

HENGAKU

The second floor of the Seiden Main Hall of Shuri Castle was originally adorned with wooden plaques (hengaku) inscribed with messages from Chinese emperors.

Calligraphy

To reproduce the calligraphy of Chinese Qing Dynasty Emperor Kangxi, his handwriting specimens are collected for a calligrapher to copy from.

Woodwork and seals

The structure of the plaques to be restored is determined by examining another plaque inscribed with the word “Chiwa” written by King Shokei, the 13th monarch of the Second Sho Dynasty.

The seals are designed by analyzing plaques preserved in Okinawa, including the one with calligraphy of “Chiwa,” as well as overseas plaques with calligraphy by emperors.

Carvings

Analysis of plaques in China and Taiwan has discovered that plaques with calligraphy by emperors were typically decorated with a relief of nine dragons.

Additional studies are conducted on cultural assets related to Ryukyu to develop and evaluate prototypes for the relief of dragons.

Lacquering and decorating

Following the success of the previous restoration, this project restores the lacquer finish using kawara jinoko (earthen powder) as described in historical documents from the Ryukyu Kingdom period.

According to the Sho Family Documents passed down through the royal family, the plaques were originally lacquered in yellow. To reproduce this color, Chinese yellow lacquerware, especially from the reign of Emperor Kangxi, housed in Tokyo National Museum are analyzed in detail.

Additional preparatory studies are conducted, such as the evaluation of the Heisei Restoration Project and the analysis of new findings on the relief of nine golden dragons and the yellow lacquer paint applied on the surface, among others, to more accurately restore the original appearance of the plaques.