

しゅりじょうせいであん

首里城正殿のヒミツ

Secrets about the Seiden
Main Hall of Shuri Castle

しし

ぼたん

獅子と牡丹

Lions and Peonies



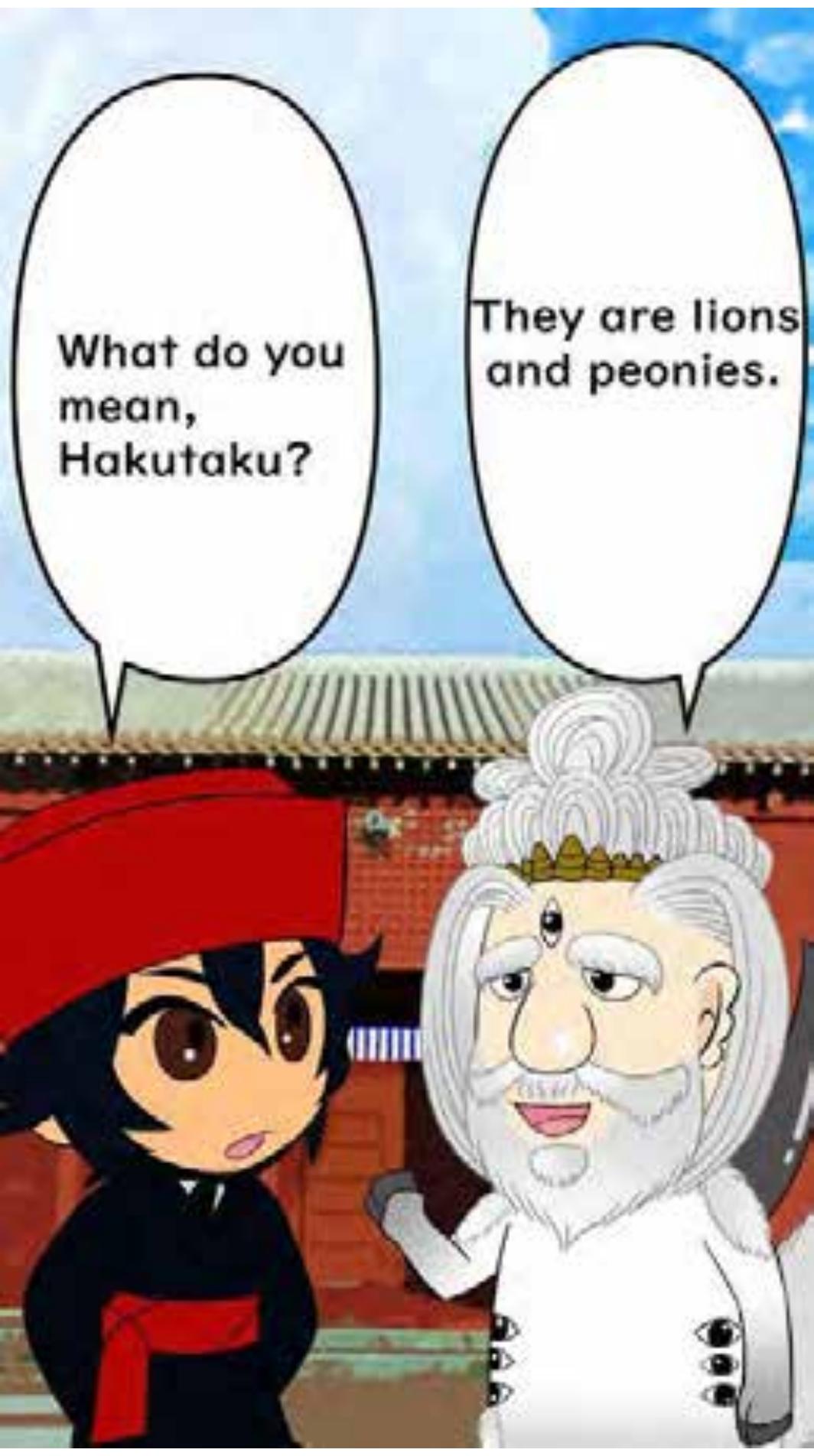
A chibi-style anime character with a red hat and black hair, looking surprised with a speech bubble saying "Wow!". The character has large, expressive brown eyes and a wide, open mouth. They are wearing a black traditional Japanese garment with a red sash. The background features a red wooden wall and a blue sky with white clouds.

Wow!



Lions with
beautiful
flowers!

How lovely!



What do you mean, Hakutaku?

They are lions and peonies.

The lion is
traditionally the
king of beasts.



However, even lions have weaknesses.

An example is parasites in their bodies.





Lions cannot
remove parasites
from their body.

So, they
need to take
medicine.

They take
morning dew
drops on the
petals of peonies
as medicine.



芍薬

To protect themselves,
the beasts cannot part
from peonies.

I see.



As a symbol of strength,
lions are hidden together
with peonies all over the
Seiden Main Hall.





Let's go
and find them!

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りゅう かえんほうじゅ

龍と火焰宝珠

Dragons and flaming jewels





Hey,
Hakutaku.

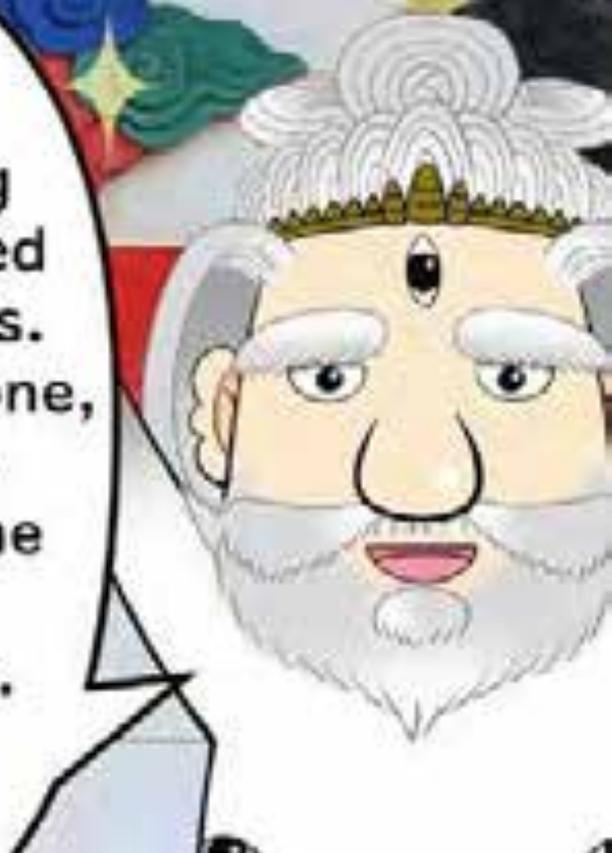


Shuri Castile has a lot of paintings of dragons and flaming balls. Is there any reason for this?





These flaming balls are called flaming jewels. If you catch one, you can make your wish come true, whatever it is.





Apparently,
a pair of dragons
are fighting over
the jewel.



Maybe that is true.





Dragons and flaming jewels are also depicted on



lacquerware



**Black Lacquered Mother-of-Pearl
Inlay Tray with a Motif of Clouds
and Dragons**

Bingata-dyed
fabrics



It seems like the
Ryukyuan people of the
past loved this motif.



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Main Hall of Shuri Castle

ぶどう

りす

葡萄と栗鼠

Grapes and Squirrels



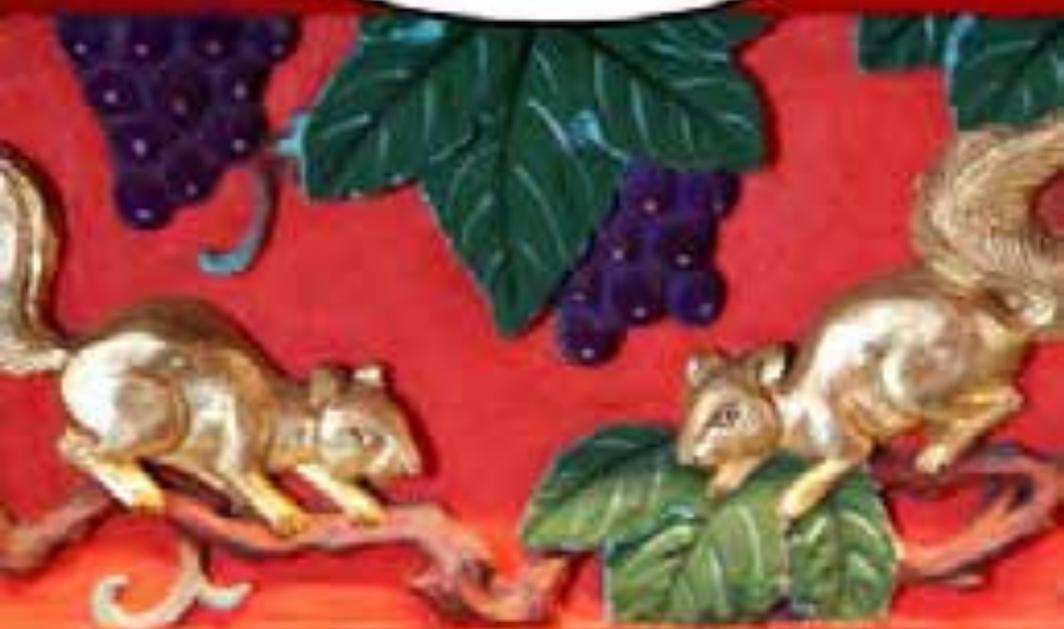
中山世土



This is a throne.



Squirrels are depicted here.



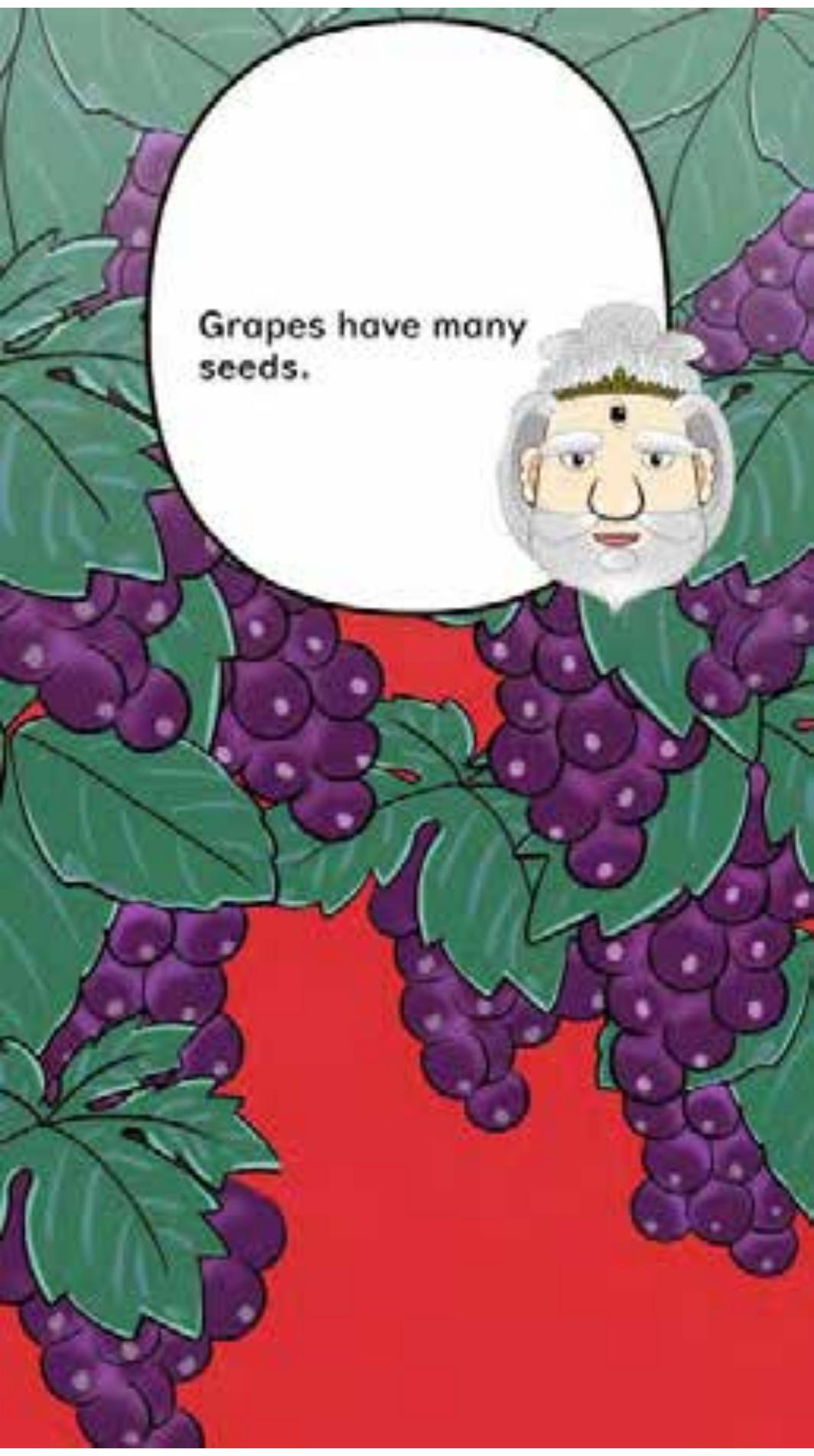


Do they eat
grapes?
How adorable!



What?

Satonushi, this motif has a meaning.



Grapes have many
seeds.

And squirrels have
large litters.



So, the motif of grapes and squirrels represents wishes for happiness and prosperity





for the descendants
and the state of
Ryukyu.



The image features two cartoon characters standing in a traditional Chinese interior. On the left is a character with black hair, a red cap, and a dark blue robe with a red sash. On the right is an elderly character with white hair, a beard, and a white robe. Above them is a large white speech bubble containing the text "Don't miss it when you come here!". The background includes red walls, golden pillars, and a decorative ceiling with a squirrel and a dragon.

Don't miss it when
you come here!

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首里城正殿のヒミツ

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せいであん に かい ぎよくさ

正殿二階の玉座に

えが

クレマチス

描かれた鉄線

The Clematis Painted
on the Throne on the Second
Floor of the Seiden Main Hall





Satonushi...



**Do you know about
this pattern on the
throne**

**on the second
floor of the Seiden
Main Hall?**



**It's a beautiful flower pattern.
I wonder what flower it is.**



The image features a background of purple clematis flowers with green leaves. A large white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned in the upper left and center. Inside the speech bubble, there is text and a small cartoon illustration of a person's face.

**The Japanese
name is tesssen.**

**Nowadays,
we call it clematis!**



It's a flower that's often grown in English gardens!



A chibi-style character with a red hat and black hair is looking upwards. The character has large brown eyes and a slightly open mouth, suggesting surprise or realization. The background is a field of purple flowers.

I see.



**But
why did they use a
clematis pattern?**

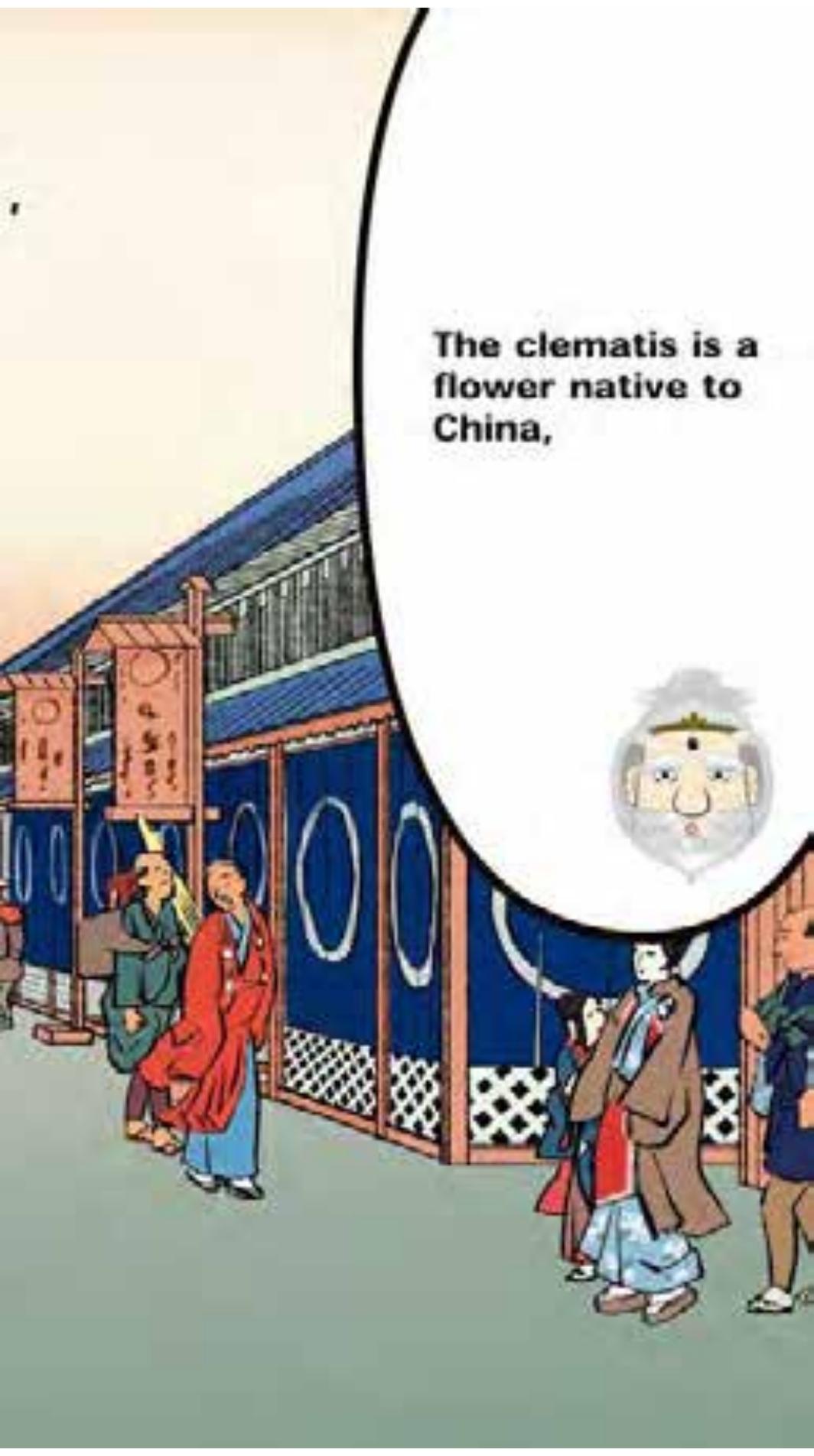


**It was the latest
trend at the time.**



Huh!?
What do you mean!?

**The clematis is a
flower native to
China,**



but during the Edo period in Japan,
clematis designs on

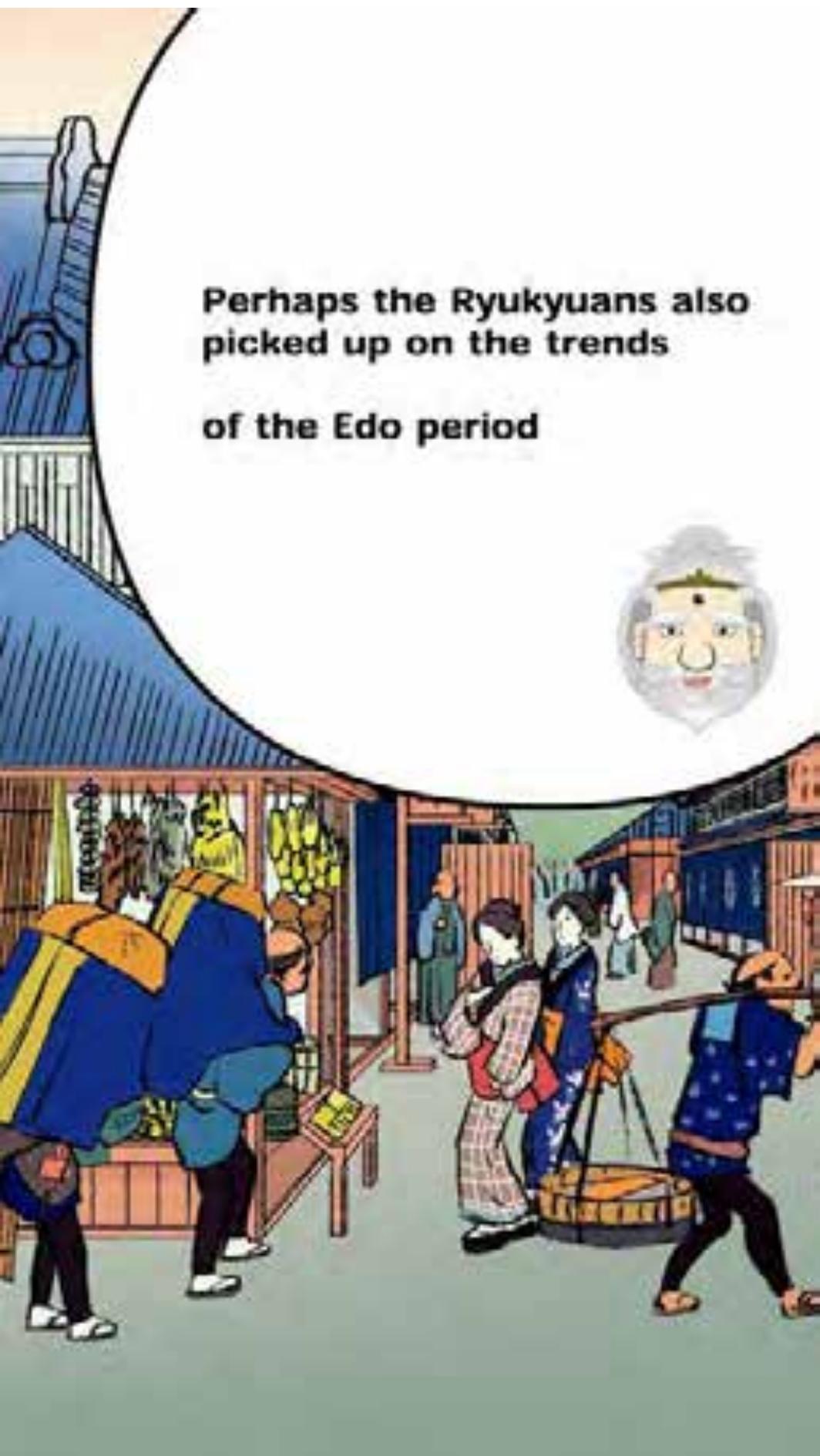
women's kimonos
became all the rage!



Is that so?



Perhaps the Ryukyuan
also picked up on the trends
of the Edo period



and used the pattern for the
king's throne!



■ 沖縄県立芸術大学付属図書館・芸術資料館所蔵
■ 鎌倉芳太郎撮影



So the king was a fashionable man!

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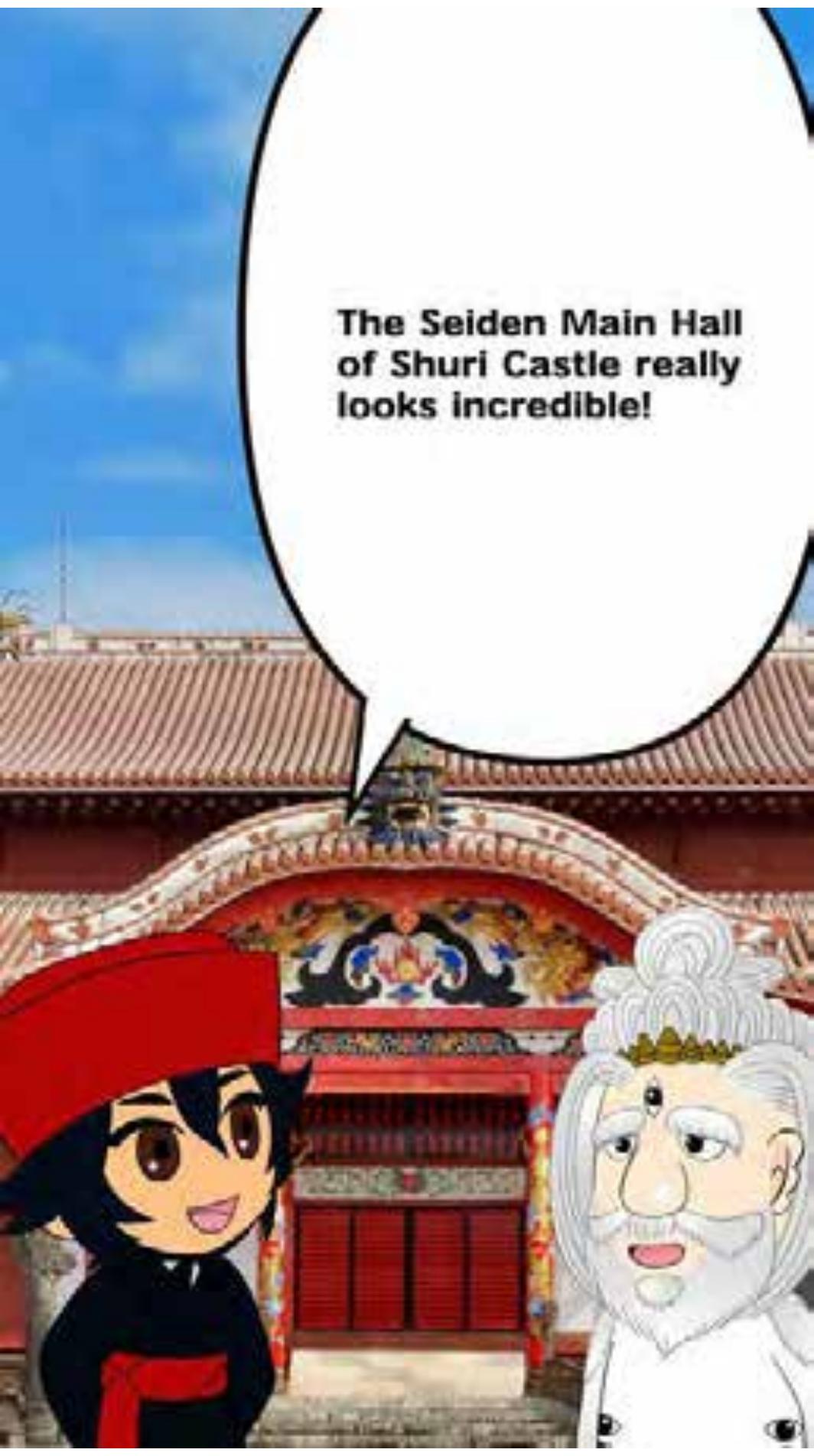
せいであん や ね

正殿屋根の

か うつり変わら

Evolution of the Roof of the
Seiden Main Hall



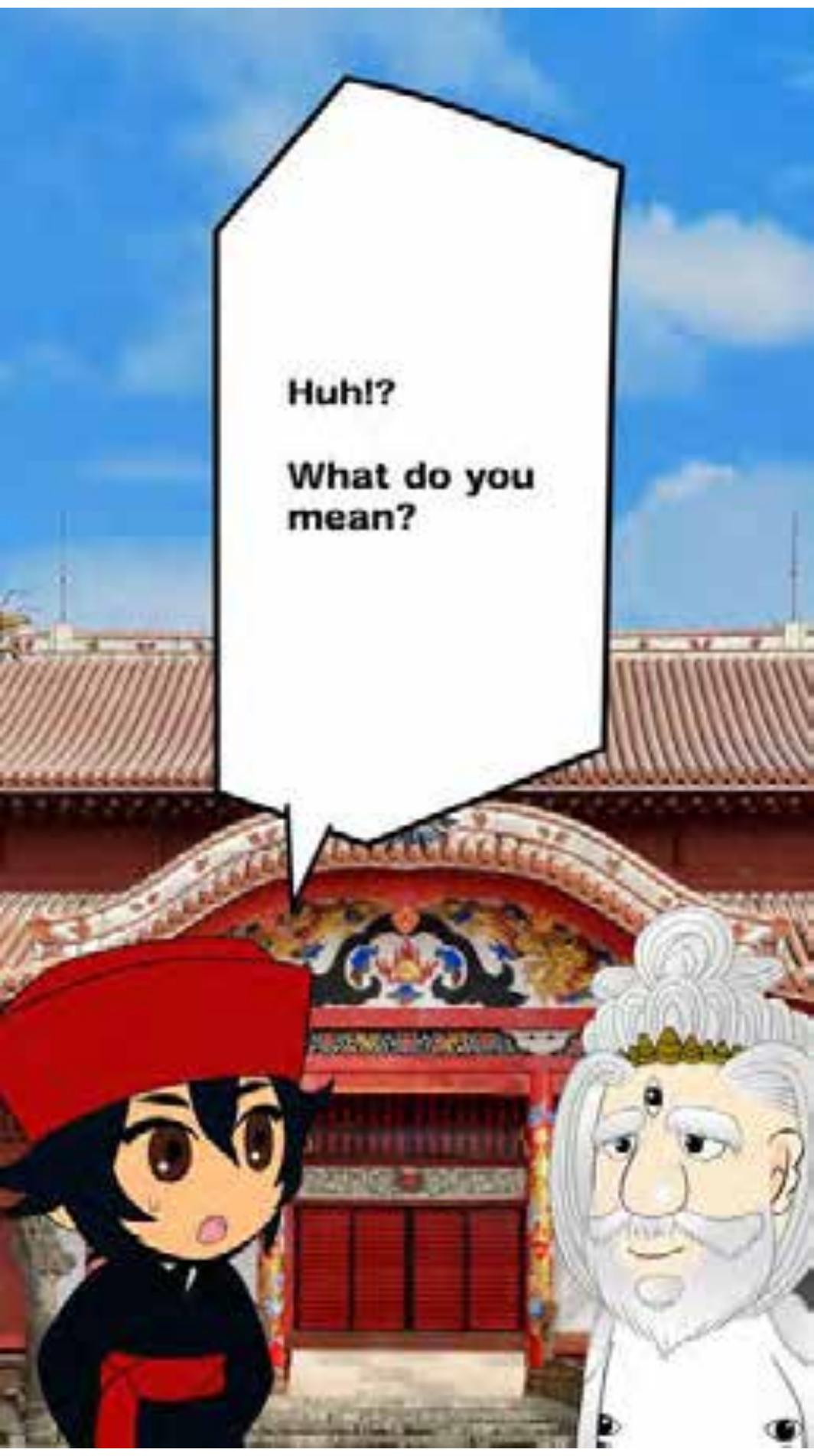


**The Seiden Main Hall
of Shuri Castle really
looks incredible!**



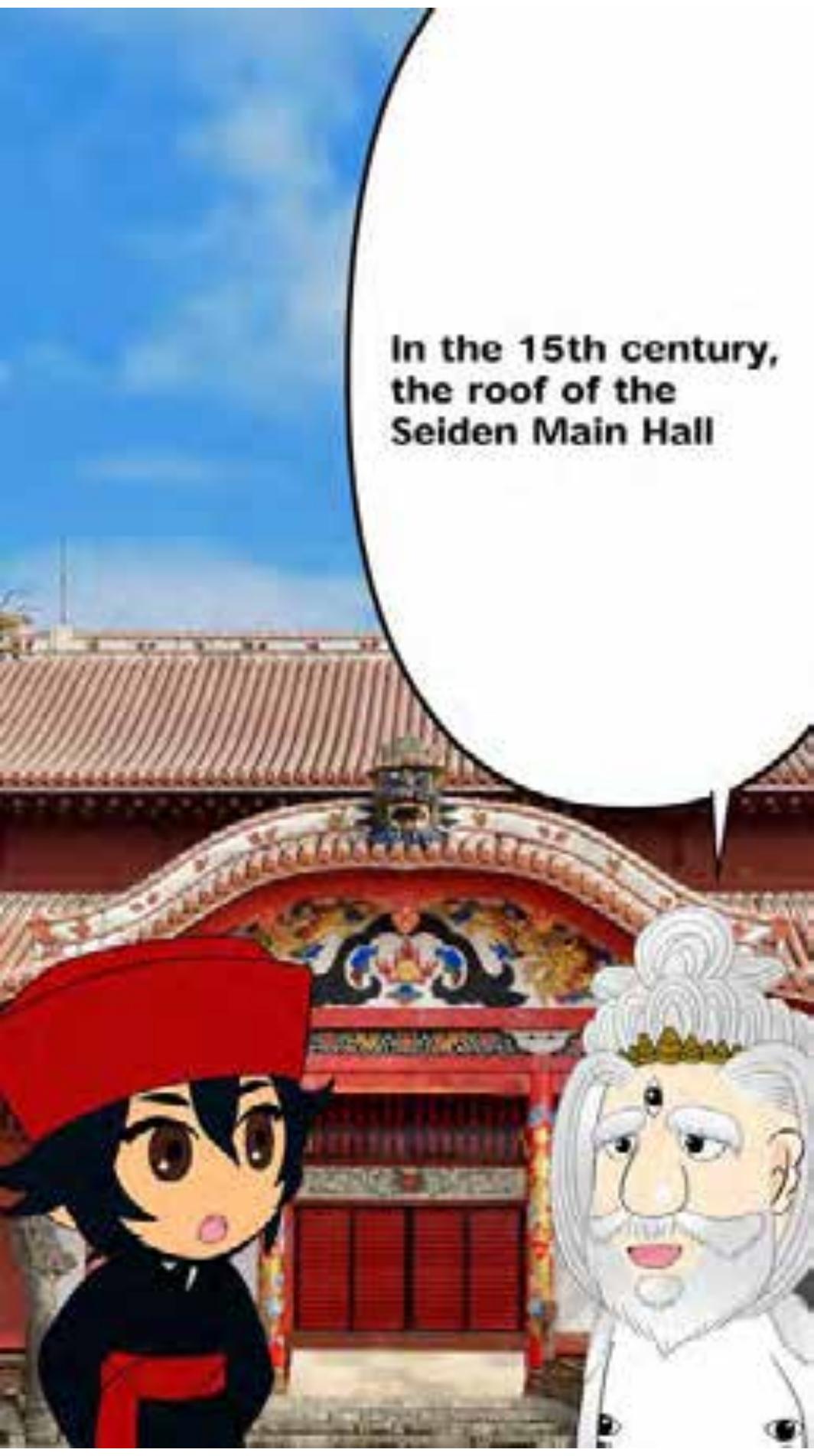
Satonushi...

Did you know that the roof
of Shuri Castle wasn't always
made of red tiles?



Huh!?

What do you mean?

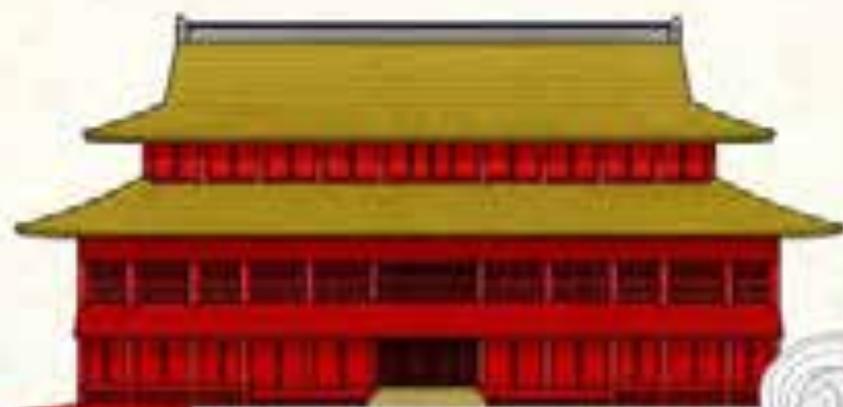


**In the 15th century,
the roof of the
Seiden Main Hall**



※15世紀頃のイメージ図

was actually made
of shingles!

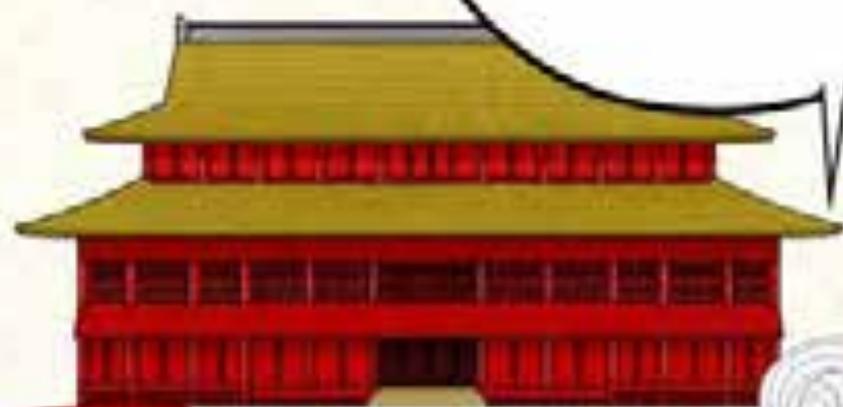


No way!



※15世紀頃のイメージ図

After a fire in the
17th century, it
was rebuilt



※17世紀頃のイメージ図

using gray
tiles.



**the tiles on the
Seiden Main Hall
were gradually
replaced with red
ones!**

**Starting around
the 18th century,**



**It was this red-tiled, 18th-century
Seiden Main Hall that was used as
the model for restoration!**



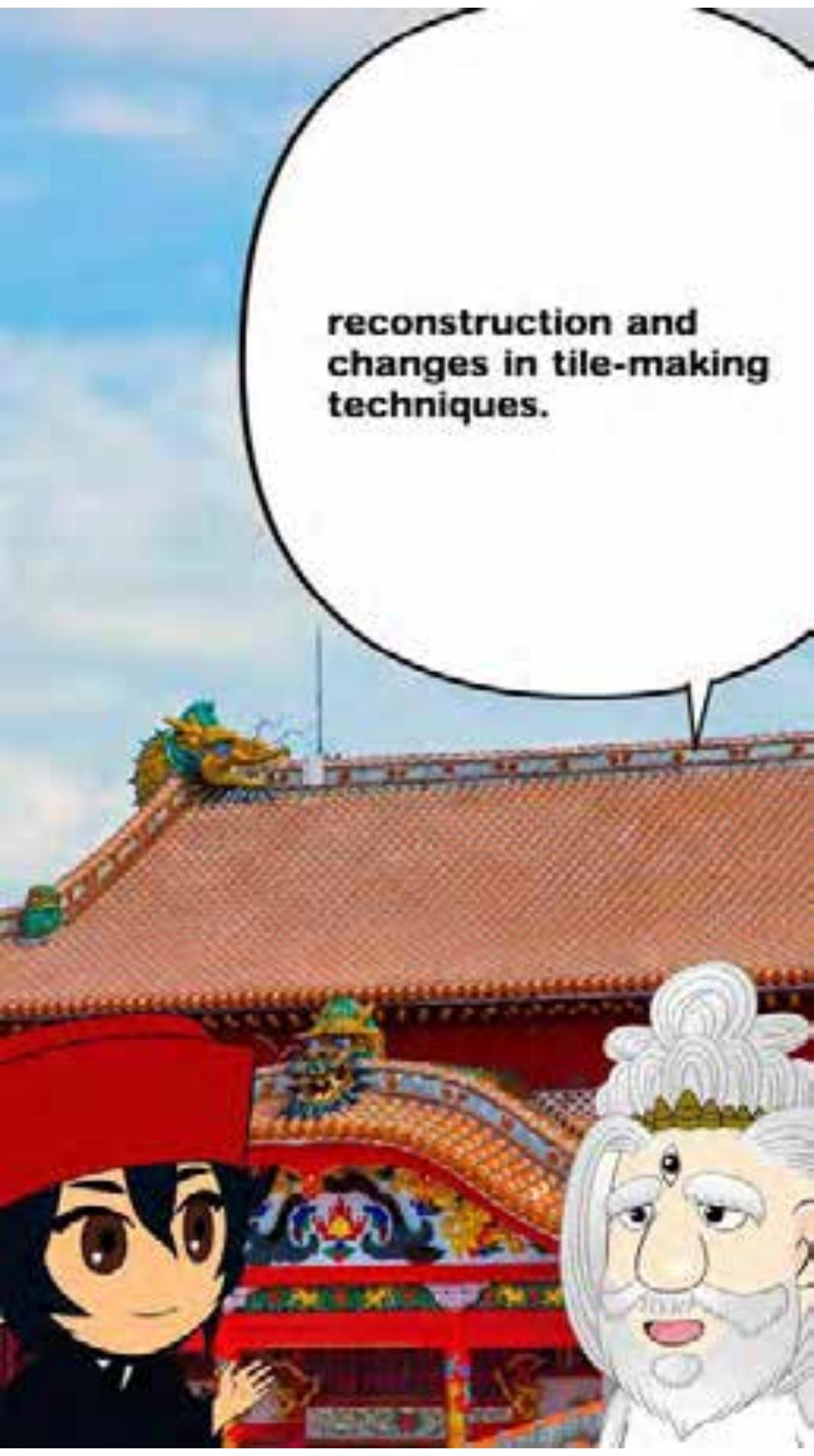


**I see.
I didn't know that!**

Over the course of the Ryukyu Kingdom's history,

the roof of the Seiden Main Hall transformed due to fires,





**reconstruction and
changes in tile-making
techniques.**

A cartoon illustration featuring two characters in the foreground. On the left is a woman with large brown eyes, wearing a red hat and a black top. On the right is an older man with a long white beard and hair, wearing a white robe and a green crown. They are standing in front of a traditional Japanese building with a red facade and a decorative, colorful gable. A large white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned above them, containing text. The background shows a blue sky with light clouds.

**When you're looking
at Shuri Castle,
picturing the changes**



**in the roof of the
Seiden Main Hall
really brings the
history to life!**



That's right!

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首里城正殿のヒミツ

Secrets about the Seiden
Main Hall of Shuri Castle

から は ふ ひ み つ

唐玻豊の秘密①

The Secrets of the Karahafu
Part 1





The most prominent part of the facade of the Seiden Main Hall is called a karahafu!



**It's like the face
of the Seiden
Main Hall!**

Karahafu were influenced by the way Japanese shrines and temples were built!





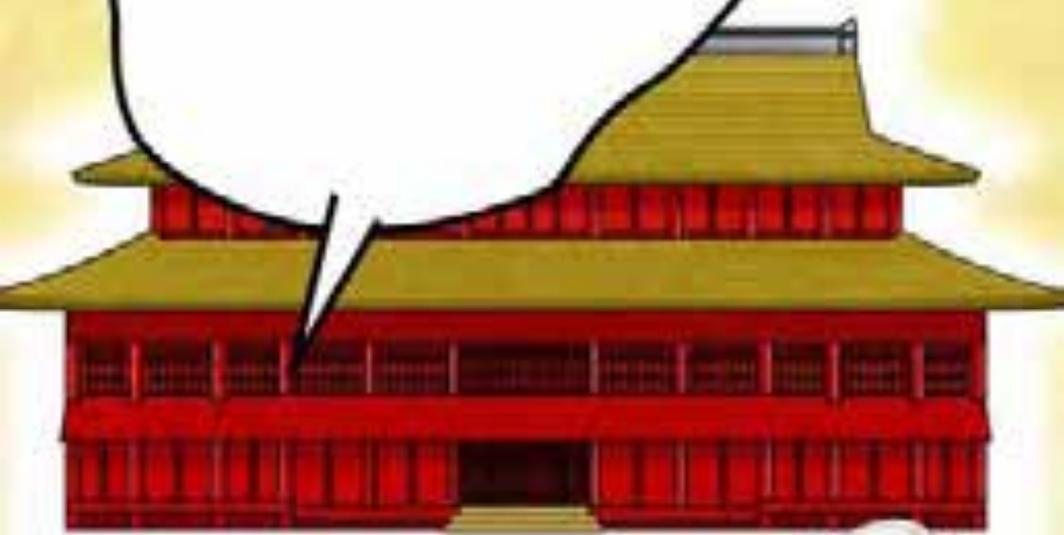
**And it wasn't there when
the Seiden Main Hall was
first built!**



No way!



**The most prominent part
of the Seiden Main Hall
wasn't even there!?**





**We don't know
for sure,**

but it's likely that the karahafu was first built around 300 years ago.





**Really?
I didn't know
that.**



Originally, it was a small karahafu with two pillars,

but it was later changed to a large one with four pillars!



The architectural term
"karahafu" is written using a
character



so the character was changed to a more auspicious one read "Karahafu"!





**So the pronunciation
Karahafu is exclusive to
Shuri Castle!**

しゅりじょうせいでん

首里城正殿のヒミツ

Secrets about the Seiden
Main Hall of Shuri Castle

から は ふ ひ み つ

唐玻豊の秘密②

The Secrets of the Karahafu
Part 2



**There are so many
different patterns on
the Karahafu!**



There are lots of patterns on the white walls of Karahafu!



Is there any meaning to the patterns?





**The flaming orb in the middle
is known as a flaming jewel!**



**It's a treasure orb, and it's said
that it will grant you**

any wish if you manage to catch it!



Wow!
I want one!





**Two dragons are
fighting over the orb,**



**one with its mouth open, and
the other with its mouth closed!**



Well, if it can grant any wish, it's no wonder they're fighting over it!



**Dragons are also
water deities,**



so they've brought with them many auspicious clouds that bring rain!



The clouds are so colorful and gorgeous!

しゅりじょうせい でん

首里城正殿のヒミツ

Secrets about the Seiden
Main Hall of Shuri Castle

せい でん に かい きよ しょ へん がく

正殿二階の御書扁額

ちゅうざん せい ど

『中山世土』

Chuzan Seido: The Inscribed
Plaque on the Second Floor of
the Seiden Main Hall



**This plaque reads "Chuzan Seido,"
and it's displayed on the second
floor of the Seiden Main Hall.**



What does it mean?



**It's an inscription
bestowed by the
Chinese emperor.**



世山甲



**It means that the Ryukyans
shall reign over the land of
Chuzan for generations!**



中 山 世 上



**Chuzan is another
name for Ryukyu!**



中 山 世 土





The yellow color is beautiful!



平成の扁額復元

中山世土

During the Heisei era, it was thought to have been painted red.



平成の扁額復元

中山世土

But a diary from the Ryukyu Kingdom era describing the making of the emperor's gift



平成の扁額復元



令和の扁額復元



revealed that it was
originally painted yellow!





**There is one other
change from the
Heisei era!**

世土

Can you spot it?

山世土



世山

Hmm... What
could it be?



世山



There seem to be
more dragons than
before.

世

Great catch!





The paintings
used to feature
six dragons,





but this time, nine engraved dragons have been placed around the frame!





It's so...
extravagant!

中山世土

There were three
plaques in the Seiden
Main Hall of

the 18th century,



中 山 世 土

輯 瑞 球 陽

永 祚

which served as
the model for
restoration!



中 山 世 土

輯 瑞 球 陽

永 作

When the Seiden Main Hall is restored, the Chuzan Seido plaque



中 山 世 土

輯 瑞 球 洪

永 祚

will be put up first,
and then the other
two will be made!





So there's still more to look forward to after the Seiden Main Hall is completed!

