (presumably earlier) in the kabuki *Taiheiki sazareishi*, and "Fujino Kajiemon" appeared also as a leading figure in Ejima Kiseki's *Keisei denjugamiko*, which was published in the eighth month of 1710; it is a key work in the Akō-mono boom of that year, and is presumed to have preceded both *Goban Taiheiki* and Kaion's *Onikage Musashi abumi*; it was doubtless the source of the name for Kaion's character, although the character itself is closer to the earlier Kaji no Haemon. I have omitted *Keisei denjugamiko* from this discussion, in spite of the argument by Hasegawa Tsuyoshi (Hasegawa 1994a, pp. 7-8) that a low-ranking retainer in the novel by the name of Yaegaki Muraemon 八重垣村右衛門 was the prototype for both Kodera Kichizaemon in *Sazareishi go Taiheiki's* and Okahei in *Goban Taiheiki*. Yaegaki is a very low-ranking retainer who falls in love with Ōgishi Rikitarō 大岸力太郎, son of the league leader Ōgishi Kunai, and commits seppuku after he is rejected by Rikitarō; he

dies happy when learning that he was spurned not for lack of Rikitarō's affection, but because father and son worried that public rumor might deem his admission to the league to be a reflection of personal favoritism rather than true loyalty. I find Hasegawa's arguments unpersuasive, partly because little in the character of Yaegaki corresponds to Kōdera or Okahei, but above all because Yaegaki is clearly not modeled directly after Terasaka: the name reveals no correspondence, and Yaegaki's rank is considerably below that of an *ashigaru*: he is described as a military servant on term contract (*bōkōnin* 奉公人), whereas *ashigaru* never served on such contracts; see Ejima 1710, pp. 287-88.

- ⁶¹ Kitagawa 1985, p. 29, note 12, gives *Akō seigi naishidokoro* 赤穂正義内侍所, 13, as a source of the grave-robbing story. It is unclear whether he is referring to the hybrid chronicle-novel (adhering generally to the historical story but changing the names, hence legally published) of Miyako no Nishiki 都の錦—entitled simply *Naishidokoro* 内侍所. Hasegawa 1994b, p. 61, considers the *Naishidokoro* preface date of 1703 to be fake, and thinks that it was written in about early Shōtoku (ca. 1711-13); conceivably, it could have been available to Ki no Kaion when he wrote *Onikage Musashi abumi*. *Naishidokoro* was later greatly expanded into a *jitsuroku*-style novel under the title that Kitagawa cites; for the story of Fuwa digging up corpses in one such version, see *Akō seigi*, p. 183.
- ⁶² Both of these plays were in fact multi-authored, but Namiki Sōsuke was the lead author, and although there are debates over which author wrote which acts, Sōsuke himself probably wrote Act 2 of *Chūshin kogane no tanzaku*, and definitely wrote Act 7 of *Kanadehon Chūshingura*, the respective acts of each play in which the Terasaka character plays a leading role.
- ⁶³ Kitagawa 1985, p. 22, argues that Hayano Kanpei is in certain respects an “alter ego” (*bunshin* 分身) of *Goban Taiheiki*'s Teraoka Heiemon, in that the father had been dismissed by the lord, and Kanpei himself messes things up with his premature attack on the enemy—just as his successor in *Kanadehon Chūshingura* would fail in his duty by dallying with Okaru at the time his master Enya Hangan was being challenged by Moronao.
- ⁶⁴ Keene 1971, p. 121.
- ⁶⁵ The Honda were moved from Himeji to the Murakami domain in 1704, to Kariya 刈谷 (Owari 尾張 province) in 1710, and on to Kōga 古河 (Chiba 千葉 prefecture) in 1712. Terasaka remained with the Itō family throughout these moves, but not on the further moves of the Honda lord to Hamada 浜田 in 1759 and finally to Okazaki in 1769.
- ⁶⁶ The timing of Terasaka's move to Edo has been disputed: on the stone monument erected by his grandson Nobunari in 1792 and composed by Uchida Shukumei 内田叔明 [1736-96] (Uchida 1792). Terasaka is said to have spent 22 years with the Itō family. Fukumoto Nichinan disputed this, claiming it to be an error for “12” years. The issue was reopened by Itō Takeo, who claimed that Uchida was essentially correct, citing Itō Haruyuki's record of the Akō affair, which records that Terasaka was summoned to Edo by Yamanouchi Shuzen in 1726.3, or twenty-three years after the seppuku of the Akō rōnin; see Itō 1935, pp. 60-62. The exact date remains in doubt, however, since Nabeta Shōzan cited a list of Yamanouchi retainers that included Terasaka as early as 1723 (Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 1, p. 115). I am disposed to accept that Terasaka remained with the Itō family in Kōga into the 1720s.
- ⁶⁷ Two years after Terasaka's death, in 1749, a stone memorial was erected with an inscription by Itō Chikuri 伊藤竹里 (1692-1756), a son of the celebrated Confucian scholar Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627-

1705); a photograph and transcription appears in Itō 1935, pp. 58-9. The 1792 memorial mentioned in the previous note (Uchida 1792) was much longer and more detailed, and survives today in the Sōkeiji cemetery.

⁶⁸ Eshita 1999.

⁶⁹ Kitagawa 1985, pp. 26-28,

⁷⁰ A good annotated selection of many of the relevant texts is to be found in Ishii 1974, pp. 371-452; Tahara 1978 is an excellent analysis of the entire archive.

⁷¹ “Horiuchi Den’emon oboegaki 堀内伝右衛門覚書,” Nabeta 1910-11, pp. 273-362. A different copy appears in Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, pp. 504-55, under the more evocative title “Conversations with the Loyal Retainers of Akō” (“Akō gishin taiwa 赤穂義士対話”).

⁷² Yagi 1993a, p. 19, which includes a photograph of the original document, now in the Akō City Museum of History. The date of the “fifteenth” differs from the “fourteenth” used in the letter of the league leaders to Terai Genkai, but the two dates were used interchangeably, since in the Edo period, the date changed at daybreak rather than at midnight, and the attack continued from about 4 am until sunrise, straddling both dates.

⁷³ Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 527.

⁷⁴ The text here is from Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 527; I have used the punctuation of this version. Numerous variants are to be found among the many different manuscript copies of the Horiuchi memorandum. For the debates over this passage, see especially Hiroi 1994, pp. 33-36, responding to earlier assertions by Yagi Akihiro.

⁷⁵ Another work that openly took the Akō incident as its theme, using the real names of the protagonists, was *Akō gishi no kagami* 赤穂義士の鑑, which has an author’s preface of 1851 but no date of publication. It is possible that there were earlier works that dealt with equal openness about the Akō incident, but I have not yet seen any. There were, however, earlier works that mentioned various of the Akō rōnin by their real names, but only in a passing way; a prime example is Ban Kōkei 伴蒿蹊, *Kinsei kijinden* 近世崎人伝 (1790) and *Zoku kinsei kijinden* 続近世崎人伝 (1798), which included biographies of such “unusual people” as Ōishi’s servant, Onodera Jūnai’s wife, and Horibe Yahei’s daughter, which involved mention of the Akō revenge, but no direct description of it.

⁷⁶ Aoyama 1851, pp. 128-30. Aoyama also implicitly downgraded Terasaka by not according him a separate entry as he did for the other league members (except for the father-son combinations, who shared entries), but rather appended him to the entry for the forty-sixth in rank, Mīmura Jūrōzaemon.

⁷⁷ Yamazaki 1851, pp. 324-335 (reprint ed.). Yamazaki also inserted still another episode at the end of the section on Terasaka, relating that there was a second *ashigaru* under Yoshida named Terasaka, with the given name of Sadaemon 定右衛門, who like Kichiemon (with whom no particular family connection was indicated) was a member of the league, loyal and with a will of steel. Whereas Kichiemon was assigned a mission of taking news of the attack to Hiroshima, Sadaemon was charged with transporting Kira’s head to Sengakuji by boat, as a way of thwarting possible Uesugi pursuers. Imao 1987, pp. 46-49, discusses this curious story in detail, speculating that it may have originated in a mention of Terasaka Sadaemon in *Sengakuji kakiage* 泉岳寺書上 (Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 1, p. 458), a work purporting to be the testimony of a Sengakuji priest at the time of the attack on Kira,

but now universally considered a blatant forgery, possibly dating from as late as 1803. Imao further suggests that Yamazaki himself may have taken the passing mention of Sadaemon in this work and embellished it himself.

- ⁷⁸ The supplementary (*hoi* 補遺) third volume was edited under the direction of the Confucian scholar Nishimura Yutaka 西村豊. It is sobering to realize that despite Nabeta Shōzan's diligent efforts over a number of years in the late Edo period to assemble all the documents on the Akō incident, he had not apparently gained access to the many crucial works that appear in this volume, including such important early chronicles as *Kōseki kenmonki* and *Chūsei gokanroku*. With all the documents easily available in print today, it is hard to appreciate the difficulties of studying the Akō affair under the limitations imposed by the Tokugawa state.
- ⁷⁹ Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 427. This roll call, which Shigeno seems to have been the first to bring into the modern Terasaka debate and which would later become a standard piece of evidence for the pro-Terasaka forces, had been mentioned in *Chūsei gokanroku* (see above at note 36), and is corroborated by at least two other important first-hand sources: Onodera Jūnai's account of the attack (Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 431) and the description of the attack generally known as "Uchiiri jikkyō oboegaki 討入実況覚書," which was included in the letter of Ōishi, Hara, and Onodera to Terai Genkei on 1702.12.24 and later widely circulated; see *Kōseki kenmonki*, vol. 5, in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, pp. 305-06. Finally, there is the testimony of Gekkai 月海, a young monk studying at Sengakuji at the time who later dictated a detailed and highly credible account of the events that morning, who relates that a later roll call was made at Sengakuji, and only then was it discovered that Terasaka was missing (although the leaders themselves must have known, since they had already dismissed him); see *Hakumyō waroku* 白明話録, in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, p. 119.
- ⁸⁰ Shigeno 1889, p. 141 (p. 32 in reprint).
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² The letter of Hara to Wada has a strange history. It was first made public by in 1934 by Itō Takeo (Itō 1934, part 2, p. 68, and Itō 1935, p. 12), one of Terasaka's most ardent partisans. In late 1990, however, in the midst of the new debates over Terasaka, Yagi Akihiro located the original copy of the letter and seized on it as a weapon against the defenders of Terasaka, claiming that it proved conclusively that Terasaka fled out of cowardice. Yagi managed to make news out of his "discovery" of a document that had already been published by Terasaka loyalists fifty-five years earlier; see *Mainichi shinbun* 1990. See also Iio Kuwashi's counter-attack in Akō-shi 1997, pp. 12-13.
- ⁸³ The other three were *Akō shokan jitsuroku* 赤穂書簡実録, a collection of letters of the rōnin, which appears with Kensai's comments in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 192-223; *Myōkai go* 妙海語, the story of the nun Myōkai 妙海 (1686-1778) who claimed to be the daughter of Horibe Yasubei but who was clearly an imposter, as Kensai takes pains to demonstrate, in comments included in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 247-52; and the *Horiguchi Den'emon oboegaki* mentioned below, for which Kensai's comments do not appear to survive. Kensai's comments on *Akō shokan jitsuroku* are dated 1838, and the Terasaka critique probably appeared about the same time.
- ⁸⁴ Itō 1935, pp. 18-24. Itō in the same section responds to Kensai's accusation that Terasaka's statement that the pole used to display the group's manifesto was placed "in front of the gate" was erroneous, and suggests he was not present at the time.

- ⁸⁵ The only source Shigeno cites that is clearly hostile to Terasaka is *Kasshi yawa* 甲子夜話, a miscellany compiled from 1821 by Matsura Seizan 松浦静山 (1760-1841), the daimyo of Hirado; I have been unable to locate the relevant passage in *Kasshi yawa*, but from Shigeno's description his arguments were very close to those recorded by Ōkura Kensai, of whom Shigeno makes no mention.
- ⁸⁶ Tokutomi 1924.
- ⁸⁷ Tokutomi 1925, p. 311.
- ⁸⁸ Matsushima Eiichi 松島榮一 in his commentary on the 1982 Iwanami Bunko edition of Fukushima Shirō, *Seishi Chūshingura*, p. 420.
- ⁸⁹ Fukushima 1931.
- ⁹⁰ The letter may be found in Itō 1935, pp. 41-44, Katayama 1970, pp. 298-301, and Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, pp. 414-16. All of the Itō family documents were donated to Kagakuji 花岳寺 temple in Akō, where they remain today.
- ⁹¹ For the complete text, see Itō 1935, pp. 120-48. The document appears also to have been known as "Terasaka dan hikki 寺坂談筆記" (Akō Gishi Jiten Kankōkai 1972, p. 486). According to Itō 1935, p. 12, the "Terasaka dan" was included in *Gishi ryūhō* 義士流芳, a manuscript collection of several basic documents of the Akō incident edited by the kokugaku scholar Ban Nobutomo 伴信友 (1773-1846); I have been unable to check the surviving fragmentary versions of this manuscript. Fukumoto Nichinan in fact mentions "Terasaka dan" in *Genroku kaikyōroku*, specifying it to have been compiled by Itō Haruyuki and describing it as a work worth consulting (Fukumoto 1909, p. 795). This reference was dropped in *Genroku kaikyō shinsōroku*, however, and I suspect that Nichinan had never actually seen it; at any rate, he certainly never used the testimony of Terasaka that it contains.
- ⁹² The volumes in the *Chūshingura* series appeared out of their numbered order: vol. 3 (the historical documents of the Akō incident) appeared first in 1987, followed by vol. 1 (Yagi's history of the incident) in 1989, and then vols. 4-6 in succession; vols. 2 and 7 are still in preparation.
- ⁹³ Akō-shi 1987, vol. 1, pp. 215-31 and 351-3.
- ⁹⁴ A list of all the articles in the debate by Terasaka's defenders may be found in Iio 1997, note 2 (pp. 34-36). For Yagi's responses, see Yagi 1991, 1993a, 1993b, and 1997, as well as other minor pieces cited in the notes of Iio 1997.
- ⁹⁵ *Mainichi shinbun* 1990. The document in question was the farewell letter from Hara Sōemon to Wada Kiroku mentioned earlier; see note 82.
- ⁹⁶ Hiroi 1994.
- ⁹⁷ Akō-shi 1997.
- ⁹⁸ I must hasten to exempt Senba Keiko ("Hiroi Kei") from the charges of either disingenuousness or incivility that I have brought against Yagi and Iio, respectively. She is an amateur historian in the best sense, dedicated to a close reading of sources, and willing to listen carefully to the arguments of her opponents. She is in the end a prisoner of her time and culture, but so are we all.
- ⁹⁹ Akō-shi, vol. 3, p. 508.
- ¹⁰⁰ It is ironic that Fukushima's provocative suggestions were naively taken at face value by Utsumi Teijirō 内海定治郎, another Akō native who became dedicated to the study of the Gishi. In his 1933 history of the Akō incident, Utsumi simply condensed Fukushima's 1931 "theories" of why Terasaka had been dismissed, attributing them to Fukushima and simply noting that they were "not without

problems,” but offering no further discussion (Utsumi 1933, p. 526). The same summary then found its way into the *Akō gishi jiten* biography of Terasaka, shorn of the attribution to Fukushima, and left to stand as something of a Trojan horse in this monument to Gishi piety (Akō Gishi Jiten Kankōkai 1972, p. 262).

¹⁰¹ Onodera Jūnai wrote in his later statement that they had planned to enter Ekōin, and either commit seppuku, or fight it out with Uesugi pursuers there, or await bakufu orders; “Onodera Jūnai mōshiagesho 小野寺十内申上書,” Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 431. *Ekisui renbeiroku* reports that they actually announced to the priest(s) at Ekōin that they intended to commit seppuku there, which made the priests recoil with fear and refuse them entry. The priest Gekkai reported later that they thought of committing seppuku at Ekōin, but after being refused entry when the priests saw how many people were involved, they rethought their options; *Hakumyō waroku*, in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, p. 113.

¹⁰² *Hakumyō waroku* 白明話録, in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 3, p. 123.

¹⁰³ Hara Sōemon to Mizuno Genkaku, 1703.2.3, Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 418.

¹⁰⁴ Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, p. 489. This document, entitled “Sengakuji sō oboegaki 義士実録：泉岳寺僧覚書,” is a report by Sasagawa Tadaemon 笹川唯右衛門, a Himeji retainer and the brother-in-law of Fuwa Kazuemon, based on interviews with three priests at Sengakuji less than a month after the seppuku of the Akō rōnin. The story of Chikara’s proposal to commit seppuku at Sengakuji after offering Kira’s head also appears in *Chūsei gokanroku*; see Ogawa 1708, pp. 472-73.

¹⁰⁵ Smith 2003, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁶ Fuwa Kazuemon to Sakura Shinsuke, n.d., in Akō-shi 1987, vol. 3, pp. 423-24. The first part of this letter also appears in Katayama 1970, pp. 293-95; Katayama in his comments dates the letter to 1702.12.24, and highly evaluates Fuwa’s role in urging surrender, noting that it was a rather surprising gesture of submission by one of the league members best known for aggressive behavior.

¹⁰⁷ This version is quoted by Ōkura Kensai in his comments on the Terasaka “Hikki,” in Nabeta 1910-11, vol. 2, pp. 244-45; the source is unclear.

¹⁰⁸ Momokawa 1896.

¹⁰⁹ Ichiryūsai Teizan 1929. See Yoshida 1912 for a shorter *naniwabushi* version from the period of the great “Gishi boom” of late Meiji.

¹¹⁰ I have not yet been able to find any evidence of a connection between the Yoshida family and Sasayama, but there must have been some reason for the choice of this domain.

¹¹¹ Akō-shi 1987, vol. 5, pp. 794, 795, 799. The 1930 film appears only in the Japanese Movie Database 日本映画データベース, at <http://www.jmdb.ne.jp/1930/bf000090.htm>.

¹¹² Inagaki 1962.

¹¹³ *Hagakure*, vol. 1, p. 45. See also Bitō Masahide’s analysis of the *Hagakure* discussion of the Akō avengers, in Bitō 1975, p. 321 (English translation, p. 167).

要旨

足軽は「義士」になれるか：寺坂吉右衛門の厄介な存在

ヘンリー・D・スミス

元禄14年12月14日の吉良義央邸討ち入りには47名の赤穂浪士が参加していたことに、今では多くの研究者の間で意見の一致を見ている。しかし討ち入り成功の直後、浪士中ただ一人の足軽で、最も身分の低かった寺坂吉右衛門が現場から姿を消した。そのため、公儀に自訴し、翌年2月4日に切腹の刑をうけた浪士の数は46名であった。寺坂自身は、その後1747年に83歳で没するまで45年という年月を生き延びるのだが、すでにその存命中、赤穂事件を題材とし、寺坂をモデルとした芝居や小説が多く作られた。なかでも、1748年の「仮名手本忠臣蔵」の寺岡平右衛門役は有名である。しかし、江戸末期から明治期になると、寺坂の「義士」としての資格をめぐる議論が沸きおこり、その数を47人とするか、46人とするかが問題となった。本稿では、文芸における寺坂像の変遷と、寺坂吉右衛門の歴史的位位置付けにかんする議論をたどりながら、足軽という周辺的存在がイマジネーションを刺激して赤穂浪士復讐譚の人気を煽ったと同時に、相反する解釈を可能にさせた彼の「厄介な」存在を考えてみたい。最後に、寺坂の身分の低さが、吉良邸討ち入り後数時間の決定的時間におこった「悲しい真実」の鍵を握るのではないかという考察を提起したい。