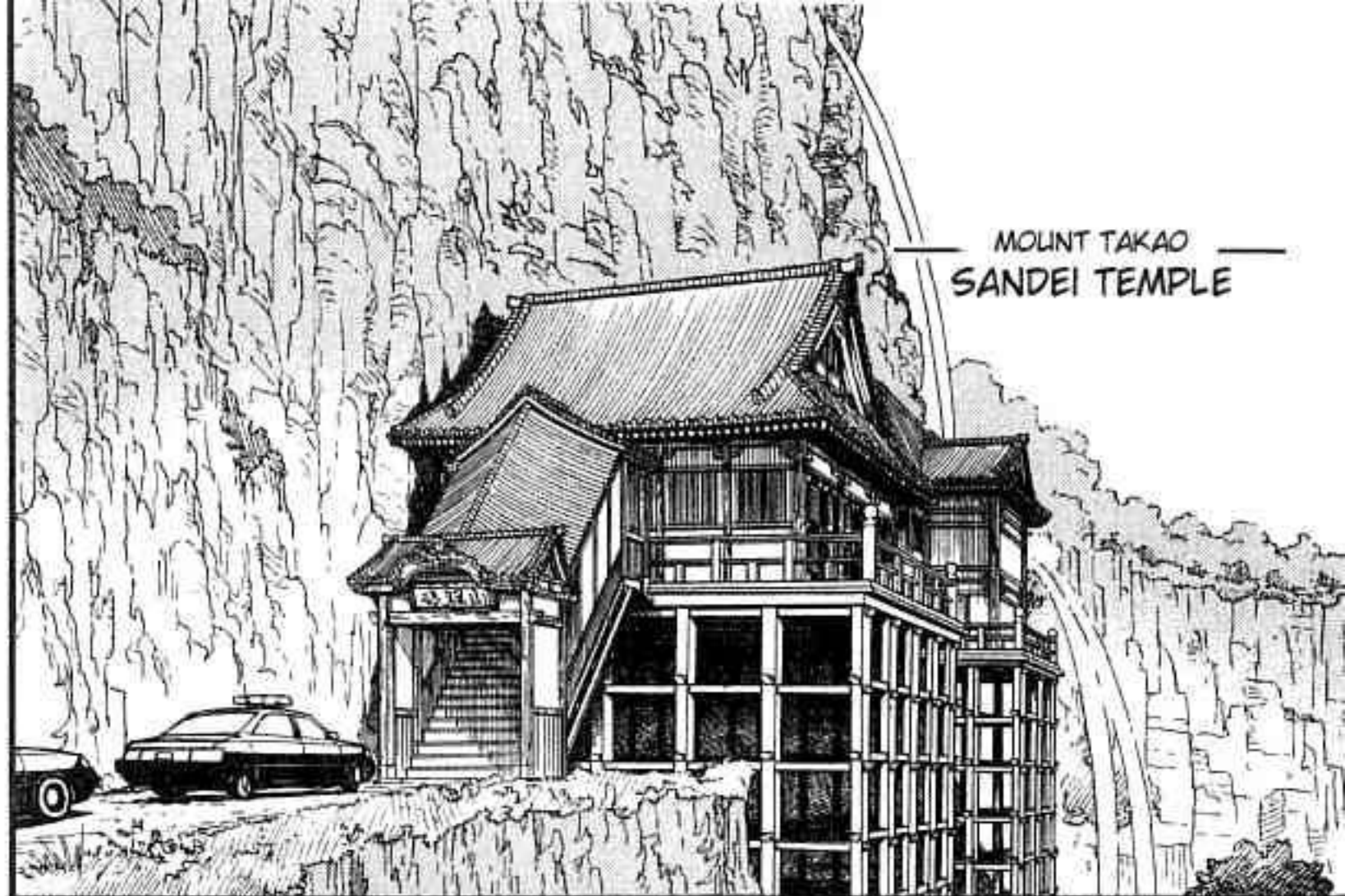


**File 9:
Sakura flowers and the
hole in the wall.**



MOUNT TAKAO
SANDEI TEMPLE





...
I DON'T THINK IT CAN COMPARE TO YOURS, THOUGH...

THAT WAS A MARVEL-
OUS SCREAM,
KANNEN!

?



HAHA
...

KOGORO
MOURI AT
YOUR
SERVICE,
INSPECTOR
MEGURE!



HUH
?

KANNEN,
YOU HAVE A
VERY GOOD
INTUITION,
DON'T YOU?



I'M SURE
THAT I
WOULDN'T
HAVE
FOUND
HIM.

WELL, THE
MONK WAS
HANGING
VERY HIGH
UP THERE,
WASN'T
HE?



IT'S
NORMAL
THAT HE
FOUND HIM
RIGHT
AWAY...

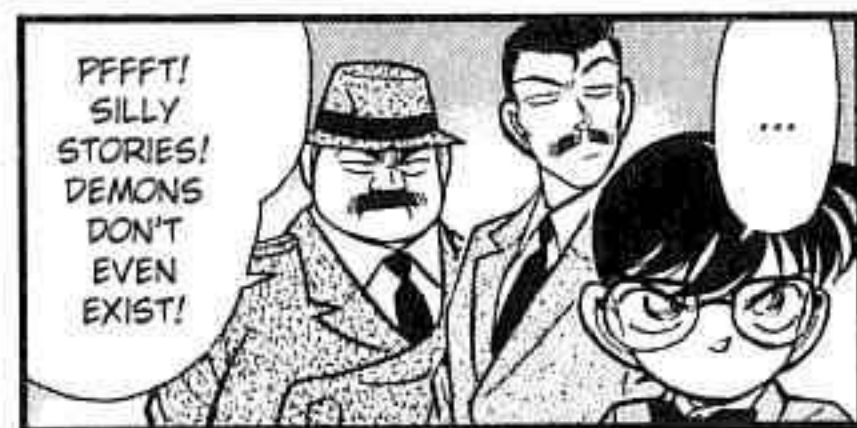


DON'T
SAY
SUCH
THINGS!!

I...
I...

AMAZING, ISN'T IT?
UNLESS, OF
COURSE, YOU
KNEW THAT THE
MONK WAS
HANGING THERE IN
THE FIRST PLACE.







I THINK IT'S ANOTHER CASE OF SUICIDE.

ALSO, THERE ARE NO APPARENT TRACES OF THE PERSON HAVING BEEN DRAGGED UP.



AND APPARENTLY THERE AREN'T ANY TRACES OF IT BEING TOUCHED.

THERE'S DUST ON THE BEAMS...



BUT TO PULL SOMEONE UP THERE...

CLIMBING THERE LIKE HE JUST DID WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.

SUICIDE?



WE COULD ALSO THINK THAT SOMEONE CLIMBED ONTO THE BEAM FIRST AND PULLED THE CORPSE UP. HOWEVER, THE BEAMS ARE TOO NARROW, MAKING IT AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TASK...

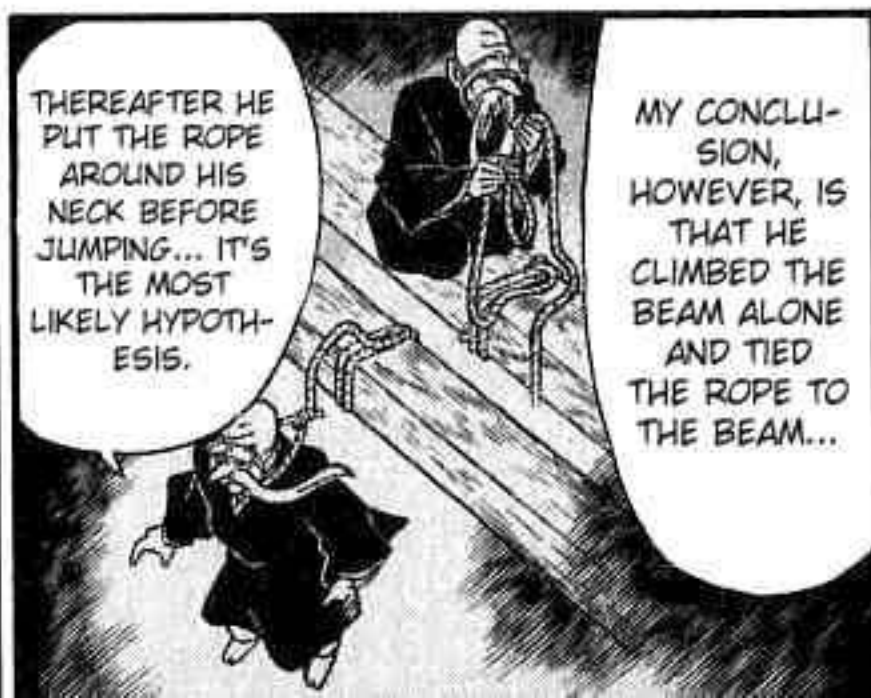
IF WE THINK ABOUT TYING THE ROCK TO THE VICTIM'S NECK, AND THEN PULLING HIM UP TO THE BEAM, IT COULD BE POSSIBLE... BUT THAT WOULD LEAVE TRACES ON THE BEAM.

THE HEAD MONK, LIKE THE DISCIPLE WHO HUNG HIMSELF 2 YEARS AGO, WAS PRETTY HEAVY... SO IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CLIMB THE ROPE AND GET ON THE BEAMS WITH A WEIGHT LIKE THAT ON YOUR BACK.



YES, I CAN ONLY SEE THIS THEORY ...

ADDING THE AXE THAT WAS USED TO CUT THE REST OF THE ROPE...



THEREAFTER HE PUT THE ROPE AROUND HIS NECK BEFORE JUMPING... IT'S THE MOST LIKELY HYPOTHESIS.

MY CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, IS THAT HE CLIMBED THE BEAM ALONE AND TIED THE ROPE TO THE BEAM...





IT'S THE DAUGHTER OF THE HEAD MONK, MISS KIKLINO ...

HEY! BUT IT'S...

AAAA!



GRAND-FATHER!!

GRAND-FATHER!!

HM?



STOPPED COMING AFTER THAT TIME.

YES. SHE USED TO COME TO THE TEMPLE A LOT, BUT...

YES, I RECALL HER NOW. SHE WAS THE ONE CRYING OVER THE BODY OF YOUNG CHUNNEN TWO YEARS AGO!



THEY WERE PROMISED TO EACH OTHER AT A YOUNG AGE... IN FACT, HE IS THE SUCCESSOR TO A HEAD-MONK OF A GREAT TEMPLE...

IT'S HER HUSBAND. SHE RECENTLY GOT MARRIED.

AND THE MAN BEHIND HER?



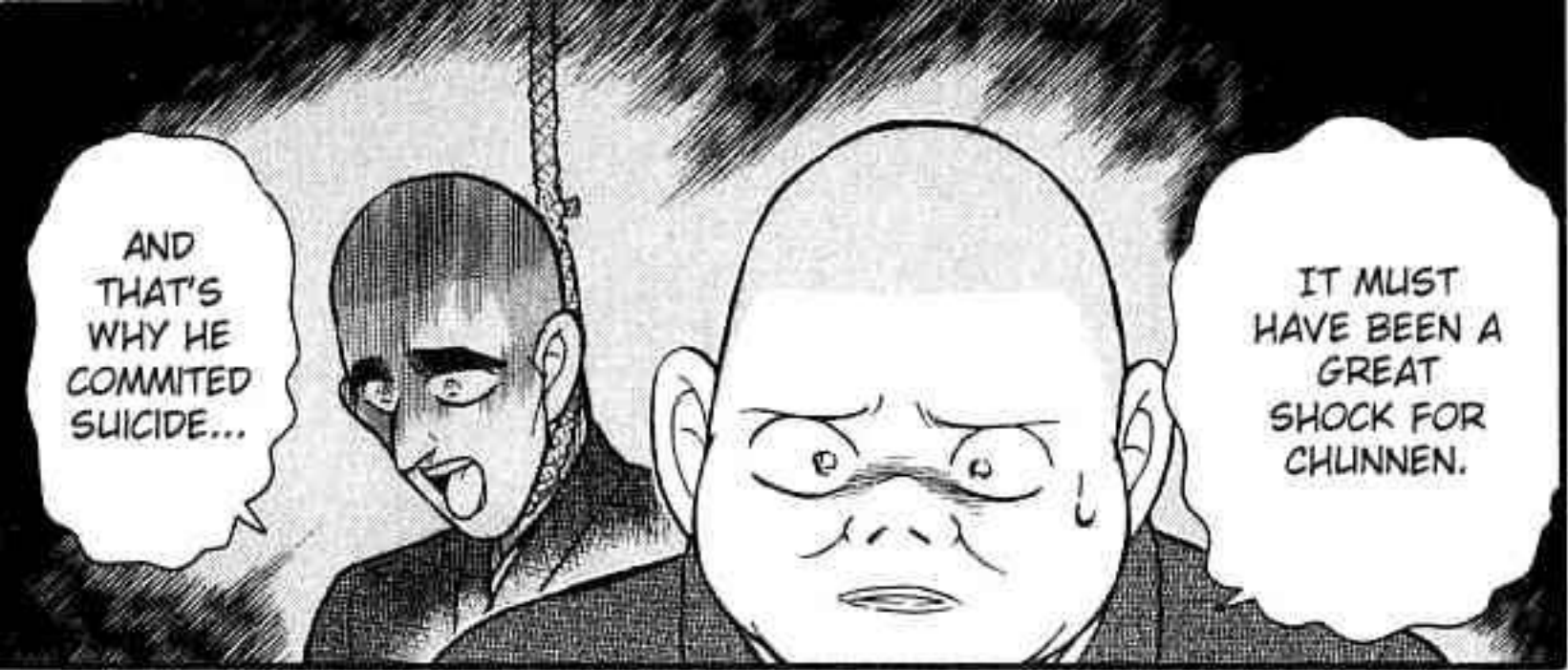
YES... THEY WERE VERY CLOSE...



CHUNNEN? THE DISCIPLE WHO PASSED AWAY?

BECAUSE I WAS CERTAIN THAT SHE WOULD GET MARRIED TO CHUNNEN...

WHEN THE HEAD MONK TOLD ME ABOUT IT TWO YEARS AGO, I WAS REALLY SURPRISED...



AND THAT'S WHY HE COMMITTED SUICIDE...

IT MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT SHOCK FOR CHUNNEN.



...

WE MUST FIND IT!

IN THAT CASE THERE MUST BE A TESTAMENT!



HM... POSSIBLY...

SO HE DECIDED TO DIE THE SAME WAY AFTER THE MARRIAGE OF MISS KIKUNO...

MAYBE THE HEAD MONK FELT GUILTY ABOUT THAT.



WHO WOULD HANG HIMSELF SO HIGH AFTER MAKING SUCH A BIG HOLE IN THE WALL?

EVEN TO BE LOYAL TO THE LEGEND...

SUICIDE?

REALLY...



WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE, KID?



WE COULD THINK THAT BOTH MEN WERE KILLED BY THE SAME PERSON...



WHAT IF THE HOLE WAS ONLY A FALSE CLUE?

WHAT IF IT WASN'T SUICIDE?

THE INFORMATION IS THE SAME AS IN THE CASE TWO YEARS AGO...



WITH ARMS LIKE THESE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE SUCH A HOLE...

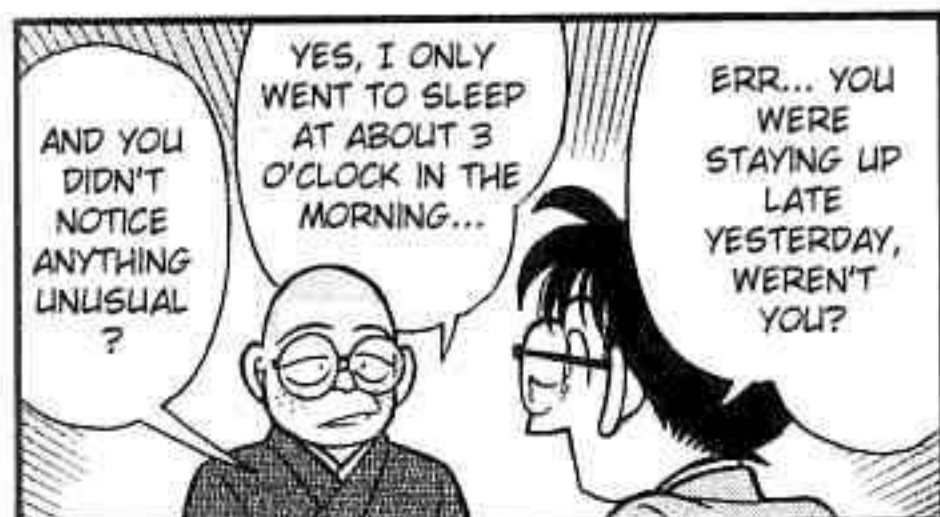
?

HE IS THE STUDENT THAT ARRIVED LAST TO THIS TEMPLE, HE'S ONLY BEEN HERE A YEAR...



SHUNEN

...



AND YOU DIDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING UNUSUAL?

YES, I ONLY WENT TO SLEEP AT ABOUT 3 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING...

ERR... YOU WERE STAYING UP LATE YESTERDAY, WEREN'T YOU?



THE NIGHT WAS VERY QUIET YESTERDAY.

NO, I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING!

A SCREAM?

A SOUND OF SOMETHING BREAKING OR...

LIKE SOMEONE WHO WENT SECRETLY OUT OF HIS ROOM, OR...



ERR... YES!

WELL THEN, SHUNEN, ARE YOU GOING TO HELP US SEARCHING FOR THE TESTAMENT OR NOT?!



ARE YOU SUSPECTING ME, KID?

NO, NO...! NOT AT ALL!



NO! THE ROOM OF THE HEAD MONK IS VERY ISOLATED, BUT OUR ROOMS ARE NOT. SO IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN, WE'D KNOW RIGHT AWAY!

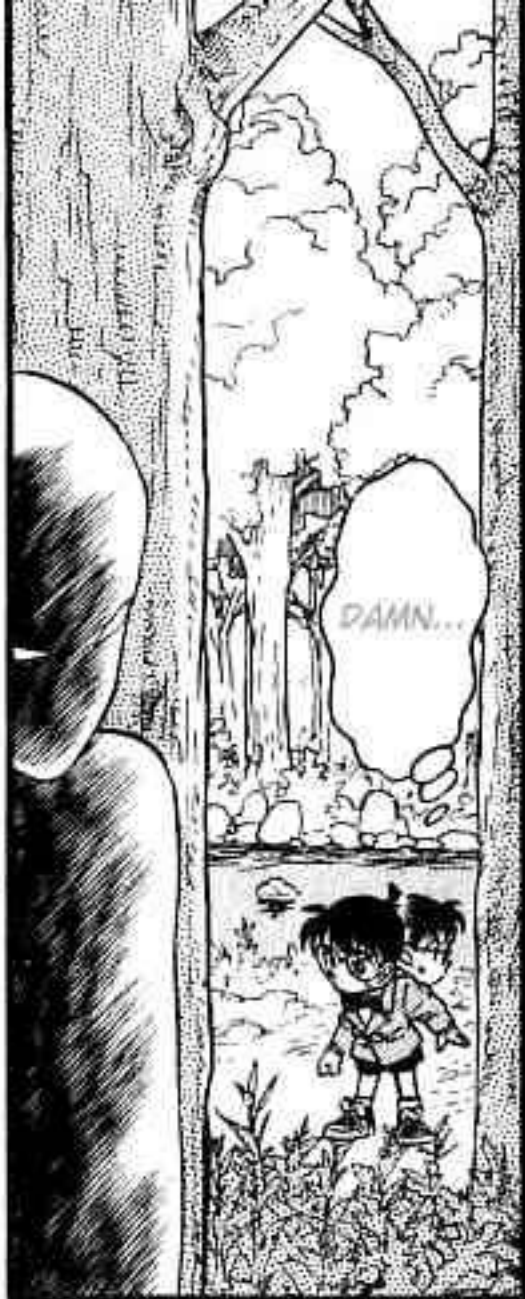
ABSOLUTELY NOTHING THEN?





12







NO!!

AND
THROW THAT
DISGUSTING
PIECE OF
WOOD
AWAY!!



RAN!!

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING IN
SUCH A
PLACE,
CONAN?!



THAT'S
ENOUGH,
THIS WILL DO
FOR TODAY!

YES.



IN ANY CASE,
IT WAS A
SUICIDE, NO
DOUBT...

BUT WE
HAVEN'T
FOUND
THE WILL
YET...



SHE
LEFT TO
ACCOMPANY
THE
CORPSE
TO THE
POLICE
STATION.

ERR...
AND
MISS
KIKUNO?



SOMETHING
WE
CAN'T
IMAGINE!!

SOMETHING
HAPPENED
IN THIS
ROOM LAST
NIGHT...

WRONG!
IT WAS
A MURDER!!





WHICH MEANS
HE HAD TO
SPEND THE
WHOLE NIGHT
IN THIS
ROOM...

I
KNOW
HOW
HE DID
IT!

OF
COURSE!
THAT'S
HOW IT
IS!!



THAT
EXPLAINS
WHAT HE
SAID!



IT
COULD
ONLY
HAVE
BEEN
HIM!!



AND
THEREFORE...