

WHAT'S IN A SUBTITLE ANYWAY?

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剣は凶器。剣術は殺人術。それが真実。薫どのの言ってる事は. . . 一度も自分の手血はがした事もないこと言う甘えだれ事でござる。けれども、拙者は真実よりも薫どのの言うざれごとのほうが好きでござるよ。願あくはこれからのよはその戯れ言の真実もraitaiでござるな。

Ken wa kyouki. Kenjutsu wa satsujinjutsu. Sore wa jijitsu. Kaoru-dono no itte koto wa... ichidomo jishin no te chi wa gashita gotomonaikoto iu amae darekoto de gozaru. Keredomo, sessha wa jujitsu yorimo Kaoru-dono no iu zaregoto no houga suki de gozaru yo. Nega aku wa korekara no yo wa sono zaregoto no jujitsu moraitai de gozaru na.

Swords are weapons. Swordsmanship is the art of killing. That is the truth. Kaoru-dono 's words... are what only those innocents who have never stained their hands with blood can say. However, I prefer Kaoru-dono' s words more than the truth, I do. I wish... that in the world to come, her foolish words shall become the truth.

- Rurouni Kenshin, *Rurouni Kenshin* episode 1

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Abstract

This paper is a critical examination of the subtitling process. The film that is the subject of this paper is *Rurouni Kenshin* (2012), a film adapted from the previous media of manga and anime. The examination of subtitles was done by selecting four short scenes and creating titles for them in order to answer the question of whether or not analysis and examination of the film caused the subtitles to differ from a basic translation edited to fit within the requirements of subtitles. The subtitles were created for an audience that was familiar either with the *Kenshin* franchise's previous incarnations or with the Meiji Restoration and post-Meiji periods in Japan. The conclusion of the study is that analysis and examination of a film certainly does affect the subtitles. While linguistic factors form an overwhelming majority of the work in creating a title, an examination of the film, its characters and elements is necessary for the subtitles to convey all that they need to communicate to the audience.

Introduction

or

What are Subtitles and How Do I Create Them?

Subtitles are a more challenging subject than one may think; far more work goes into making even one functional title than it seems at a glance. It is a great victory to be able to create a subtitle that portrays all the information it needs to, and for this reason I have chosen the subtitle as my topic of study. It is interesting, and of note that rather than actually going out into the world and seeking out subtitles that have been created in order to compare them, or observing those that create them, or a combination of both, that I have decided to undertake the task of creating a subtitle script myself. It is through creating the titles myself that I believe I can best begin to comprehend the difficulties of creating them, and through this process assess them and their functions.

Subtitles, like almost all things to do with film, have a set of guidelines. And like the films they rest upon, the guidelines are generally subject to whimsy, provided that several important structural components exist in the title. These steadfastly agreed upon components are that the titles must not exceed 43 characters per line for commercial film, the titles are to be centered, and no more than two lines of title can simultaneously appear on the screen.¹ The standards

¹ *Audiovisual Translation*, 23-24; *Cine y Traducción*, 99. The claim that Chaume makes “Un subtítulado no puede exceder las dos líneas, de entre 28 y 40 caracteres cada una” has become slightly outdated, as the limit is now accepted to be 43

concerning punctuation vary, as do the standards on what font to use, although fonts sans serif are preferred for ease of reading. The standards for time are set by the Six Second Rule, which states that the time needed for a subtitle (of two lines each of maximum characters) to be read and understood is approximately six seconds. However this time varies in reverse proportion to the length of the title itself.²

If these standards, or lack thereof were the only thing that had to be considered when creating a subtitle, I would hardly say that creating a subtitle would be challenging; however, given that there are a seemingly endless array of things to consider the subtitle is one of the most challenging media one can work in. Once all the factors have been accounted for, the subtitler is still left with the puzzling conundrum stated by Shimizu that “[f]ilm subtitling is not translation”,³ and if it is not translation, what is it? Given the fact that what appears in a subtitle is essentially a translation of what is being said, it makes perfect sense to mistake it as translation, rather than the complex kind of interpretation it is. The complexity lies simply in that “the subtitler has to face both the challenges presented by the switch from one sub-code to another and the difficulties of retaining speech characteristics written in text.”⁴ In so saying, it becomes apparent that subtitling contains all of the characteristics of both translation and interpretation. In addition it deals with the

characters per line; further information on standards and their deviations can be found in Bannon’s *The Elements of Subtitles*.

² *Audiovisual Translation*, 23, 93; *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*, 97.

³ *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context: Subtitling in Japan*, 25.

⁴ *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context, Let the Words Do the Talking: The Nature and Art of Subtitling*, 92; the same point is further stated and explored on page 46 of *Audiovisual Translation*.

complications of applying these actions to a written script that is spoken in the film and then written again (as subtitles) after being changed into a different language.

Taking all of this into consideration, it comes to be understood that subtitling, if done right, may take an excruciating amount of time. In my study I was able to take this amount of time, but in the film industry, as it is a business with production goals, schedules and so on time is a luxury that simply cannot be afforded. This seems absurd to me, and indeed it is. Unfortunately it gets only worse. Bannon states that often schedules for releasing a film in a foreign market are insanely limited in time, and the quality is often not at all controlled, with companies ignoring the opinions of the translators and often handing essentially linguistic work to technicians who know nothing of how to put it together or pare it down.⁵ Naturally, this can result in those all-too-common subtitles that just seem off. Such titles may actually make no sense in the target language; other times they do not fit the characters' personalities or the actions that are portrayed on-screen. But such are the perils of large-scale production, and although unforgivable and undeniably unfortunate, they may be inevitable.

When one is looking at subtitles, how can one determine if a title really fits, especially in cases where the source language is completely unknown to the viewers? This actually is quite simple, and agreed upon throughout the industry and by professionals in general: "the best subtitle is the one the viewer reads unknowingly".⁶ Such a cruel irony it is that something that took so much effort and

⁵ Foreword to *The Elements of Subtitles*.

⁶ *Audiovisual Translation*, 185, also stated at various intervals in both *The Elements of Subtitles* and *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context*.

conveys the entire meaning of the film, while providing the character's personality and so much more is best when unnoticed. This however, is what I strove to do with my subtitles. I am fairly confident that had I been able to actually place them on the digital film⁷, they would be unnoticed, assimilated into the brains of the viewers as if spoken by the characters themselves.

When creating the titles for the chosen scenes in *Rurouni Kenshin*, I followed a process that I found logical, and as such is probably quite similar to the one used in the actual subtitling profession. I first transcribed the lines being said, as I do not have a script to follow, and believe that in the case a script was available it would need to be checked with what was actually said anyway. The transcription did take the most time of any of the steps. I watched the film several times through to get the gist of what was being said and to get a feeling of the personalities of the characters. I then tried to write out what was said by each character as it was being said. In the cases where I could not understand what was being said, I wrote out all of the things that I heard, regardless of whether or not they meant anything. After this I slowed the audio to half speed and did the same again. Finally, I changed all of the scripts into kanji for ease of reading in Japanese.

After creating this first round of transcriptions, I consulted with Kumiko Sensei, a native Japanese speaker who did essentially the same thing that I did to check what I had written. There were quite a few small but helpful changes as I missed syllables and intonations, or misheard words. However, there were lines that

⁷ The titles are not on the film mostly due to copyright reasons. However I also do not have access to or training with software that creates subtitles and gaining that would have been extra time I simply do not have.

even Sensei did not understand or could not make out after several times listening to them. This confirmed to me just how hard the task I had set out to do was. After my transcriptions were checked, I listened to the scenes repeatedly and at different speeds to confirm the changes, and in some cases the transcriptions were again changed as my original transcription was, in fact correct, or as words became clear enough to understand. It was with these transcriptions that I created two versions of translations.

The first translation I created was a Literal Translation⁸ and from that I created a Natural Translation, one that made sense in English and could serve as a translation if one was simply translating and not interpreting. After that I turned to my character profiles and what I knew of the characters and story from my familiarity with the franchise thus far.⁹ Using the profiles, the context of the film and what I knew of the Japanese and English languages I made a Stylized Translation, a script intended to be placed directly onto the film, as subtitles. All of this was submitted to Sensei for a final check. After the final check, it was again edited, as I did misunderstand some of what was said based on the flexibility of some of the grammar structures and the indirectness of Japanese language.¹⁰ As complicated and drawn out as the process was, almost the entirety of the time spent on it was in getting the correct transcription.

⁸ I use the word literal to mean as close to the Japanese structure as possible while still being able to be understood in English.

⁹ I am quite familiar with the franchise, I own all of the various media and have read and watched it more than once. This made me very critical of some parts of the film, but I feel like it helped my translations overall.

¹⁰ Generally, I just had the opposite of what was said in my head, and although it made sense in English it was not what was being said in Japanese.

Finally, I would like to state that although I made an effort to maintain professional standards, what I did would technically be classified as a fan-sub. This is because, had I the software to actually put the titles on the film, that software would have been independently created software downloaded from the internet. Additionally, since I did not obtain permission from the studio to put the subtitles on the film, it would have been out of the realm of copyright laws-- that is, as non-commercial work, and therefore, it fits the definition of a fan-sub.¹¹

Fan-subs, although I personally think they are often done better than the professional titles, are distinctly non-professional in that they are done for fun rather than profit. For this reason, and for the amount of effort that goes into the creation of such titles, I disagree with Fong's assessment that fan-subs are "abusive subtitling".¹² I understand that Fong believes that the liberties often taken in fan-subs, such as coloured text, fun fonts and moving the text around the screen can seem distracting and therefore embody exactly what subtitles should not do. However, I believe that as long as the titles are well written, that is, translated and adapted to show exactly what they need to show, such liberties can actually enhance the viewer's experience with

¹¹ Following the definition of fan-subs from pages 26-27 of *Audiovisual Translation*.

¹² *Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context, The Two Worlds of Subtitling: The Case of Vulgarisms and Sexually-oriented Language*, 57.

increased clarity. I say this as someone who has watched a great number of fan-sub, and the only thing that annoyed me, or even drew my attention was poorly translated lines, unreadable fonts, and lines that did not fit the characters' personalities. It is of note, that in my experience all of these mistakes are found just as, or possibly more frequently in professional subs as they are in fan-sub.

Adaptation of Media

or

Condensing the Story Without Losing the Story

The original manga, by Nobuhiro Watsuki is titled るろうに剣心-明治剣客浪漫譚、 *Rurouni Kenshin: Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story*. It is a heartwrenching drama, set in the Meiji Era, shortly after the modernization of Japan into a Western style society has begun. It explores the lives of those that lived through and participated in the trauma of the Meiji Restoration, and looks at how although one may never be able to escape the past, one can make up for the mistakes that one has made. The manga was popular more for the action and the drama than the romance it presented. It was taken up and made into a popular anime series. Recently, it was made into a series of films directed by Keishi Ohtomo, an American trained Japanese director. This melding of Japanese and American sensibilities and ways allowed the *Kenshin* series much

success in the past and proved once again to be a winning formula. I look at the first film, made back in 2012, when I was first preparing for this study.

When looking at the film *Rurouni Kenshin*, I think it is of great importance to remember that it was constructed from these previous media. The characters and the story already existed, there was an established plot and each of the heroes and villains had an established personality and back-story. Based on the popularity of the previous media, both in Japan and in the West, it can be concluded that the existing context was a winning formula. However, as the film was and is an adaptation of this media it is necessary that changes must be made. Understandably some of these changes were large changes and may be met with disagreement. However, I believe that each of the changes was made for a reason, and would like to here explain what I, and hopefully also the staff of the film, accept these reasons to be.

The film encompasses much of the Tokyo arc of the *Kenshin* series. It is the first major story arc and introduces each of the primary characters, as well as establishing a pattern of interaction between them and their opponents. The arc covers approximately the first four volumes of the manga, and the first eleven episodes of the anime, a little over four hours of viewing time. Within the arc there are three main stories: First, principal character introductions wherein Kenshin and Kaoru are introduced. Later this formula is also followed to a lesser extent with Yahiko, Sanosuke and Megumi. These introductions provide a back-story for the characters, show their personalities through a series of short, memorable events and establish the parameters of their relationships with each other, as well as

providing room for the development of these relationships. Second there is the Jin-e story. Jin-e, in all the media, is the first true villain that Kenshin faces; he is the first test of Kenshin's beliefs and he cements what the relationship between Kenshin and Kaoru really is. He also provides the introduction of the sub-themes of the Shinsengumi (新撰組), Ishin Shishi (維新志士), and how the times are changing, yet people choose to live in the past. The third and final story is the Kanryu/Megumi story in which the final principal character is introduced and content for further chapters is established.

With so much happening in the previous incarnations, the original, linear story made sense. In both the manga and anime there is the luxury of slowly introducing, characters and plots, and even dragging on important scenes for a seemingly ridiculous amount of time. Unfortunately, this indulgence of time is not afforded to film and so all of these things must happen in minutes, if not in seconds. Thus the stories needed to be shortened and placed on a parallel time-line. To do this many minor, and not-so-minor, characters and events had to be cut out or combined together. Of course this could not be done without inciting rage within the fan-base, so it needed to be done carefully.

The Oniwabanshu (お庭番種)¹³ are very important in the original *Kenshin* stories. They are a remnant of the past, a reminder of what strength can be and can do, and a recurring rival for Kenshin to overcome. They are also central to the Kanryu/Megumi story, yet they are left out of the film altogether. Considering the

¹³ The Oniwaban were an elite group of fighters and spies in service of the Tokugawa, historical note *Rurouni Kenshin* omnibus, Volume 1, 380.

popularity of the characters,¹⁴ this seems like it would spell doom for the film, but rather it made it a more effective incarnation of the story. The Oniwabanshu simply were not needed in this film, although their function in the sequels which cover the Kyoto arc, serves an effective purpose.¹⁵ Introducing them into the film would simply mean more characters to keep track of, and may have forced Jin-e out of the film, which could not be allowed. In addition, if the sequels were never made, including the Oniwabanshu would not allow the film to close and be a stand-alone story the way that including Jin-e as a principal villain did.

Including Jin-e as the principal villain, in itself was taking a chance. Although he was my personal favourite of Kenshin's early opponents, he is largely considered a failure.¹⁶ Jin-e is considered a failure mostly because he does not invoke emotional attachment as the Oniwabanshu do, which I believe makes him more, rather than less effective as an opponent for Kenshin. Precisely because the viewers do not get attached to Jin-e the full gamut of negative emotion that he causes to be felt in the audience and in the characters can be realized. Without this emotional turmoil, this medley of rage, disgust and pity, the madness that is the character Jin-e cannot be fully realized and the character of Kenshin cannot be properly introduced.

In all the media Jin-e has a very short stint. He appears as an assassin; targets Kenshin upon realizing him as Hitokiri Battousai; kidnaps Kaoru; fights Kenshin and commits suicide. However, in that short stint, he causes huge amounts of emotion. Jin-e begs the audience to consider what evil is, to take pity on those stuck in the

¹⁴ The character notes for the Oniwaban characters talk about how their popularity surprised Watsuki.

¹⁵ Ohtomo's interview with Otakumode, 2012.

¹⁶ *Rurouni Kenshin* omnibus, Volume 1, 338.

past and to realize what a terrible world it must be for them, in the present. Although he is essentially an evil character, he is clearly mad, and for that reason he evokes a combination of sympathy and fear from those who come upon him. It is because of this and the amount of thinking that Jin-e presents to the audience in addition to his semi-philosophical dying words and the threat this causes to Kenshin's resolve that I believe Jin-e was far more effective an opponent than the Oniwabanshu for Kenshin, and that his starring place in the film is not only well deserved, but a great decision by Ohtomo.

Jin-e, although only present for a short time, is given a lot of attention. Even though the details of his past are not necessarily important, as he is a disposable villain, they are still interesting to the audience and an effective tool in establishing his character. In both the manga and anime he is an assassin, killing those of the Ishin Shishi that now bear high ranks in the corrupt Meiji Government.¹⁷ This is, I believe, an extension of his grudge as a former Shinsengumi leader, who was overthrown by his subordinates.¹⁸ More than that, it is a perpetuation of his love of killing and of his desire to be beaten by an opponent stronger than himself, in an attempt to once again live in the days of the revolution he so enjoyed fighting in. Although all of these details are left out of the film, I think that in the opening scene when he finds and claims Kenshin's sword, his nature is established. The ambiguity presented in that scene also allows for speculation as to whether what he will do is

¹⁷ Made up of powerful men from the domains on the winning side of the Restoration, primarily Satsuma and Choushuu.

¹⁸ I don't know for sure, but I believe this is an allusion to him being Serizawa Kamo, taking the fact that the real Serizawa was killed and twisting it into him becoming Jin-e Watsuki does state the Jin-e is based on, or an incarnation of Serizawa, *Rurouni Kenshin* omnibus, Volume 1, 338.

part of a revenge plot against Kenshin, or a logical extension of his mental instability, both possibilities that are equally intriguing.

Using Jin-e in place of the Oniwabanshu opened up a couple holes in the film. First it left Kanryu without guards, or accomplices, or whatever ambiguous relationship he and the Oniwaban had in the original media. Next it opened up a place for explanation of the relationship between Jin-e and Kanryu. The first hole was filled by including Inui and Gein, characters from a later arc in the series. This choice allowed for the outright excision of the Oniwabanshu and their story, while allowing in villains who did not necessarily need a story, as they were presented as hired thugs for Kanryu. Using Gein and Inui was a good move here, as they are characters that can be recognized from the previous media and who could potentially be used in further films. The roles that the Oniwaban filled were thus taken over, but the challenge of saving Megumi still remained. Having Gein and Inui hired on allows for them to be either in compliance with Jin-e or independent of him, a thing that does not matter to the overall story and therefore needs no time for explanation in the film itself. This in turn allows for Jin-e and Kanryu's relationship to be ambiguous; it is implied that Jin-e is somehow working for Kanryu, but, out of respect or fear, is allowed to essentially do what he wants.

Another interesting choice on part of the director was placing Kanryu so centrally as an opponent for Kenshin. I personally don't think that character of Kanryu was necessary in the film. Although including Kanryu makes Megumi's introduction and establishment easier, without association with the Oniwabanshu, much of the character's purpose is defeated. He still effectively shows the place of

money in politics and in the new world, while establishing that embracing the way of the West is the best way to survive, providing an important contrast to the still very feudal world the principal cast lives in. However, I feel that by presenting Saitou and Yamagata this contrast was already presented and established. Including Kanryu made this contrast more mucky, as the Oniwaban proved more of a clear-cut contrast to him in the original media than did Kenshin in any incarnation. The only way that Kanryu is an effective character is in his personality. Kanryu in the film is a comic relief, of sorts. He looks and talks funny, his henchmen are hilarious, the rounin (浪人) in his garden are ridiculously inept and out of place. However, he still manages to be a menacing figure and the relationship between Megumi, Jin-e and himself helps to hold the story together. Although I think the story would be just as effective without Kanryu, I feel that Ohtomo included him as redemption. In the character notes in the manga Watsuki admits that Kanryu fell short of his expectations¹⁹. I feel that his inclusion in the film was to deny his failure. I also think that, despite his role being fairly unnecessary, it worked. Overall, I will admit that I found Kanryu more menacing and villainous in the film than in the manga or anime. I also very much enjoyed the opulence he presented and the performance of the actor.

The inclusion of Saitou in the film is also a point of interest. In the manga and anime he doesn't appear until closer to the Kyoto arc (chapter 48, episode 28 respectively), but he is a central character once introduced. Since there were sequels planned for the film it made sense to introduce him early, as did the fact that

¹⁹ *Rurouni Kenshin* omnibus, Volume 2, 147.

he had a position of power. By mitigating Yamagata Aritomo's²⁰ role and substituting Saitou, a person with a much more personal connection to Kenshin, Ohtomo made an effective move. Although Saitou and Kenshin were once enemies, they have little hatred for each other and in many respects are allies. However, their roles in society, both past and present pit them against each other in many ways. Both have been changed by their experiences in the war, but they have been changed in ways that heavily contrast in their expressions. For example, both seek justice and redemption, and where Kenshin vows not to kill and decides to defend people from violence such as he had caused, Saitou becomes a police officer and strives to mitigate corruption in the upper levels of society, although this was not portrayed well in the film. By opening the film with the battle of Toba-Fushimi (鳥羽伏見の戦い), the relationship between Kenshin and Saitou was introduced; unfortunately, Saitou's few appearances did not allow for the exploration of their relationship afforded by the previous media. What was presented was nonetheless interesting, particularly the scene immediately following the scene I translated for Sanosuke's character, where Saitou and Kenshin fight as per Yamagata's orders (a scene I regret not translating). Overall the inclusion of Saitou was well thought out. However, I feel that he needed a slightly larger role for the full impact of his character to be felt. He was introduced, but beyond that the audience does not really get a feel for the importance of his role, especially his relationship with Kenshin.

²⁰ Like Saitou, Yamagata Aritomo was a real man who had the same role in real life as in the *Kenshin* media.

Next, I would like to talk of how some of the principle characters' introductions were different from in the original media. The introduction of Yahiko as Kaoru's student and having a pre-established sibling-like relationship between them saved time on back-story that was not necessary for establishing Yahiko's character. Although the back-story given to him was quite effective in the previous media and allowed for the audience to warm up to him, it would have taken time the film just did not have. The pre-established relationship was all that was needed, especially considering he barely had a role in the film at all. The pre-establishment of the relationship between Kaoru and Yahiko also allowed for parts of Kaoru's story to be explained in other ways than in long scenes, and felt more natural from the point-of-view of someone watching the film. Establishing Sanosuke as a thug from the start and then placing him in relation to the Akabeko restaurant allowed for his back-story to also be eliminated, as it can be assumed that he is a character established in this world, and possibly that Kenshin knew of him before the events in which they made acquaintance.

The pre-establishment of Sanosuke's character however, has short-comings. As his back-story is never explained his line 人斬り抜刀齋だろ (Hitokiri Battousai darou; I've found you, Battousai) is never given a basis for existing; and, although speculating why he would be searching for Kenshin is interesting, without this presentation of his back-story it is unfulfilling. He has a fascinating history and since it is tied so deeply to the roots of the revolution and his hatred of the Ishin Shishi it gives his character depth. There is a hint of his story when he is fighting Kenshin, but there is no explanation, no flashbacks, nothing. This

lack of story and establishment angers me. Sanosuke is one of my favourite characters, and although I enjoyed that the actor who played him was able to capture his personality, even without his story, the fact that his story is missing makes him just a random guy who likes to fight. Without his story his fighting lacks reason, his friendship with Kenshin means little and his character cannot extract emotion from the audience like it did in the previous media. The lack of story didn't allow for Sanosuke's pain to be presented, or for his love-hate relationship with Megumi to be established. In the film he was a very static character, more there for the sake of being there than any other reason. At the very least, he could have explained his past to Kenshin as they were fighting, like in the previous incarnations²¹. I am not saying that leaving his past out was outright wrong, as sometimes creating a film demands such painful decisions to be made, but I am saying that there were still ways to include his past, and that without this inclusion the character of Sanosuke suffered.

Despite the changes in characters and their introductions, I feel that the original story was portrayed well, and in some ways improved upon. Additionally the relationships between Kenshin and Kaoru and between Kenshin and Jin-e were portrayed quite effectively. The dredging up of the past and pitting it against the present, what I believe is the major theme of the *Kenshin* story, was so well executed in the film that many of the flaws can be forgiven. Once an understanding of the constraints of the medium of film are grasped, I believe the audience is more willing

²¹ Episodes 4 and 5 in the anime, chapters 5-8 in the manga.

to forgive Ohtomo for some of his more anger-inciting decisions and look at the film as a successful whole.

***Kenshin* Characters and Japanese Archetypes**

or

Don't Bottle Me Up!

I feel it pertinent that before I get into the discussions on the factors of my translation, the film itself is discussed. In the *Kenshin* characters, there is a wonderful mash-up of traditional Japanese characters and their archetypes. Along with this mash-up there are obvious references to American super-heroes and comic themes. Although I do not wish to delve into the American references, as they are not overly apparent in the film, with the exception of the reference of Westernization in general, I do wish to dissect the Japanese traits present in two of the characters; the characters of Kenshin and Kaoru will be the focus here, as they both fit and do not fit into archetypes typically present in Japanese films.

The first, and most seemingly fitting archetype that is seen is the Chaste Warrior; Kenshin. This archetype fits Kenshin more than the Lord-Retainer archetypes, as he is neither of the two, and the period of the events is too late for these to apply. Barret says, in his introduction of the character of the Chaste Warrior that “[t]hey best represent the universally admired ideal of courage because they put it to the ultimate test in battles where they stake their own lives”.²² This is epitomized in Kenshin. Just in the introductory scene he is the Battousai, the master of his sword school, a Hitokiri assassin and he fights off staves of skilled warriors in battle for his ideals. However, in this concise description of what a warrior is, there is a universality that does not quite bring to light that in the Japanese mind courage is not placing one’s self in harms way, but that it is “quelling weakening emotions”.²³ In this way, the very Japanese character of Kenshin varies from the way the archetype itself becomes Japanese. Perhaps while he was Hitokiri Battousai Kenshin did fulfill this strange requirement, however, in the age of change, he does not. Rather the opposite is true. Kenshin’s courage and his actions are fueled by emotions; specifically by remorse and the need for retribution in the eyes of those he wronged.

Although Kenshin continues to practice the noble art of swordsmanship, and continues to fight, he does not seem to be a warrior in the truest definition. But, he does fulfill the chaste part of the archetype. Chastte in Kenshin’s definition can expand past the sexuality and into the reluctance to take life. Much like the Musashi

²² *Archetypes in Japanese Film*, 43.

²³ *Archetypes in Japanese Film*, 43.

introduced in the Kodan tradition,²⁴ Kenshin observes courage as the “endurance of hardships”.²⁵ In the way that the relationship between Kaoru and Kenshin progresses and certainly their attachment to each other grows stronger, but nothing really happens, there is a recollection of the chasteness that was for so long a characteristic of the true warrior in Japanese stories. This, combined with the clearly historical setting is reminiscent of the jidaigeki (時代劇) period film. Even though Ohtomo did not set out to make a period film,²⁶ Kenshin very much fits the definition provided by Thornton of the period film as simply being “firmly based in history”.²⁷

Regardless of the fact that Thornton fails to describe in which manner the jidaigeki is based in history, it can be assumed that he means to state the inclusion of a historical period as the setting or of historical events as major plot-points. In this definition *Rurouni Kenshin*, regardless of how much Western influence was exerted in the film, is in essence a historical film. It is based in the Meiji Era, and shows the way that the times in Japan are moving from feudal to modern. The story portrays characters that lived through the tumultuous end of the Feudal Period and who fought in the events that introduce and resurface within the story. The inclusion of characters based on men that actually existed and the personifications of Japanese ideals and legends more firmly places the Kenshin film in the jidaigeki category. This

²⁴ Kodan is Japanese oral story telling, there are different schools and styles, but all tell traditional stories or of historical events and characters. It is not to be confused with the similar, but comedy based Rakugo tradition, an example of which can be found in *Genki II* with the story 猫の皿, pages 295-296.

²⁵ *Archetypes in Japanese Film*, 45.

²⁶ ClickTheCity interview with Ohtomo.

²⁷ *Japanese Period Film*, 13.

is important as it reinforces the archetypes found in the film and it allows for the characters to simultaneously break out of the archetypes that they embody.

In the case of Kenshin, the first archetype to be discussed is the Chaste Warrior, as touched on, Kenshin roughly lines up with the Kodan Musashi. They have similar personalities and accomplishments, and both settle down to more peaceful things later in life.²⁸ However Kenshin varies from Musashi in that he does not “[repress] his feelings when he hears the call of duty”²⁹, but rather he harnesses the power of his emotion and channels it into his the accomplishment of that duty. For Kenshin, the duties themselves have always been dictated by emotion. As an assassin he fought for a better world and the ideals he believed should exist within it. He protected others with those same ideals. In the new age he searches to cleanse himself of the evils he has done and once again raises his sword for the innocent. Kenshin is the epitome of the character who has realized, like Yagyuu Munenori that “the Way of Heaven is the Way that gives life to beings, so something used for killing is truly an instrument of ill omen”.³⁰ In fact the entirety of the *Kenshin* media is devoted to defining the difference between the Killing Sword and the Life Giving Sword, the two swords distinguished by Munenori in his work.

Kenshin’s archetypes and how he fits into them are determined by his attachments to others. Kaoru and Megumi attach themselves to the chaste Kenshin,

²⁸ Musashi wrote the *The Book of Five Rings* (五輪の書) a book about how the principles of swordsmanship can be applied to life in general. It is a good read for those interested in such things, it is also short, concise and wonderfully quotable.

²⁹ *Archetypes in Japanese Film*, 56.

³⁰ Yagyuu Munenori’s *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War* in *The Book of Five Rings*, 95.

just like women do to the traditional Chaste Warrior. Unlike these women, however, they form emotional connections with Kenshin, that push him to the next level of strength, which is not, as is traditional, in conquering by killing, but in the new way of conquering by perception. For Kenshin “perception of abilities and intentions alone is to be considered the eye”.³¹ In this way, Kenshin also fills the archetype of The Wanderer, which seems only fitting considering that the word Rurouni (るろうに) is a form of the word for wanderer: Rounin (浪人).

The archetype of Wanderer seems to have been crafted for Kenshin, the traditional Wanderer. This is both opposed by and personified in that Kenshin is on a “pilgrimage for atonement”³², since the atonement he seeks is not the traditional recompense for having been sinned against (almost always caused by one’s own sins and therefore a form of atonement), but the almost non-existent search of atonement for one’s own sins. In this archetype, The Wanderer is almost never solitary, and is generally helped by women.³³ This then is Kaoru’s role in the Kenshin story. In providing strength for his convictions and reminding him of what he must do, Kaoru ensures that eventually, this Wanderer will atone for his sins. This relationship, as well as Kenshin twisting the Chaste Warrior ideal keeps Kenshin from falling into the Weak Male counterpart of Kaoru’s All-Suffering Female.

The All-Suffering Female is the first of the archetypes that could be applied to Kaoru. However, I apply this only in contrast, as the All-Suffering Female is

³¹ Yagyu Munenori’s *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War* in *The Book of Five Rings*, 127.

³² *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, 91.

³³ *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, 94.

characterized mainly by her personification of the Buddhist virtue of passivity,³⁴ and Kaoru is anything but passive. The other characteristic of the All-Suffering Female is being the love interest of the Weak Male, a character eventually done in because of the weakness caused by his love for the woman. There is no such character in *Kenshin*. Although it can be seen that Kaoru does suffer in some ways, and is the love interest of Kenshin, who is certainly not a Weak Male neither of the characters are weakened by this love. In fact, both are strengthened by it. This goes against the Confucian system³⁵ and is a marvellous parallel of the rapidly Westernizing times in which the story is based.

Kaoru, does however fit the later definition of suffering as the “virtue of endurance... because it maintains the status quo”³⁶. She endures through many hardships along side her everyday struggles. She endures the embarrassment of her school and her students leaving. She endures the changing times and, most importantly, she endures pain in order to become stronger. All of this works in maintaining the status quo of her own world, if not in maintaining the overall balance of the society in which she lives. With this strength, Kaoru exhibits parts of the modern archetype of the Earthy Woman. The Earthy Woman can make good on her own. She works and can even support others.³⁷ Like the Earthy Woman Kaoru literally fights for what she believes, and like the Earthy Woman Kaoru has compassion for others, even when wronged by them. However, Kaoru stays on the innocent side of this archetype and is never dragged into the dirty, sexual part

³⁴ *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, 118.

³⁵ *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, 122-123.

³⁶ *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, 133.

³⁷ *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, 195.

where all that is wrong with society is satirized. Although in presenting Kaoru's character the ills of society are seen, they are not directly related to her as they would be related to the Earthy Woman.

The archetypes presented in Japanese film are interesting, and in some ways can be applied to the characters in the *Kenshin* film. However, the ways that the characters in the film both fit and don't fit the archetypes, and the way that they seem to be a mish-mash of the old and new archetypes is what really makes them interesting. Although I chose only to discuss Kenshin and Kaoru, the archetypes that they fit into, or evade, as well as other archetypes portrayed in Japanese film can be applied to the other characters in the film as well. Especially to Saitou, Jin-e and Megumi. However the point of this was not to delve too deep into the world of archetypes, but to discuss those that characterized the two people that the film is really about. In doing so I hope to have established an understanding of these two characters to be carried in the mind while continuing with the reading of my study.

Scripts

Here I would like to present the scripts, for quick reference when reading the following pages. This is what the characters are saying, in Japanese, followed by a Romanization of the Japanese characters for ease of reading. As I wrote out the lines, I broke them up at natural points so it would feel as if the lines were really being spoken. These are provided simply as an easy-access reference to see where in the film or scene something is located while reading the body of this work. The English

versions of the scripts are included as the stylized translation intended for subtitles; however they are not presented as if broken up for placement in subtitles. Additionally, there are no periods in actual subtitles, but here periods are included for ease of reading. The English is presented in the same way as the Japanese titles, at the natural breaking points, for ease of reading. For a visual of the translation process, please refer to Appendices 1.1, 1.2 and 9, where the different stages of transcription and translation can be seen.

Scene 1・剣心のシーン・鳥羽伏見の戦い、最後の日・慶応時代
Scene 1 - Kenshin's scene - The final day of the Battle of Toba-
Fushimi, Keiou Era

TEXT 今から百四十年前「幕末」の動乱期 imakara hyakuyonjuunen mae
“bakumatsu” no douranki

「人斬り抜刀斉」と呼ばれる暗殺者が居だ “Hitokiri Battousai” to
yobareru ansatsusha ga iru da

倒幕派の命により京都を暗躍しその修羅の如き、強さと冷徹さから人々に
怒れられた toubakuha no inochi ni yori kyoto wo anyaku shi sono shura no
gotoki, tsuyosa to reitetsusa kara hitobito ni okorerareta

時は天下分け目の戊辰戦争 toki wa tenkawakeme no boshin sensou
一八百六八年一月京都賭場伏見の山中 senhappyakurokujuuhachinen
ichigatsu Kyoto Toba-Fushimi no yama naka

MAN いたぞ！新撰組だ！Itazo! Shinsengumi da!

SAITOU 人斬り抜刀斉、どこだ？Hitokiri Battousai, doko da?
どこにいる？Doko ni iru?

MAN 新撰組三番隊長斉藤一！Shinsengumi san-ban taichou Saitou Hajime!
隊長！Taichou!

SAITOU 勝負だ、抜刀斉 shoubu da, Battousai

MAN 錦の御旗じゃ！nishiki no mihata jya!
薩長軍の勝利じゃ！sacchou-gun no shouri jya!

KENSHIN 来たか？新しい時代が、やっとな Kita ka? Atarashii jidai ga, yatto

SAITOU 非村抜刀齋これで終わりだと思ふなよ。たとえ世の中は変わろうとも剣に生き、剣に死ぬ、以外俺たちに道はない Himura Battousai kore de owarida to omouna yo. Tatoe yo no naka wa kawarou domo, ken ni iki, ken ni shinu igai oretachi ni michi wanai

JIN-E なぜだ Naze da

なぜ俺を生き残った Naze ore wo iki nokotta

何だこの刀は…これが人斬り抜刀齋の Nan da kono katana wa... Kore ga Hitokiri Battousai no

Scene 2・薫のシーン・橋で会う・明治時代

Scene 2 - Kaoru' s scene - Meeting on the bridge - Meiji Era

KAORU ネコちゃんだ。ネコ〜、ニャン Neko-chan da. Neko~, nyan

ちょっと Chotto

待ちなさい！お前が抜刀齋か？ Machinasai! Omae ga Battousai ka?

なんの目的で、神谷活心流の名を語って悪事を働くか Nan no mokuteki de,

kamiya-kasshin-ryuu no na wo katatte akuji wo hataraku ka

お前のような奴がいるから父は。。。父が残した神谷活心流は Omae no you na me ga iru kara chichi wa... Chichi ga nokoshita kamiya-kasshin-ryuu wa

JIN-E お前の父親がどうしたと Omae no chichi-oya ga doushita to

KAORU 人を生かす剣を説いていた。切るのではない、殺すのではない人を、人を生かす剣を Hito wo seikasu ken wo toiteita. Kiru no dewanai korosu no dewanai hito wo, hito wo seikasu ken wo

JIN-E 木刀でしかも女の身で俺に立ち向かうとは Bokutou de shikamo onna no mi de ore ni tachimukau to wa

KAORU だまれ！ Damare!

JIN-E こんな棒切で何が出来る？血を浴びてこの刀は生きる物、あの世で悟れ Konna boukire de nani ga dekiru? Chi wo abite kono tou wa ikirumono, ano yo de satore

Scene 3・差之助のシーン・牢は苦しくないぞ
Scene 3 - Sanosuke' s scene - Jail ain' t so bad

TEXT 悪 Aku

SAITOU 十字傷の男、矢張りお前が。久しぶりだな、人斬り抜刀斎。Juuji kizu
no otoko yahari omae ga. Hisashiburi da na Hitokiri Battousai
鳥羽伏見の戦い以来、もう十年になるから Toba-Fushimi no tatakai
irai, mou juunen ni naru kara
話がある。。。Hanashi ga aru…
出るDero

SANOSUKE 人斬り抜刀斎だろう Hitokiri Battousai darou

Scene 4・剣心対刃衛・死と変の戦い

Scene 4 - Kenshin vs. Jin-e - A battle of death and change

JIN-E 目が覚めたようだな。まあ、そうにらむな、お前を人質にすれば抜刀斎は怒る Me ga sameta you da na. Maa, sou niramu na omae wo hitojishi ni sureba Battousai wa okoru

怒りを奴を往年の人斬りに立ち戻らせる Ikari wo me wo ounen no Hitokiri ni tachi modoraseru

そろそろおでましのようだ Sorosoro odemashi no you da

KAORU 剣心 Kenshin

JIN-E 怒ってるな Okotteru na

KENSHIN 薫どのを巻き込んだ貴様とそれを阻止できなかった俺自身にな Kaoru-dono wo makikonda kisama to sore wo soshi dekinakatta ore jishin ni na

KAORU 剣心 Kenshin

JIN-E いいぞ、抜刀斎 Ii zo, Battousai
怒れ、怒れ！ Okore, okore!

KENSHIN 薫どの！ Kaoru-dono!

JIN-E そんな刀で俺が殺せるか Sonna tou de ore ga koroseru ka

KAORU 剣心！Kenshin!

JIN-E 背車刀まで読めなんだか Kaisha tou made yomenanda ka

KAORU 剣心！Kenshin!

JIN-E まだだな～まだお前は昔の抜刀斎には遠く及ばない Mada dana～, mada omae wa mukashi no Battousai niwa douku oyobanai

KENSHIN 薫どの！Kaoru-dono!

JIN-E 心の一方を強めにかけて、肺まで麻痺する程度にな Shin-no-ippo wo tsuyome ni kaketa, hai made mahisuru teido ni na
持ってせいぜい二分 Motte seizei ni-fun

KENSHIN 刃衛！Jin-e!

JIN-E 時間がないぞ Jikan ga nai zo
言いたい事は剣で言え、流石だな Iitai koto wa ken de ie, sasuga da na

KENSHIN 命がほしければ、薫どのに掛けた心の一方を解け Inochi ga hoshikereba, Kaoru-dono ni kaketa Shin-no-ippo wo toke

JIN-E 俺にはもう解けん、方法は二つに一つ自力で解くか術者を殺して剣気をたちきるか Ore ni wa mou token, houhou wa futastu ni hitotsu jiriki de toku ka jutsusha wo koroshite kenki wo tachikuru ka

KENSHIN ならば！Naraba!

JIN-E 勝負だ、緋村抜刀斎 Shoubu da, Himura Battousai

KENSHIN 遊び終わりだ殺してやるから掛けてこい！Asobi owari da koroshite-yaru kara kakate koi!

JIN-E これが抜刀斎のかまえかな？ Kore ga Battousai no kamae ka na?

KENSHIN 飛天御剣流抜刀術双龍閃 Hiten-Mitsurugu-Ryuu battoujutsu Souryuusen
肘の間接を砕き筋をたった。これでお前の剣の命は終わった、そしてこれで息の根も Hiji no kansetsu wo kudaki suji wo tatta. Kore de omae no ken no inochi wa owattasoshite, kore de iki no ne mo

薫どのを守るため、俺は今一度人斬りに戻る Kaoru-dono wo mamoru tame,
ore wa ima ichidou Hitokiri ni modoru

JIN-E 殺せ Korose

KENSHIN 死ね Shine

KAORU 剣心、やめて！ Kenshin, yamete!

JIN-E 解きやがった Toki yagatta

KENSHIN 薫どの Kaoru-dono

KAORU 人斬りに戻らないで、Hitokiri ni modoranai de
だめ、殺したら Dame, koroshitara
殺しちゃだめ 剣心 Koroshicha dame Kenshin
あなたが、殺してしまった人のためにあなたが今まで、助けた人のために
人を切らなくても Anata ga, koroshiteshimatta hito no tame ni anata ga
ima made, tasuketa hito no tame ni hito wo kiranakutemo
だれか助ける事をできるそれがあなたが、剣心が目指した新しい世の中で
しよ Dareka tasukeru koto wo dekiru sore ga, anata ga, Kenshin ga mezashita
atarashii yo no naka deshyo

KENSHIN 薫どの Kaoru-dono

JIN-E 決着を付けるぞ～、抜刀斉 Kecchaku wo tsukeru zo, Battousai

KENSHIN もうよせ、左手しか使えぬおめしに勝気はござらん Mou yose, hidari
te shika tsukaenu omeshi ni kachiki wa gozaran

JIN-E 終わっちゃいねえよ Owaccha i-ne yo

お前の本性は人斬りよ～。同じ人斬りが言ってんだからまちがいいねえよ
Omae no honsei wa htokiri yo ~ . Onnaji Hitokiri ga ittenda kara
machigai inee yo

所詮人斬りは人斬り Shousen Hitokiri wa Hitokiri
お前がいつまで流浪同じなぞとござっているなのか。地獄の淵で見てて
やろう Omae ga itsumade ruro onnaji na zo to gozaitteiru nano ka? Jigoku
no fuchi de miteteyarou

Scene 1・剣心のシーン・鳥羽伏見の戦い、最後の日・慶応時代
Scene 1 - Kenshin' s scene - The final day of the Battle of Toba-
Fushimi, Keiou Era

TEXT 140 years ago, during the Bakumatsu
There was an assassin called "Hitokiri Battousai"
He was the strength of the regime, bringer of carnage, feared by all
The decisive battle of the Boshin War
Jan 1868, Toba-Fushimi, near Kyoto

MAN Shinsengumi!

SAITOU Hitokiri Battousai Where are you?
Where are you!

MAN Unit Captain Saitou Hajime!
Strike him down!

SAITOU Is this a game, Battousai?

MAN Victory to the Imperial banner!
Victory to Sacchou!

KENSHIN Have we finally brought about a new age?

SAITOU Manslayer Himura, do you think this is over? Even as the world changes, we have lived by the sword, we must die by it. There is no other way.

JIN-E Why am I alive?
This sword... Is the Hitokiri' s.

Scene 2・薫のシーン・橋で会う・明治時代

Scene 2 - Kaoru' s scene - Meeting on the bridge - Meiji Era

KAORU Here kitty, meow.
What...
Wait! Aren' t you Battousai?
Why are you going around committing crimes, and slandering my family' s name?
It' s to stop guys like you that-- that my father created the Kamiya School.

JIN-E Your father...

KAORU Swords exist in order to protect people. Not for cutting. Not for killing. Swords exist to save lives.

JIN-E You can' t stand up to me with a wooden sword.

KAORU Shut up!

JIN-E Give up woman, swords live on blood. Maybe you' ll understand that in the next world.

Scene 3・差之助のシーン・牢は苦しくないぞ
Scene 3 - Sanosuke' s scene - Jail ain' t so bad

TEXT Evil

SAITOU Man with an X-shaped scar... of course it' s you. It' s been a while, eh... Battousai.

Has it really been ten years since Toba-Fushimi?

We need to talk.

Get out.

SANOSUKE I' ve found you, Battousai.

Scene 4・剣心対刃衛・死と変の戦い

Scene 4 - Kenshin vs. Jin-e - A battle of death and change

JIN-E You're awake. Why such hatred? I only took you to anger Battousai.

His anger will turn him into the Battousai I once knew.
He will come soon.

KAORU Kenshin.

JIN-E Oh, are you angry?

KENSHIN Kaoru-dono is innocent, I cannot forgive myself.

KAORU Kenshin.

JIN-E Anger becomes you, Battousai.

Embrace your anger!

KENSHIN Kaoru-dono!

JIN-E You can't kill me like that.

KAORU Kenshin!

JIN-E You couldn't read my jutsu.

KAORU Kenshin!

JIN-E Not yet... You are not yet the Battousai I once knew.

KENSHIN Kaoru-dono!

JIN-E My Shin-no-ippo is taking hold, her lungs will become paralyzed...
...In no more than two minutes.

KENSHIN Jin-e!

JIN-E Time is running out.
Talk with your sword. Good.

KENSHIN Release Kaoru-dono, if you want to keep your life.

JIN-E I've told you she must release it herself, or you must kill me
to cut off the flow of energy.

KENSHIN If that's the case...

JIN-E Let's play, Himura Battousai

KENSHIN I'm done playing. Here you die!

JIN-E The old Battousai...

KENSHIN Hiten-mitsurugu-ryuu Souryuusen.

Your elbow has been broken; you will never use a sword again. In
this way, I end your life.

In order to protect Kaoru-dono, I shall once again become a
manslayer.

JIN-E Finish it.

KENSHIN Die.

KAORU Kenshin, don' t!

JIN-E Impossible...

KENSHIN Kaoru-dono...

KAORU You don' t need to kill.

Killing solves nothing.

Please, Kenshin,

for the sake of those you have killed until now,

for the sake of those you have helped, stop the killing

You must continue helping people, in this world that you fought for. You have a new purpose, in this new world

KENSHIN Kaoru.

JIN-E Finish this, Battousai.

KENSHIN It' s over, you can only use your left hand.

JIN-E It' s not over.

You are Hitokiri Battousai. We are the same.

Once a killer, always a killer.

You cannot keep up your charade; I will wait in hell for that day.

Scene Analysis

or

A Change in the face of Death

Originally I planned on translating the entire film, a task so obviously huge that I was persuaded to do otherwise. Considering how ridiculously long it took to transcribe the four scenes that I settled on, that was a wise decision. Here I would like to talk about those four scenes. Each scene was chosen for a challenge it presented to the film and as it presented something relevant to the story and or historical context of the film. Additionally each scene established a character or relationship dynamic crucial to the story.

The first scene I chose was naturally the opening scene of the film. *Rurouni Kenshin* opens with the only palpable historic event in the film: a loose portrayal of the final moments of the Battle of Toba-Fushimi (鳥羽伏見の戦い). Toba-Fushimi was the decisive battle in the Boshin War (戊辰戦争), sometimes known as the Japanese Civil War. Although at this point the Emperor was restored³⁸ and the Patriots (威信志士 *Ishin Shishi*) were the *de facto* winners, there was still cleaning up to do. This cleaning up entailed defeating in reality those remaining of the 公武合体 (Koubugattai) segment that supported the feudal system (there was a second fragment of the Koubugattai that supported political reform and the *Ishin Shishi*), and the factions that

³⁸ The Emperor was restored to power on Oct 14 in the third year of Keio, Western year 1867, whereas Toba-Fushimi did not happen until January of the next year, and the *Shinsengumi* et al were not defeated until the Battle of Goryoukaku in May of 1869 (*Shinsengumi*, 157).

split off of the Patriots: those that no longer followed the ideal of 尊王攘夷 (Sonnoujoui) ³⁹ namely, Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians (foreigners), and those who formerly served the Shogun (將軍), including the infamous Shinsengumi (新撰組).

In real life, and to a degree in the film, Toba-Fushimi was a bloodbath. It went on for days and the artillery factions simply slaughtered the sword corps. Neutral Han, including those traditionally attached to the Shogun by blood⁴⁰ and small Han, that loosely supported the Sonnoujoui or Kobugattai ideals threw in with the Choushuu Satsuma Alliance (薩長, Sacchou). The battle began with the Bakufu⁴¹ troops at a decided advantage. They had a better position, better weapons, and much larger numbers, however, the chain of command was pitiable and many weapons were inaccessible to those who were trained to use them.⁴²

The Bakufu was flanked by the Ishin Shihsi, which is, I believe where the film begins. Satsuma moved in on the Bakufu troops attempting to march to Osaka; rebel troops from Aizu moved from the village of Toba

³⁹ Both the Sonnoujoui and Kobugattai had supporters on both sides of the conflict, however te extremism of their views varied greatly.

⁴⁰ Notably Mito(水戸藩), a branch of the Tokugawa family traditionally close to the Shogun, and from whence shoguns, including Yoshinobu had been chosen .

⁴¹All remaining on the Shogun's side are henceforth referred to as Bakufu troops. Most notably Tosa (土佐藩), who were secretly in league with Satsuma (薩摩藩), and turned on the Bakufu before Toba-Fushimi; Yamazki's essay, sections 6, 7; *Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, Part 3, 4.

⁴² *Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 422.

to the village of Fushimi; seeing this as an attack, Satsuma reacted, causing the Shinsengumi units to be deployed from their position in the Bakufu's vanguard, where they were protecting important political figures, toward Satsuma's troops.⁴³ This appears to be portrayed in the film as Saitou enters battle, and the Shinsengumi somehow evade the gunfire and take down men with their swords. Choushuu's sniper unit took down the Osakan guards on the bridge, allowing for attacks on the Bakufu from two directions. As Bakufu troops attempted to re-secure the bridge, Satsuma and Choushuu drove them into an ambush by Tosa (土佐藩) turncoats. The Ishin Shishi managed, over the course of a couple days, to push Bakufu troops into a defensive position at the castle on the east bank of the river. By this point, there was a plea for reinforcement by the Bakufu, but it went unanswered. Additionally, Hiroshima (広島藩) and Tsu (津藩) decided, at this point to throw in with the Ishin Shishi and arranged an attack. The Tsu ambushed the Bakufu units with their own firearms, as they were attempting a counter-attack on the Ishin Shishi.⁴⁴ The Bakufu then took the remainder of their troops and retreated to Osaka overnight.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 422-423.

⁴⁴ *Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 428.

⁴⁵ The battle is explained in detail from page 422 in *Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, and from page 63 of Yamazaki's essay. Additional information can be found in other books, but not to such detail.

I believe that the *Kenshin* film, as films tend to do, simply portrayed the events that were most interesting: the arrival of the Shinsengumi, the continued prowess of swordsmen in the age of guns, the confusion of the battle and, of course, the moment of victory. This was a great move on part of Ohtomo. He opened the film with excitement, and it was believable. The score portrayed the action perfectly and raised emotion in the viewers. Alongside introducing the historical context of the story, the scene served as a perfect introduction to Kenshin, Saitou, and Jin-e. In a few seconds each had their personality established and their relationship with each other set in place. It was important that this happen in the context of battle, in the midst of the real history in which the *Kenshin* story takes place. If it took place in any other situation I believe the drama and the overall effectiveness of the introduction of these characters would have been lost.

Looking first at Kenshin, I find it interesting that Saitou is shown before him, but also find it effective as it does add to the mystery of the character. Saitou appearing first leaves the audience wondering when the assassin that the titles spoke of will appear. Who is the assassin, and why hasn't he been shown yet? Apparently Saitou wonders the same, and as his thoughts conclude, Kenshin is revealed. The moment when Kenshin and Saitou see each other is so powerful, the stare,

in the midst of battle, although only lasting seconds, immediately places them on a level above others. Then Kenshin moves. His graceful demeanour, as he takes down many in one swipe tells us why he has earned the name Hitokiri Battousai (人斬り抜刀斎). His face remains in poise, desensitized to the violence he creates. Why would one seek out such a man? Finally, he rises, victorious, from the carnage. They have won, and he softens. His job is finished; what he has fought for has been brought about. The relief seeps from him, through the screen. He is no longer the Battousai, no longer Hitokiri. He is tired and drained to his core, he will not be provoked by Saitou into prolonging this war. As he places his sword in the ground, his personality is revealed. He fought and now he is done, he is glad that the world is now a better place, but what he has done to make it so is not a source of pride. He will seek redemption and beg forgiveness from this new world.

Saitou, on the other hand, presents a sharp contrast. He also has fought for a new world, but his new world was much closer to the one they lived in. He lives by his sword, a remnant of the world that was. As such, he is determined to carve a place for the old world in this new one. As he pursues Kenshin, he doesn't once drop his cigarette. He is cool, composed, he takes in every move Kenshin makes and shoos away his opponents as if they were simply insects. He has a determination about

him, and demands respect. Yet, he is the enemy. That he is not cut down or pursued at the end of the battle speaks volumes of how even the Ishin Shishi see him with respect, and as he is part of the infamous Wolves of Mibu,⁴⁶ fear. As they part ways he is a curious combination of dumbfounded and enraged that Kenshin, that the Hitokiri, has rejected his views and his offer for new life. A curious character he presents, and he gets still curious-er.

In a final pan, possibly days later, the destruction of the battle is seen. Jin-e rises. It is unclear what side he was on, what his ideals were and are. Yet he rises and carries on. He presents to the audience the question that must be asked by all survivors: “Why have I been spared?”. In answer he finds Kenshin’s discarded life. He grasps the sword and feels its power, the pain it has caused and the havoc it had wreaked. In this moment, as Jin-e resonates with the sword he determines to become one worthy of wielding it, to become the Hitokiri. And his madness is tangible.

As this scene, so charged with emotion, so evoking of intrigue, fades from the title card, the cuts of Kenshin in the boat and the common people doing as they have done for centuries alternated with

⁴⁶ The Wolves of Mibu is a nickname for the Shinsengumi. It refers to their ferocity, like that of wolves and to the Mibu region from whence many of them came, and where they were based.

views of the shiny new politics and voiced-over with Yamagata's, "we now live in a new, better, more Western world" speech the contrasts continue. Life hasn't changed for the people, there is still fear, there is still anger, they are still living as they have for centuries. This beautifully underscores both the differences and similarities between Kenshin and Saitou. The different ways they have embraced this new world come slowly into view. It also establishes room for Jin-e to become the fear that now exists. As if on cue, Jin-e is re-introduced as Kanryu allows for the opium maker to get away, leaving him to Battousai, a man that the audience recognizes must be the Hitokiri in the poster, even without seeing him.

The introduction and expansion of situations that follow the opening scene allow for the impact that remains of the battle to hit full force. This leads to the second scene I translated where Kaoru encounters Jin-e on the bridge. It has been established that Kaoru is a fairly decent fighter; she got in some hits on Kenshin in a previous scene. It has also been established that she has strong ideals and a reason for her actions. These themes are established in this scene, as she confronts Jin-e, who really is posing as the criminal Battousai, about his actions and the slandering of her family's name. The scenes flow perfectly to form the story to this point and as they connect, so

do the characters. Immediately, the kind nature of Kaoru, introduced in the scene in which she first encounters Kenshin is revisited. She tries to play with the kitten and shows genuine concern for the police officer. However, she is in awe of Jin-e. As she confronts him, her fear can be felt, yet she perseveres. As she does so, her fear is channelled into anger. Jin-e casually ignores her, yet he loves killing and in his eyes it can be seen that he sees her an intriguing target: she knows who he is, understands his game, yet she does not run, instead she stands to fight. As he jumps from the bridge, the view of his face from below allows the audience to momentarily feel targeted as Kaoru does. The strength of Kaoru's character and the fact that she is not a Japanese stereotypical weak woman is portrayed well as she fights. She surprises Jin-e with her skill, but they both know that he easily outmatches her. As she grasps for her bokutou (木刀) practice sword in a last effort to defend herself and her ideals there is a moment of paralyzing fear as it appears that she will die. However, as she is one of the central characters, she cannot die, and as that is realized, Kenshin saves her. This establishes a relationship between them that Jin-e, recognizing Kenshin as the real Battousai, fully intends to take advantage of.

In this short scene, and in the words that are uttered during it, the characters of Kaoru and Jin-e are fully shown. Kaoru is strong-

willed and prideful. She is skilled in the way of the sword and uses that skill to defend her ideals. Jin-e is madness incarnate. He wishes only to wreak destruction in an attempt to bend the world back into the chaos it once was. The way that their characters conflict is almost more interesting to the audience than the conflict between Kenshin and Jin-e. This scene presents that in the film's dénouement Jin-e does not merely kidnap Kaoru because of her relationship with Kenshin; although that is the principal reason, he kidnaps her because her strength makes it more fun for him. Jin-e wishes to test her and to see her break when Kenshin becomes what Jin-e believes him to truly be. He wants to torture her in the only way that he knows will be effective, then he wishes her to die with that cruelty imprinted in her heart and in her mind.

Sanosuke's scene is interesting in several respects. First, it focuses on the dynamic of the Kenshin-Saitou relationship introduced in the title scene. Secondly, it introduces a principle character so late in the film. Finally, the character of Sanosuke is introduced very concisely. The scene opens as Kenshin is escorted to the jailhouse after the fiasco at the dojo. There is a lot of environmental noise, as can be expected in a jail. Among this noise, is Sanosuke. The first thing the audience sees is the character on his back: 悪(aku), bad, evil. This immediately brings up the question of why one would wear such a

character on one's self. Sano paces his cell, waiting, curiously alone (he has cell mates, but not many, and they are cowering) while the other cells are overstuffed. He does not appear as aggressive as the other inmates. However, as he observes Kenshin being brought in, his restlessness intensifies with his curiosity about the newcomer. Why is Kenshin so co-operative and calm? Surely Sanosuke is used to seeing those being arrested put up a fight; as can be seen from his demeanour, he himself put up a great fight and expects no less from anyone else. Likely he has been in jail before and will be jailed again. The scene suddenly shifts focus and there is no more of this mysterious prisoner, rather the audience is given a surprise as Saitou re-enters the film. Kenshin's passive new personality is displayed as he waits in the cell for his imminent release. However some of his old self shines through as he attempts to catch himself a cup of water and waits, seemingly asleep when he senses Saitou coming. Of course, he does not know it is Saitou until he is confronted with the familiar voice, and with the arrogant attitude, unchanged through all of these years. The guarded demeanour Kenshin presents and the music, slightly menacing provide the fact that Kenshin still instinctively distrusts Saitou. There is so much tension presented as Saitou lowers himself to the floor where Kenshin sits and beckons to him. Saitou, in the height of his self-importance and

perceived superiority rudely orders Kenshin to leave the cell, using the verb 出る (deru), usually used only toward animals. It seems as if there will, after all be a fight. However Kenshin's new persona will not allow it; calmly he follows Saitou. Finally, as the scene closes, Sanosuke is presented again. Unlike the rest of the prisoners, Sanosuke seems to care a great deal about Kenshin's identity. He is clearly seeking him out; but why?

This suspenseful introduction of the character of Sanosuke allows for so much to potentially happen with the character later. His importance to the story must still be seen; his past must be learned. However, after this masterful introduction of the character, the only thing that satiates this desire is the fight at Akabeko. However entertaining the fight is though, it explains little. Sanosuke likes to fight and fights for money, he wants a good fight so seeks out Kenshin. However, the fight presented does not provide the back-story that is so essential to Sanosuke's character. Without the back-story, he is left almost devoid of personality and is hard to connect with. The Sanosuke on film, although well portrayed, although aware of his own story, does not pull on the heart-strings as the original character does.

The final scene, in a way, makes up for the failings in the film, as it directs attention back to the primary relationships of the film,

and back to the conflict at its core. In this scene the characters of Jin-e, Kenshin and Kaoru are realized to their full potential, and the transformation of Kenshin is completed. As the scene opens, Kaoru's face emerges. Immediately it is seen that she is trying to find a way out of the situation. She realizes, as she is engaged by Jin-e that it is best not to struggle, if she does so Kenshin could get hurt. The change in Jin-e's demeanour-- he no longer seeks to kill her-- indicates that his attention is elsewhere, but that his intent could still become murderous. The various fires around the shrine add drama to what is already looking to be a scene full of it. Contrasting colours of the flames and foliage, as well as the symbolism invoked by the controlled flames, sets the stage for one of two outcomes: either Kenshin becomes the Hitokiri once more, or Jin-e slays him, but is there room for an alternative conclusion?

I believe that, in this moment, the characters see only these two outcomes as possible. This is accentuated as Jin-e provokes Kenshin by harming Kaoru. The fight moves from even to unmatched. The controlled flames of Kenshin exit the picture and the open fire that is Jin-e and the spirit of the Hitokiri take their place. The expressions on Kenshin's face and the sloppy manner in which he parries Jin-e's onslaught capture that he is struggling to maintain the mentality that

throughout the film he has been striving to embrace. Kenshin in this moment is struggling with the impulse to unleash his former self. This is epitomized as he missed Jin-e's signature move the haishatou (背車刀) and is himself injured.⁴⁷

The strange and twisted respect that Jin-e has for both Kenshin and Kaoru is realized when he uses the strongest version of his Shin-no-ippou (心の一方) ability on Kaoru.⁴⁸ He uses this stronger version not only to spur Kenshin into Hitokiri mode, but also because he sees Kaoru equally as a threat to this plan as a means to its end. Otherwise he would have simply used the regular Shin-no-ippou as he did on the officers at the police station. However, Jin-e will not allow the fact that he sees Kaoru as a threat to be seen. To prove this, he casually tosses away his pocket watch, a bit of imagery directly from both the manga and anime which, as it is such a powerful tool of contrast and holds so much of the story within its tiny frame has stood the test of time as one of the most emotionally wrenching scenes in the entire *Kenshin* franchise. At this recurrence, I think it is interesting to note

⁴⁷ Jin-e can be seen using the Haishatou in *Rurouni Kenshin* omnibus, Volume 1, 291-292.

⁴⁸ The Shin-no-ippou technique is used on Kaoru immediately following the Haishatou, *Rurouni Kenshin* omnibus, Volume 1, 293-294. When using the Shin-no-ippou, Jin-e uses chi to control another's blood flow, which slowly paralyzes the victim of the jutsu, killing them. It is always fatal, unless the victim's strength of will surpasses his own, or he is killed, causing the spell to be released.

that much of the dialogue in this scene is lifted directly from the manga, which was then used word for word in the anime and is now also recurring here verbatim from the original media. This scene has been so effective at what it does that it has changed little from the original incarnation Watsuki created in the 1990s.⁴⁹

The moment that Jin-e allows it to be known that the victim of the jutsu can break it, Kaoru is seen struggling for breath.⁵⁰ This is not to be interpreted as weakness on her part, but rather as an exercise of will as she is attempting to break the jutsu on her own to prevent useless deaths. She remembers how Kenshin reacted positively to her family's philosophy of swordsmanship and now wishes for Kenshin to be able to uphold what he has embraced. She will break the jutsu, Kenshin will remain Kenshin, and villainous as it is, Jin-e's life will be spared. Kaoru's resolve is redoubled in the moment when she and Kenshin are face-to-face. He only sees her struggling to survive and she understands what he has resolved to do. When he saw her, he missed the pleading in her eyes, the pleading for him not to kill, not to revert to what he was. She cannot allow this reversion, and so she will break free.

⁴⁹ The battle is Chapters 12-14 in the *Kenshin* manga, Episode 7 of the anime.

⁵⁰ A jutsu in this sense is kind of like a magic spell. Although the term jutsu simply means technique, it can be applied to martial, military or magic techniques.

As the music reaches crescendo, the view changes; suddenly, the audience is made painfully aware that a different battle is now taking place. It is no longer about Kenshin's struggle to do what is right or what needs to be done; it is about going against all one stands for to save someone else. By placing the audience momentarily at the stairs leading to the shrine, Ohtomo has made this blatant statement in the most beautiful of ways. In the spurt of violence that follows, the prowess of Battoujutsu (抜刀術) is seen, climaxing in the Souryuusen (双龍閃, literally twin dragon flash) move not seen since Toba-Fushimi. At such a dramatic point, it would be natural for the audience to feel an elated anticipation for Kenshin's upcoming victory, but it is not so. The score becomes sombre, almost seething with sadness as this anti-victory comes to closure. Kenshin, who could have taken Jin-e out with the move, simply injures him. Whether this was to make Jin-e feel the pain he has felt or to allow for Kaoru to be released, the reason for preventing Jin-e's death it is uncertain. However the former seems most likely as Kenshin announces that Jin-e will now die.

As Kaoru breaks the jutsu, her character is fully realized as nowhere else **in the film. Kaoru's words, so moving, so true, touch Kenshin, but it remains to be** seen how fully he embraces them. The softening of his expression and the depth of emotion in his eyes say that he wants, more than anything for what she says

to be true. But, knowing who he is and who he has been, Kenshin understands that a world where he does not have to kill may be an impossible dream. However, he strongly wishes to embrace this dream, and so will strive to do so, if not for himself, then for those he has killed and for those he has saved. This resolve is not shaken. Although Kenshin knows that, to an extent, Jin-e's words are true; that he is and always will be a Hitokiri, he wishes to overcome that part of his life. As Jin-e takes his own life, the final act in his all-embracing madness, Kenshin becomes what he is meant to be. Jin-e's death is simply the beginning of a long road for Kenshin and does not in any way signify the death of his past. It does, however signify the death of Hitokiri Battousai.

Linguistic Factors and Translation

or

How in the World Does This Even Make Sense?

Since I am tackling a translation, however small, I feel it pertinent to talk extensively of the linguistic factors that affected my translation. I wanted very much to not have to do a line-by-line explanation, but it appears that, for the most part, that is what is in order. I hope dearly that this will not be too tiresome to read, as it is something that I personally have a great interest in. It is, I feel, essential to understand the breakdown of the translations themselves, in order to understand how other factors could affect it. In this section there will be a lot of little explanations of Japanese grammar and much breaking down of sentences. Just the fact that I have come so far in my studies as to be able to explain this is a matter of great pride to me and I hope that my passion is felt.

The very first spoken line of the film gave me quite a bit of trouble. I know that in so saying it appears that already, I am off to a bad start, and in hope of disproving that I shall now provide explanation. The line is simply *いたぞ!* (itazo), and how could something so simple be troublesome? Well, it is in the intonation. Japanese is not tonal in the same way as other Asian languages, rather intonation is used to differentiate mostly, as in English, between different types of sentences, such as to identify a query or explicative. The other way intonation is used in Japanese is to how that a word is different from another word that is pronounced the same. Most nouns have intonation of some sort and many verbs will have intonation to help indicate tense, or distinguish them from other verbs that are written the same. The first ten or so times I heard the line,

and in fact the first few times Sensei heard the line, there appeared to be no intonation, which made it hard to discern which verb it could be. The only thing that was certain was that the root verb was いる (iru); but which iru? 居る” to exist” , 入る” to enter” , 要る” to need” or 射る” to shoot” ? Luckily, to need was easily eliminated, but the other three possibilities were still up in the air. All three fit the context of the situation, and all three seemed to fit the action of the film at that moment. The solution was in slowing the playback speed and listening carefully, and repeatedly. After many listens, the intonation became clear. The stress was on the second syllable. When the stress was placed on the second syllable, rather than on the first, the verb had to be either 居る” to exist” or 射る” to shoot” . Although both fit contextually, Sensei insisted that it must be 居る” to exist” since the kanji 射(i) refers specifically to manual shooting such as the shooting of a bow and arrow. The verb used for artillery shooting is 撃つ(utsu). Although I knew about the verb 撃つ, I believed the words to be interchangeable until informed otherwise. Initially, not knowing that the kanji 射 would be so specific in meaning, I definitely would have chosen the meaning of “to shoot” , as the situation presented in the film made it seem the best choice.

The finalizing of the translation as 居る” to exist” may seem odd to English speakers, but it makes perfect sense in Japanese. The line that follows いたぞ! (itazo) is 新撰組だ! (shinsengumi da).⁵¹ In Japanese these two lines, although clearly distinct sentences would be heard as one sentence, not at all a confusing concept, right? I feel that first an explanation of だ (da) is in order. だ is the casual form of the more polite です (desu, generally pronounced as simply “des”), which is itself a contraction of the verb form である (de aru), used almost strictly in written Japanese. The verb form である, and its derivatives, are used as sentence enders in Japanese. While actually meaning “to be”, it is used in a more general context to end sentences where no other verb is appropriate. In English the name for such a function is a “copula”.⁵² So, in reading 新撰組だ (shinsengumi da), one would read it as 新撰組 plus copula, or more simply 新撰組. However, as concise as it sounds, 新撰組 cannot simply exist on its own, therefore it connects with the previous reading of silence by いたぞ! (itazo). It is now known that いた is a conjugation of 居る (to exist), but what

⁵¹ For information on the Shinsengumi please refer to Appendix 5 and notes on Hajime Saitou, for even more information, the books *Samurai Revolution* and *Shinsengumi: The Shogun's Last Samurai Corps* by Romulus Hillsborough are filled with a wealth of interesting if not useful facts.

⁵² Although they do not use the word “copula”, a good explanation of だ can be found starting on page 151 of *Essential Japanese Grammar* by Masahiro Tanimori and Eriko Sato.

about ぞ (zo), and why would one yell out “Exists!” in the first place? Well, one probably wouldn’t. ぞ is a particle; in Japanese particles are used for everything from indicating the subject or direction of a verb, to creating emphasis on a sentence. ぞ is a particle that creates emphasis. According to Naoko Chino, ぞ “adds force to a sentence” by either indicating a command or threat, or by adding encouragement.⁵³ In the sense of ぞ announcing the Shinsengumi, I believe it would constitute a threat. In that case, the man is not yelling “Exists!” but rather “A threat exists!” leading to the logical question of what the threat is. Such a question is then promptly answered by the utterance of “The Shinsengumi!”. Therefore the two lines should be read together as “A threat exists and it is the Shinsengumi (who in turn are now existing here).” Of course that is long and cumbersome, so now that the lines are understood, such a line can be rendered down to simply “Shinsengumi!” or “The Shinsengumi are here!”. For the purpose of the subtitle, the short character limit⁵⁴ along with the need to sound natural in the target language must be kept in mind therefore “Shinsengumi!” is deemed to be the more correct choice.

⁵³ *All About Particles*, 143-144, *How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles*, 145.

⁵⁴ No more than 43 characters per line *Audiovisual Translation*, 23-24.

Saitou' s lines are also interesting. Starting with the first line, 人斬り抜刀齋 (Hitokiri Battousai), there is an interesting concept. I (and many others) like to call this concept a Manga or Anime Names. Names in manga and anime are usually not real names. Although they sound like real names, and indeed might be, they are usually made from kanji that are not generally used in people' s names⁵⁵, and sometimes not made out of kanji at all. While not strictly a name 人斬り抜刀齋 is a title, and thus I place it in the classification. Anime Names often describe features or qualities of the character bearing the name, and this is true for 人斬り抜刀齋 . 人斬り (Hitokiri) is made of the characters 人 (hito, gen) meaning “person” and 斬り (kiri), from the verb 斬る (kiru) meaning “to cut”, or “to kill by using a blade,” as opposed to killing with another or unspecified method, which would be 殺す (korosu). Thus 人斬り literally means “man-cutter” or “manslayer” . 抜刀齋 (Battousai) also has a meaning. Whereas 人斬り is a legitimate Japanese word, 抜刀齋 is made up specifically for the purpose of its play on words. 抜刀齋 (Battousai) is made of the characters 抜 (me, ba) meaning a great many things depending on what kanji it is paired with, but, in

⁵⁵ For a short, and wholly unacademic video on Manga Names see *The hidden meanings in Anime names! 外国人が知らないキャラ名の意味* by Rachel & Jun on youtube (I love that the Japanese title for the video is “foreigners don't understand character names”), or, just type “anime names” into a search engine to get seemingly endless results, or see Appendix 8.

this case because it is combined with 齊(sai, e, sei) meaning “equal” or “same” ; it means “without” making the word “without equal”. 刀 (tou) means simply “blade”, but can refer specifically to a katana, so when placed with 抜 and 齊, it can be read as “blade of unequal skill” or as a sentence with a subject as “one who’s skill with a blade is unequalled”. When the two are combined together into 人斬り抜刀齊 it can be read as “manslayer of unequal skill (with a blade)” a fitting title for the man who is considered the ultimate assassin.

Following the line 人斬り抜刀齊(Hitokiri Battousai) Saitou utters どこだ(doko da) then どこにいる(doko ni iru). Both of these sentences are essentially the same in meaning, however, the way the audience receives them is different. Before I go into that, I would like to state that both sentences have what is referred to as a zero subject; a phenomenon that occurs in Japanese when “the speaker and the listener are both aware of the verbal and non-verbal context in which the utterance takes place”⁵⁶ thus allowing for verbs and other important components to float in space seemingly without a subject. However, there is a subject, and in the case of Saitou’s sentences, the subject is Kenshin, the Battousai. This is not simply an implication or understanding, but is stated directly before the utterance of the どこ

⁵⁶ *Making Sense of Japanese*, 26.

(doko) lines. The first どこ is simple, as it is followed by the copula, so can be read as “where are you, Battousai?”. This is a question, regardless of the fact that the question marker particle か (ka) is missing, because it uses the word for “where” plus rising intonation, so, as in English it is a question. The second line, どこにいる (doko ni iru) is a bit more difficult to understand, as it has those pesky extra words added on. As established before, the word いる can have many meanings, but as before it is the verb “居る” to exist” unlike before, the reasons for this are obvious. But, what does に (ni) mean? に is a directional particle indicating, among other things, where something (or someone) is⁵⁷, so in this sentence Saitou is effectively saying “Where is it that you exist, Battousai?”. Simply an expansion of the first query. In light of this expansion, and of both of the sentences boiling down to the short, sweet “where are you?”, I chose to have the first remain a question, while making the second an expletive to show Saitou’s frustration. Far from being grammatically or contextually incorrect, this allows for more impact than a simple repetition would.

Fittingly Saitou’s next statement also needs a short explanation. Albeit a very short explanation. 勝負だ、抜刀斎 (shoubu da, Battousai)

⁵⁷ *All About Particles, 52-60 How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles, 24-7.*

translates almost directly into English, as there is an equivalent expression that can take its place. However, the sentence must still be understood in its entire complexity. First, 勝負だ (shoubu da). だ (da) has been explained already, so 勝負 (shoubu) is the only part in need of explanation. 勝負 means, quite literally, “game”. However, it can also mean “a match” or “competition” (military or otherwise), which is the implied meaning in the situation in which Kenshin and Saitou are engaged. Kumiko Sensei said that this word is a hold-over from Samurai honour culture.⁵⁸ Not being Japanese I wonder how the word for “game” and a “military competition” came to be the same. Nevertheless it is the same and that is how it has been presented in this film, and indeed in many others over the years. So, one may now ask if the sentence 勝負だ、抜刀斉 (shoubu da Battousai) can be translated as “it is a game Battousai”? No, it cannot be. There is a rising intonation, however slight which makes the sentence a question. It is, even in Japanese a rhetorical question, but a question nonetheless and therefore it must be rendered as something more along the lines of “Is it a game you want, Battousai?” or “Is this a game to you, Battousai?”. Both would be equally correct, however, I feel that the one that I chose fits Saitou’s personality better.

⁵⁸ For a short explanation of Samurai and Feudal Japanese culture see Appendix 3.

The line 錦の御旗じゃ (nishiki no mihata jya) is not overly complicated, but it does refer to an actual military strategy used at Toba-Fushimi.⁵⁹ In order to grasp this, an understanding of what 錦 (nishiki) and 御旗 (mihata) are must be obtained. First, 錦 (nishiki); 錦 is a brocade fabric. Although that sounds simple, it is not. It can refer to either the fabric itself or to rich garments made of the fabric. In this case it refers to the fabric itself, which is what the 御旗 (mihata) is made of. 御旗 is much more difficult to explain. Made out of the words 御 (mi, o, go, on, gyo) and 旗 (hata, ki, ka) it is a Japanese compound word that non-Japanese, and Japanese not overly aware of military history simply will not know. However, they will often know the meaning of the individual kanji and should be able to piece it together. 御, read in this word as “mi” is an honorific, meaning, in the most simple terms possible, that it is tacked onto the beginning of words to be more polite.⁶⁰ In this case the word is 旗, which, by itself means “flag”, attached to 御, it means “honourable flag”. The concept of objects having honour may be hard for Westerners to grasp, but to the Japanese it makes perfect sense, and would lead to the

⁵⁹ Since Yoshinobu feared being remembered as an enemy of the Empire, Iwakura Tomomi, a former Kobugattai supporter had Imperial banners made for Sacchou to fly in battle, thus rendering Yoshinobu’s Bakufu forces morally unable to oppose them, *Shinsengumi*, 173-174.

⁶⁰ For a more in-depth explanation of honorifics see Appendix 6.

logical conclusion that the flag is representative of one of honour. Who, though is this person with honour? The answer lies in the word 錦 (nishiki) and the following particle の(no). The particle の is attached to words to show belonging. It is best understood simply through seeing it used in context as in most Japanese textbooks, but the explanation used by Chino will satisfy: “used between two nouns, indicating that the first possesses or is modifying the second.”⁶¹ Using this explanation it can be determined that の here is used as a modifier, therefore 錦の御旗 (nishiki no mihata) can be read as “the honourable brocade flag”. This reading explains that the flag, being of an expensive brocade material, and itself honourable must represent the Emperor. This is logical because only Lords and the emperor could afford such material, and because the side that is raising the flag 薩長 (Sacchou), The Satsuma Choushuu alliance is fighting for the restoration of power to the Imperial family.

The only part of the sentence that remains in ambiguity is じゃ (jya). This is simple to explain however. It is a casual form of the word では (dewa) which can be explained as “signalling the transition from one stage to another during the conversation”⁶², in this case it

⁶¹ *All About Particles*, 68, *How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles*, 127.

⁶² *Essential Japanese Grammar*, 169.

is the end of the battle. They have won (as stated in the previous line 勝ったぞ～! katta zo!) and now the battle is effectively over. The following line, which follows the same structure as this line, 薩長軍の勝利じゃ (Sacchou gun no shouri jya!) finalizes what it says by announcing, for certain, who is the victor. So the lines together can be read as “According to the brocade flag that has been raised, the Satsuma Choushuu Alliance Army has won the battle, and that is final (because of the flag being raised to signal victory)” ; of course this is rather wordy and confusing so it can be simplified into shorter, more concise lines, as shown in the subtitle script.

After all of this grammatical confusion, Kenshin finally speaks, and he brings more confusion with him. First he says 来たか (kita ka), which is deceptively simple. Although 来た (kita) is usually seen as the past-tense form of the verb 来る (kuru) “to come”, when used as part of expressions, it can be read as the verb 来す (kitasu) “to come about”, or “to be caused”, whose past tense form is also 来た (kita). If that is not confusing in itself, the context of the situation helps to complicate it a bit more. The context seems to allow for either 来る or 来す to be correct. For example if one were to read the context in a philosophical manner 来たか新しい時代が (kita ka atarashii jidai ga) could be read as “the new world has come”, with the implication that

it has come, in part, because of the actions that happened here. However, in making that implication in the first place, one must realize that what Kenshin is actually saying is “the new world has come about because of the actions here” and that the correct verb here must be 来す(kitasu).

Of course the explanation does not factor in the か(ka) question marker at the end of of Kenshin’s line. Additionally, the relative lack of intonation allows for the questions to be seen as a clever bit of rhetoric on Kenshin’s part, but I think he is asking a legitimate question. I think this because he follows these lines with やっと(yatto), meaning “finally”. In saying this he is essentially stating his disbelief that the world can actually change, while expressing his hope that he is wrong. It is because of this hesitancy that I have chosen to render the title as though he is asking a question.

Saitou’s closing lines require quite a bit of explanation and picking apart to understand, beginning with これで終わりと思うなよ(kore de owari to omouna yo). This sentence is complicated, as it is actually can be thought of as two sentences put together. これで終わり(kore de owari) and 思うなよ(omou na yo). The first part can be broken down as これ(kore) meaning, literally, “this thing here”, but referring to everything that has happened between Kenshin and Saitou, and in

extension, to who they are as people. で (de) is a particle that, like に (ni), can mean a great many things, but here most likely indicates “amount and scope [within] space and time.”⁶³ This use of で allows for Saitou’s implication of time as the subject to be the meaning of これ.

With that in mind, all that remains is the verb 終わる (owaru), which only has only one meaning, “to end”. I believe that here 終わり is used as a noun form, a strange thing that sometimes occurs in Japanese. But whether it is a noun or a verb does not matter here, what matters is that this part of the sentence states that “all that we are, and all that has happened is not over/has not ended”. It is not itself a negative sentence but rather is given a negative reading by the fact that it is attached to 思ふな (omouna). The entire statement gets more meaning when adding 思ふな. 思ふな is a negative form of the verb 思ふ (omou), generally meaning “to think” or “to believe”⁶⁴. 思ふな is followed by the particle よ (yo), which used here could indicate either certainty in his statement or contempt toward Kenshin, but probably a bit of both.⁶⁵ It is because the verb is negative that the sentence must be thought of as two sentences. The first sentence reading “all

⁶³ *All About Particles*, 50.

⁶⁴ It is unlikely that here な is being used as an ending particle to indicate a question, but it is possible. However, if it is a question marker here, the sentence ceases to be negative and becomes somewhat nonsensical.

⁶⁵ *All About Particles*, 131-132.

that we are, and all that has happened is not over/has not ended” , the second “Do not think that it has ended/is over” . In English there would be a natural break between the two halves, but in Japanese the sentence would read literally as “this here (implication of what “this here” is) hasn’ t ended, do not think (this has ended), affirmation” . However, without that natural break it makes no sense to a non-Japanese speaker.

Saitou’ s closing line, although presented as four lines, is one single sentence. This is terribly confusing as it is difficult to read or translate it as one sentence without understanding how the parts connect to each other. The first part たとえ世の中は変わろうとも (tatoe yo no naka wa kawarou-tomo) reads in a straight-forward manner: たとえ “even if” ; 世の中は “the conditions in the world” (subject implied with は); 変わろう “to change” conjugated into a continuous form; とも, “surely” . Therefore it can be read in entirety as “Surely, even if the world changes…” . When とも (tomo) is attached to a verb it generally means “even if” , but that is already covered here with the use of たとえ (tatoe), therefore it serves here to establish the entire sentence as a definite statement. That statement in turn connects to the next part of the sentence 剣に生き、剣に死ぬ (ken ni iki, ken ni shinu); quite literally “live by the sword, die by the sword” . The connection

is hard to see as the subject is simply implied to be understood and therefore left out, as is so common in Japanese. The subject in this case is Kenshin and Saitou and the lives that they, and those like them have lived; or rather the subject is all lives dictated by the sword. So, Saitou is effectively saying “Even if the world changes, we who have lived and died by the sword must continue to do so”. This becomes clear when examining the final part of the sentence 以外俺たちに道はない(igai oretachi ni michi wanai). 以外(igai) means “with the exception of”, so it is logically tacked onto the lines that come before it making the statement now more like “Even if the world moves on, we, who have lived and died by the sword, are an exception (from moving on)”. This is in turn finalized and given an explanation with 俺たちに道はない(oretachi ni michi wanai), literally “no way for us” with “no way” referring to the subject following suit and changing with the world. In whole then, Saitou says “Even if the world moves on, we, who have lived and died by the sword, are an exception from moving on, as our path has been determined to be the way of the sword”. That, however makes little sense in English and is fairly long to be a subtitle, so a little stylization is in order.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ For stylization based on character and/or necessity see the following section, beginning page 85.

Here, I am proud to announce that the first scene is finished. With that said, I would like to move on to the second scene that I chose to examine. This scene seems like a nice break from the violence of the first scene, assuming that the scene immediately preceding it is forgotten for the moment. The scene opens with Kaoru attempting to play with a kitten. Even though it is not something that gave me trouble to translate, I agonized over how to write the word “cat” on the script. In Japanese “cat” is “neko” which can be written in kanji as 猫 or in katakana as ネコ. Generally the kanji is used, but the katakana can be used if the speaker is a child, or attempting to be cute, or simply to emphasize the word in written language. I spent a long time thinking about which should be used in the script. In the beginning I used the kanji, but decided, near the end to change it to the katakana as I feel it fits both Kaoru and the scene better.⁶⁷

As the officer falls from the bridge Kaoru utters ちよつと!(chotto), literally, “a little bit”, but in this case more of a way to get the audience’s attention, so more like “Hey, you!”. I think that this dual meaning of ちよつと is interesting, because it makes sense. It’s similar to asking for someone to please wait a minute, while actually using a word that implies asking for a small amount of

⁶⁷ See the explanations of decisions made based on context.

something, in this case time. To be used in this way, it really should be written as 一寸 (chotto), but I almost never see that, so in an attempt to look like more natural Japanese I decided to write it in hiragana. The use of ちよつと as an interjection is enforced by the later use of the verb form なさい (nasai), which implies an order, and not a polite one, used in the following line 待ちなさい (machinasai). Making the lines appear to read “Hey you there, I order you to wait a minute!” . However, when watching the scene it can be scene that ちよつと is uttered more in reference to the officer falling, so rather than as a device to catch Jin-e’ s attention, it is more an utterance of surprise and should be rendered as “what…” . The use of なさい here is also interesting to me, as it is a verb form usually used by mothers toward their small children, or by men to bully each other. It is a very forceful verb form which carries many implications, so the fact that Kaoru uses it toward Jin-e, knowing full well that he is a cold-blooded killer speaks volumes of her courage.⁶⁸

The accusatory and demanding line なんの目的で、神谷活心流の名を語って、悪事を働くか (nan no mokuteki de, kamiya-kasshin-ryuu no na wo katatte, akuji wo hataraku ka) is where translating Kaoru’ s lines gets

⁶⁸ For more on Kaoru’s personality see Appendix 8, for an analysis of the scene see the section on scene analysis.

interesting. At the same time she is accusing him of and demanding an answer for his crimes. Starting with なんの目的で(nan no mokuteki de) なん(nan) is a casual shortening of 何(nani), both words meaning “what”, so なんの(nan no) means “for what”, assuming that the particle の(no) indicates modification⁶⁹. 目的(mokuteki) can be understood here to mean “purpose”, and when joined with で(de), which here could mean either “because of”, or “the scope of” Jin-e’s actions and would read “for the purpose of what have you…?”⁷⁰ To find what he has done, one must skip to the end of the sentence as the Japanese verb always comes at the end. Therefore the next line to examine is not the second part, but the third: 悪事を働くか(akuji wo hataraku ka). 働く(hataraku) usually means “to work”, but here it takes on the tone of “to commit”, or “to pertrate”; but to pertrate what? To pertrate 悪事(akuji), “evil deeds”, that’s what. So the sentence now says “for what purpose have you committed evil deeds?”, in itself a straight forward sentence, but there is still that ominous middle line. It is in this line that the accusation can be found: 神谷活心流の名を語って(kamiya-kasshin-ryuu wo katatte). 神谷活心流(Kamiya-kasshin-ryuu) is the name of a sword school, which happens to be the school that Kaoru’s

⁶⁹ *How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles*, 127.

⁷⁰ *All About Particles* 49-52.

family founded and teaches, it is also a Anime Name.⁷¹ In 神谷活心流の名 (kamiya-kasshin-ryuu no na) the の partice occurs again, this time denoting ownership, “in the name of the Kamiya school”, which connects nicely to the other sentence parts: “why have you committed such evils in the name of the Kamiya school?”, but there is still the verb in this part of the sentence. The verb 語って (katatte) from the verb 語る (kataru), “to tell”, is uttered in a continuous form. In Japanese, verbs (and adjectives) ending with て (te) tell a story, the て indicates that the verbs took part in a sequence of other verbs, or possibly that they are still taking place⁷². This verb adds an extra dimension to the sentence, which can now be read as “I ask why have you committed such evils under pretence of the name of the Kamiya school”. The amount of implication that is underscored in each sentence in Japanese is astounding and complicated, which forces translators to take liberties and add explanatory verbs to make sentences make sense in the target language. That is exactly what I have done with Kaoru’ s lines by rendering them as “Why are you going around committing crimes and slandering my family’ s name?”

⁷¹ For the breakdown and importance of the name see Appendix 9.

⁷² A good explanation is available from page 338 in *Essential Japanese Grammar*.

In Kaoru' s next line, I would simply like to talk about one thing. It is a small thing, but hard to grasp and incredibly important. The concept and use of the particles は(wa) and が(ga). Before she trails off Kaoru says 父は(chichi wa) but picks up with 父が(chichi ga), both of these mean “my father” and both place the father as the subject of what she is going to say, but the sentence structure changes based simply on her changing は(wa) to が(ga). The particle は(wa), one of the very first things one learns in Japanese, throws the emphasis of the sentence to the actions or descriptions, rather than focusing on the subject. The particle が(ga) does the opposite, keeping attention on the subject rather than what the subject is doing.⁷³ Therefore, in saying 父は(chichi wa) Kaoru is emphasising what her father did, creating the sword school, leaving it to her after his death. But when she trails off and starts over with 父が(chichi ga), she is saying that it was *her father* that did these actions, her father, no-one else' s father and no-one but her father. In changing the emphasis of the sentence to her father she takes the attention away from お前のような(omae no yo na) “guys like you” , guys like Jin-e, and redirects the audience and Jin-e

⁷³ There is a very in-depth exploration and explanation of this topic from page 31 in *Making Sense of Japanese*, additionally each is explained in *All About Particles* (は 10-13, が 13-26) and in *Essential Japanese Grammar* (は 365-370, が 178-186).

to the good that her father did rather than having the focus on the bad that Jin-e advocates.

Jin-e's lines in this scene are also interesting as they are kind-of complicated to untangle and have a couple of interesting grammar points. First off, the line 木刀でしかも女の身で俺に立ち向かうとは (bokutou de shikamo onna no mi de ore ni tachimukau to wa). This line I find tantalizing as it has several components all worth looking at on their own. In 木刀でしかも (bokutou de shikamo) 木刀 (bokutou) is literally a “wooden sword”, combined with particle で (de), meaning, in this case “by means of”.⁷⁴ 女の身で (onna no mi de) connects to this part, but not directly. 女の身 means “a woman's body”, で (de) here means “because of”. In connecting the two Jin-e says something along the lines of “because you are a woman, and because you are using a wooden sword...”, implying that he thinks that not only is she a unskilled fighter with no chance to beat him, but that in being a woman, even if she had skill he would still come out victorious. This implication is confirmed with the rest of the sentence, 俺に立ち向かうとは (ore ni tachimukau to wa). 俺 (ore) is a way that guys can say “I”, or “me”, while sounding tough, and に (ni) here indicates that Jin-e is

⁷⁴ *All About Particles*, 49-52.

the recipient of Kaoru's actions.⁷⁵ 立ち向かう (tachi mukau) is a Japanese compound verb. It takes the verbs 立つ (tatsu) "to stand", and 向かう (mukau) "to face" or "go towards" and places them together to mean "to stand against", or "to face and fight". Japanese is full of such verbs and sometimes it is hard to differentiate compound verbs from verbs in sequence. Here, however, it is clearly a compound verb as determined by the common use of this word. とは (to wa) is a combination of particles that usually indicate that something is being defined, but here is probably just a speech pattern unique to Jin-e, or a way of him emphasising what he has to say, that "one with a wooden sword, especially a woman cannot hope to stand up to me (in a fight)".

For the final two lines I would like to quickly look at the verbs that Jin-e uses. First he says 血を浴びて (chi wo abite); 浴びて (abite) is from the verb 浴びる (abiru) which can mean either "to bathe" or "to suffer". I really like that Jin-e uses this verb because both meanings work. 血を浴びてこの刀は生きる物 (chi wo abite kono tou wa ikirumono) could easily read both: "By bathing in blood this sword lives" or, "In suffering blood-letting this sword comes alive". Both readings are effective and both evoke the same emotional response from the

⁷⁵ *All About Particles*, 56-57, *How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles*, 11-12, 24-26.

audience. However, only the first really pulls a reaction from Kaoru, because the verb “to bathe” is more powerful in this context, since bathing and cleansing are important parts of Japanese culture. If, however, there was a particle indicating cause, the verb “to suffer” would be far more accurate and offensive to Kaoru. In his final line, which is part of the same sentence, or a logical extension of this sentence, Jin-e says あの世で悟れ (ano yo de satore). Literally, “in that world over there (you will) come to realize”, “that world over there” refers to the next life, or hell, or whatever pleases you for what happens after death. But, it is not that world that concerns me, rather it is the verb 悟れ (satore) from 悟る (satoru), “to discern”, “to realize” or “to reach enlightenment”. I enjoy the off-hand implication that Jin-e believes that in coming to understand what he understands as the true purpose of swords, Kaoru will reach enlightenment, or come closer to doing so. It gives an extra dimension to Jin-e’s character⁷⁶ and to the situation.

Now comes the shortest scene, with the least to discuss on the linguistic front.⁷⁷ There are three points I would like to talk about. The first is set expressions. Saitou uses two, 矢張り (yahari), “as I

⁷⁶ For details and exploration see scene analysis, Decisions From Context, and Appendix 8.

⁷⁷ Although it has much to talk about on the contextual and adaptation fronts, see Decisions from Context.

thought” , or “in spite of” , and 久しぶり (hisashiburi), “it’ s been a while since (whatever happened, or what was done)” . There are many situations in which Japanese use set expressions and they are one of the first and easiest things one learns when learning Japanese. What is interesting is the context in which they are used. It’ s always effortless and it just fits, much like their English counterparts. However, in Japanese the set expressions are often all that is needed, unlike in English where there is usually an accompanying explanation, whether or not it is warranted. Such as it is with Saitou’ s lines. Even if Saitou did not say 十時傷の男 (juuji kizu no otoko; man with an X-shaped scar), it would be implied that he was talking about Kenshin and that when he heard of this strange man he knew it was him. It would also be implied that he was referring to Toba-Fushimi without the line 鳥羽伏見の戦い以来 (Toba-Fushimi no tatakai irai; since Toba-Fushimi…). Effectively, most of what Saitou says to Kenshin is unneeded and including the explanations as he does, Saitou shows his arrogant personality to Kenshin and the audience.

Secondly I would like to talk about the line 話がある (hanashi ga aru). 話 (hanashi), here could be from the verb 話す (to say, speak, tell), or it could be the noun 話 (hanashi) meaning “story” or “conversation” . Neither would be wrong, especially followed by がある

(ga aru) “something exists”, with emphasis on what that something is. It is simply that choosing the noun would be more correct, since it would sound better in English. This noun-is-a-verb (or vice versa) phenomenon is not uncommon in Japanese and can be, if not outright confusing, a stumbling block for both learning and translating the language.

Finally, I would like to point out the verb 出ろ(dero), from 出る(deru), “to leave” or “answer (a phone or door)”. While this does not seem that rude to English speakers, it is extremely so to Japanese speakers. In using the verb 出る, rather than a milder verb like 行く(iku) “to go” (as in “let’s go”) or 来る(kuru) “to come” (as in “come with me”), Saitou is showing great arrogance and disrespect. However, he is also exercising his authority, as Kenshin is a prisoner and 出ろ is an order to “get out”, needing no further directions or expectations.

The final scene is the longest scene, and in some ways it is the most interesting scene linguistically. Just like in English, Japanese has sounds that can hold meaning, in this case Jin-e begins a line with the sound まあ(maa), which here could mean many things, but based on the context of the situation is probably more of a sarcastic remark about how Kaoru is reacting to the situation. So, in the line まあ、そうにら

むな (maa, sou niramu na), まあ would be read as “well”, or “it seems”, both of which would accent そう (sou), “so” or “it seems that”, causing the sentence to read “it seems that you are glaring (at me)” the な (na) here is simply there for emphasis, of Jin-e’s sarcasm. Rather than translate this line as obvious sarcasm I translated it as a playful mocking: “why such hatred?”.

Jin-e goes on to further say お前を人質にすれば抜刀斎は怒る (omae wo hitojichi ni sureba Battousai wa okoru), which is best looked at in two short parts linked together by the verb form. The first part of the sentence, お前を人質 (omae wo hitojichi), “you are a hostage”, the second 抜刀斎は怒る (Battousai wa okoru), “Battousai is/will be angry”. The two parts are linked by にすれば (ni sureba), here meaning “in the event that this is the case”. すれば (sureba) is the causative form in Japanese⁷⁸, and is usually attached to the end of a verb, but it can stand alone as it does here. The whole sentence therefore reads “If it is the case that you are a hostage, Battousai will be caused to become angry (and the event I am attempting to provoke will play out)”. The implication in brackets is explained in Jin-e’s following line.

⁷⁸ See chapter 22 of the textbook *Genki II*, and pages 119-120 of *Essential Japanese Grammar*.

The next lines of interest are Kenshin's first lines. They are not only interesting because of the palpable anger, but because they are kind of a question-and-answer session with himself, in addition to being a direct answer to Jin-e's query, no matter how sarcastic said query was. The line 薫どのを巻き込んだ貴様と (Kaoru-dono wo makikonda kisama to) appears to answer Jin-e's taunt, as Kenshin expresses his anger and disbelief that Jin-e would involve Kaoru. 薫どのを巻き込んだ (Kaoru-dono wo makikonda) "Kaoru has been implicated", 貴様と (kisama to) "with you, you son-of-a-bitch". However, this line alone does not suffice. Kenshin follows with それを阻止できなかつた俺自身にな (sore wo soshi dekinakatta ore jishin ni na), in itself a complicated sentence. The initial part; それを (sore wo) "for that", referring to the situation that is playing out and 阻止できなかつた (soshi dekinakatta) "unable to hinder" meaning that he will not allow the situation to be a hindrance. However, the following part 俺自身にな (ore jishin ni na) complicates the simplicity of the first half. 俺自身, means "myself", so it appears that Kenshin is saying that he will not allow the situation to be a hindrance on himself, but the addition of にな (ni na) a combination of two particles changes the definition of the entire sentence. Here, に indicates the direction of the action 阻止できなかつた (soshi dekinakatta) as being toward Kenshin. な, however indicates a

combination of force and emotion⁷⁹ causing 阻止 (soshi) to mean something more along the lines of forgiveness. In the end, Kenshin ends up saying, “I cannot forgive myself for allowing you to implicate Kaoru (but I will not let it be a hindrance to me)” .

When Jin-e yells 怒れ、怒れ! (okore, okore!) he literally says, “angry, angry!” , which parallels a similar word repetition scheme in English. He is really saying something more along the lines of “I bet you’ re angry” or a taunting “make me pay for what I’ ve done” but the repetition really drives his point home and allows the audience to pick what he means to say out of the context. This kind of repetition is found often in Japanese when expressing strong emotion and is not to be confused with repetitive sound effects that are used as words (like ガタガタ gatagata, the sound effect for shooting), or words that are the same kanji or sound twice (like 時々 tokidoki, “sometimes”). The English parallel would be saying something twice to indicate a different context, for example; “We went on a date, but not like a *date* date” . Even this emphasising of the repetition as more serious can be heard when Jin-e speaks.

Jin-e then asks そんな刀で俺が殺せるか (sonna tou de ore ga koroseru ka) which allows me to explain why が (ga) does not throw

⁷⁹ *All about Particles* 135-137.

emphasis here the way it usually does. 殺せる (koroseru) is an un-conjugated verb so there is no definite tense to the sentence, but it can still be read as “With that blade (you will) kill me?” or “(can you) kill me with that blade?” Normally が (ga) would keep the emphasis on Kenshin, the zero subject of the sentence and sound more like “Will *you* kill me with the blade”, however, the verb is left un-conjugated to connect it to the situation. Therefore, there is an unseen causative in the context in which the sentence exists. The unseen causative makes the sentence read “Has this situation that we are in caused you to want to kill me with that blade?”, this in turn, would need to be shortened and modified to fit into subtitles. But, the subtitles still need to portray the hidden causative, if it makes sense in English. Luckily, in this case the causative doesn't fit in English and therefore there is more flexibility allowed in the translation.

I would like now to talk about the use of a question marker in the case of sarcasm in the line 背車刀まで読めなんだか (kaishatou made yome nanda ka). Kaishatou is the name of the move Jin-e uses, まで (made) and 読めなんだ (yome nanda), read together mean “you have not yet read (my technique)”. Generally the question marker would make the phrase into a question, but in this case it is more an expression of a blend of surprise that Kenshin did not read the move and sarcasm. Jin-e is

surprised at how hard it is to provoke Kenshin into fighting him at full strength, and is showing the full extent of his personality in expressing it. This decision is enforced as Jin-e also used か (ka) sarcastically in at least one of the previous scenes.

The next line sets aside Jin-e's sarcasm and shows how serious he can be. This is a line that, while interesting in its entirety, intrigued me because of a specific word choice. The line is まだお前は昔の抜刀齋には遠く及ばない (mada omae wa mukashi no Battousai niwa douku oyobanai), and the word choice I would like to look at is 及ばない (oyobanai). 及ばない is interesting not only because it looks like a verb, but is actually an adjective (there are several words like this in Japanese, each of which was likely originally derived from a verb form), but because of its dual meaning. 及ばない (oyobanai) means either unattainable or unnecessary. It would be so easy to choose the wrong meaning and completely misinterpret what Jin-e is saying. The context points almost directly to it being unattainable, as in "As of now the Battousai you were long ago is a state you cannot attain", but if the context was less clear, or Jin-e's personality a little different, it could easily be read "As of now it is unnecessary to become the Battousai you were long ago". If only that were the case, then the

audience and Kenshin would not have to suffer through what Jin-e does to Kaoru.

What Jin-e does to Kaoru is terrible, and the way he explains it is terribly confusing: 肺まで麻痺する程度にな(hai made mahisuru teido ni na). 肺(hai) means lungs, まで, here does not mean “not yet”, as it usually does, but rather “until”⁸⁰. 麻痺する(mahisuru) is a noun-verb. Earlier I talked about how sometimes, in Japanese nouns can be verbs, usually this is done by attaching the noun to the verb する(suru), which roughly means “to do”, so 麻痺する(mahisuru) is literally “to do paralysis”. 程度(teido) means “amount” or “degree”, so when putting the sentence together, thus far it says “(Her) lungs paralyzed to the degree of”. にな(ni na), here is a shortening of になる(ni naru), “to become”; it is not a particle combination or a negative verb form. Therefore, the explanation, in entirety reads, “her lungs will become paralyzed in degrees” or “until her lungs become paralyzed to the degree of”.

Another sentence of Jin-e’s worth looking at is 言いたい事は剣で言え(iitai koto wa ken de ie). 言いたい(iitai) means “to want to say”, 事(koto) is the word for abstract things, therefore 言いたい事(iitai koto) means “the things one wants to say”. The use of は(wa) here

⁸⁰ *How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles*, 13-14.

throws me off, as it is a subject marker and not a directional particle as it appears to be here. However, it makes sense with 剣で言え (ken de ie), literally “to say by way of the sword”. The sentence is interesting in its straightforwardness, it says what it says in Japanese in English: “the things you want to say are things said with the sword” or “say the things you want to say with your sword”.

Kenshin’s line 命がほしければ (inochi ga hoshikereba) introduces a new grammar point: the conditional sentence. In Japanese there are several ways of making a conditional sentence, but the most common would probably be the ば (ba) form of a verb⁸¹. Here the adjective 欲しい (hoshii) is used as a verb, so the final い (i) is dropped and the verb form, in this case ければ (kereba) a tense denoting “if”, is added to the end of the verb. This in turn attaches to the subject 命 (inochi) “life” and the subject marker places emphasis on the subject. All together it can be read as “If you want (to keep) your life…”

In Jin-e’s explanation/taunting 俺にはもう解けん、方法二つに一つ自力で解くか. . . (ore niwa mou token, houhou wa futatsu ni hitotsu jiriki de tokuka…) has a couple of interesting things. First, には (niwa) while at first appearing to be a combination of the particles に (ni) and は (wa), it is actually a word which here means “in order to”.

⁸¹ *Essential Japanese Grammar*, 56.

This is followed by もう (mou), which means “already” (when used in a positive sentence structure), making it read “I have already (told you that) in order to release…” . Second the phrase 二つに一つ (futatsu ni hitotsu). This is made out of the counters for “first” and “second” and the particle に (ni), here meaning “the means by which” allowing for it to translate roughly to the English expression “one way or another” , thus connecting the structures before and after it into one cohesive sentence.

In reply to what Jin-e says, Kenshin yells ならば! (naraba!), which sounds odd on its own. ならば is generally used as a verb form, necessitating its attachment to a verb. Here however, it appears seemingly without a verb, or even a subject. However, it has both, they simply exist as the ubiquitous Japanese zero-subject. As a verb form, and on its own ならば (naraba) means “in that case” , or “in the case of” . In using the form ならば (naraba), Kenshin is effectively saying “if what you say is the case, then I shall do it” .

I would like to quickly talk about 掛かってこい (kakatte koi), as heard in the line 殺してやるから掛かってこい! (koroshite yaru kara kakatte koi!). Just like 勝負 (shoubu), 掛かってこい (kakatte koi) is heard in action scenes, generally in combat, and between foes. It is made of the verbs 掛かる (kakaruru), “to come at” , and 来る (kuru), “to

come” or “to arrive”. Noticably, 来る (kuru) is in the verb form indicating an order⁸². This creates a literal reading of the phrase as “I order you to come and come at me”, but that is not truly what is being said. There is a strong emphasis created by repetition⁸³, but, like 勝負 (shoubu), this term has its roots in the Samurai honour code. The biggest shame to a Samurai was to strike or be struck from behind. Samurai were also forbidden to cut down unarmed foes, with the exception of enacting Kirisute Gomen⁸⁴. So what is actually being said here is “come at me first to show you have a weapon and so no-one is shamed by being cut down from behind” .⁸⁵ Of course such a thing is far too long to be a subtitle and is usually rendered as “come at me”, but I feel that Kenshin, being charged by emotion would be saying something more like “here you die”, to express his regression into anger.

Once again, Jin-e’s speech patterns are of interest, specifically the end of the line *これが抜刀斎のかまえかな* (kore ga Battousai no kamae ka na). Generally *かな* (kana) at the end of a sentence indicates a

⁸² It is an irregular verb, but it still holds the same meaning as the *なさい* (nasai) conjugation pattern, see Kaoru’s line *待ちなさい!* (machinasai), 268-269 of *Essential Japanese Grammar*.

⁸³ See Jin-e’s line *怒れ、怒れ!* (okore, okore!).

⁸⁴ See Appendix 5.

⁸⁵ Not related to *Kenshin*, but still interesting, in the manga *Vagabond* by Takehiko Inoue, there are many scenes of Musashi attacking, or being attacked from behind. In at least one of the scenes, a spectator or an enemy actually makes a comment along the lines of his actions being shameful to all swordsmen. This also happens in *Lone Wolf and Cub* by Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima.

query, literally meaning “I wonder”, but here it means no such thing. It appears merely to be part of the way Jin-e speaks, although translating the sentence as “I wonder if that is Battousai’s stance” would not be entirely wrong, it would be better translated as an expression of surprise, or even of pleasure. When Jin-e adds かな (kana) to the sentence he is expressing his gladness that Kenshin is now taking the fight seriously. Therefore it would be best translated as “So that’s Battousai’s stance” or “Finally, Battousai’s stance”.

After Kenshin attacks, he proffers an explanation of what he has done to Jin-e and in that explanation he uses the conjunction そして (soshite)⁸⁶. そして generally means “and then”, but here it is used more like だから (dakara)⁸⁷, which, among others things acts as the English “therefore”. そして (soshite) could here be read as “and”, but that reading lacks something and makes it seem like Kenshin is listing events to occur, rather than saying that what he has done has in turn caused something else.

In explaining, Kenshin states that he will now protect Kaoru, 薫ど
のを守るため. . . (Kaoru-dono wo mamoru tame…), another set expression. The verb 守る (mamoru), “to protect” is almost always attached to

⁸⁶ *All About Particles*, 323.

⁸⁷ *All About Particles*, 154.

either ため (に) (tame (ni)) or のため (に) (no tame (ni)), both roughly meaning “for the sake of”. In Japanese one cannot simply say that someone will be protected, the protection must happen for the sake of that someone. Likely this also has roots in traditional culture, but I was unable to find out what those roots are. Regardless, it is an interesting point.

Kaoru’s lines, although disjointed are full sentences, and here I shall piece them together. First 人斬り戻らないで、だめ、殺したら、殺しちゃだめ、剣心(Hitokiri modoranai de, dame, koroshitara, koroshicha dame, Kenshin). All of these parts can be read as individual sentences “don’t go back to being a man-slayer”; “why not stop killing”; “the killing (that has been done) solved nothing”; “Kenshin”, but it is not until they are put into one sentence that they truly make sense. The particles read better and actually have purpose when the lines are put together: “Don’t turn back into a man-slayer, if all of this killing was senseless, then why don’t you stop, Kenshin”. This is supported by the fact that in this sentence たら(tara) is used in its standard manner as indicating an “if…then” situation, rather than indicating a suggestion⁸⁸, which is what it seems that Kaoru wants to

⁸⁸ *All about Particles*, 100-102; *Essential Japanese Grammar*, 335-337.

say when she includes the word だめ (dame) with its wealth of meanings after a past-tense casual verb form.

In her further pleading the sentences connect in a similar manner, based on the logical breaking points of what she says: あなたが、殺してしまった人のために、あなたが、今まで、助けた人のために、人を切らなくても (anata ga, koroshiteshimatta hito no tame ni, anata ga, ima made, tasuketa hito no tame ni, hito wo kiranakutemo). The fact that Kaoru uses あなたが (anata ga) as the subject rather than Kenshin's name is interesting because in Japanese one only calls another あなた (anata) if they are really close, as a form of endearment, or while speaking to someone whose name or position you don't know, but even then just leaving out the pronoun altogether is preferred. Generally, however, using あなた, especially to an elder or superior is rude. The use of あなた by Kaoru, is indeed interesting, not because it changes the meaning of what she is saying, but because it changes the tone of the scene. In this situation it could be either that she uses it to the effect that she is saying that man-slayer Kenshin is not someone that she knows, or it could be her saying that she loves the Kenshin that she knows and wants him to understand that. Possibly, it could imply both.

In the line 殺してしまった人のために (koroshiteshimatta hito no tame ni) there is a compound verb form. In spoken Japanese, these are

fairly frequent, and often accompanied by shortening of sounds, just to make it a little more confusing. The compound verb form is 殺してしまった (koroshiteshimatta), which includes both the continuous て (te) form of 殺す (korosu) “to kill”, and the past tense form of the auxiliary verb しまう (shimau), which, when attached to another verb, acts as a signal that an action has been completed⁸⁹. This could be read as “the killing (of people) has now been completed” or “the killing (of people) is coming to completion” when combined with あなたが (anata ga) and 人のために (hito no tame ni), however, it is read more like “for the sake of all those that you have killed in the past…” When she finishes with 今まで、助けた人のために、人を切らなくても (ima made, tasuketa hito no tame ni, hito wo kiranakutemo) she brings a finality to the sentence that was missing with simply しまう (shimau). By using ても (temo) “even though”⁹⁰ at the end she is instilling hope into the situation: “even though as the man-slayer you have cut and killed people, for the sake of those same people, and for those that you have saved, you, as Kenshin, must stop (killing)” .

The situation presented immediately after between Kenshin and Jin-e can be interpreted in two ways: the first, and most correct is Jin-e

⁸⁹ *Essential Japanese Grammar*, 313-314.

⁹⁰ *All About Particles*, 29-30, *How to Tell the Difference Between Japanese Particles*, 73-74.

asserting that it is not yet over, the second that Kenshin himself says this. When Kenshin says もうよせ、左手しか使えぬおめしに勝気はござらん (mou yose, hidari te shika tsukaenu omeshi ni kachiki wa gozaran), it can be read in two ways. First as もう寄せ(mou yose), meaning, “now (it is time for the) final moves” ; or without the kanji, as I have chosen to write it as もうよせ (mou yose) giving the phrase more room for interpretation and therefore allowing it to be read as “it’s over” or “let’s end it” . This more liberal reading takes into account that もう (mou), like まだ(mada), can be used to mean both “already” and “not yet” . 左手しか使えぬおめしに勝気はござらん (hidari te shika tsukaenu omeshi ni kachiki wa gozaran) can be read as “only the left hand is useful” (左手しか使えぬ) “there is little chance of you winning” (おめしに勝気はござらん), the second part is mostly implied from context and the words おめし(omeshi, probably written お召し) and 勝気(kachiki) meaning “a summons” and “unyielding spirit”, and therefore implying that without the use of his right hand there is little possibility that he can win, as he will not summon the fighting spirit.

After Jin-e asserts once again that it is not over between them, his final lines can be read as one long sentence: お前の本性は人斬りよ～同じの人斬りが言ってんだからまちがいいねえよ、所詮人斬りは人斬り、お前がいつまで流浪同じなぞとがざいっているなのか、地獄の淵で見ててやろう (omae no honsei wa Hitokiri yo

onnaji no Hitokiri wa ittenda kara machigai inee yo, shosen Hitokiri wa Hitokiri, omae ga itsumade rurou onnaji na zo to gozaitteiru nano ka, jigoku no fuchi de miteteyarou). Together it can be read as “your real nature is that of the manslayer, as I am also a manslayer I know this is not a mistake, a manslayer is a manslayer; how long can you wander saying things like gozaru? I will watch you from hell (until the day you become a manslayer once more)”. Although this makes perfect sense and sounds quite good, it is more dramatic and fits better into titles when broken up into smaller segments that could be stand alone sentences, in a manner similar to the way that Jin-e says it. If read that way, the way that I decided upon⁹¹ seems best.

Decisions Made from Context

or

I Know They Don’ t Say That But...

In this section, I would like to touch on a few lines that I translated almost entirely based on context rather than what is actually being said. My hope is that by including this small section, I will be able to emphasize the importance of context in translating. Of course,

⁹¹ See Appendix 1.2.

even when discussing the linguistic factors context plays a part, but not in the same way as in this section.⁹² Some of the topics in this section will be repetitions or expansions of things said in the linguistic section.

It was difficult not to translate the line いたぞ！新撰組だ！ (ittazo! Shinsengumi da!) as “The Shinsengumi, shoot!” or “Shoot! Shinsengumi!”, even though that is not what is being said. I feel that including the verb “to shoot” reflects the action well and would actually be said in such a situation. However, the Japanese does not say that and including it would be confusing to those who can understand what is being said. For this reason, and this reason only I decided to not include a verb at all in the translation. Although, as saying “the Shinsengumi are here” would be unnatural in English and would be a long title, including the verb “to shoot” would simply be wrong. So, in this case I decided that the context demanded I leave something out altogether rather than change it and risk confusion.

A similar decision making process was behind translating 隊長！ (taichou) as “Strike him down!” rather than “Captain!” as it actually is. This was decided based on the fact that the repetition

⁹² I originally hoped that the historical and political context of the film would affect my translations significantly enough to warrant a section on its own. Unfortunately, this was not the case and so any decisions based on such will be included in this section.

makes no sense in English: “Shinsengumi third unit Captain Saitou Hajime!” “Captain!” feels unnatural and unneeded. I felt that it needed to change here because unlike in the previous line, where the whole could be heard as one sentence, this line is clearly separate from the line before it. While it is uttered by a random voice that cannot be identified as a specific person, and therefore could be uttered by someone from either side of the conflict, I think that the decision I made was the best way to translate the line. I think this because it fits the context and it sounds natural when reading the English. Further I chose to combine the lines 勝ったぞ〜！錦の御旗じゃ (kattazo! Nishiki no mihata jya) as a single line. So rather than “We won!/Victory!” followed by “the Imperial banner”, I decided to place them together as “Victory to the Imperial banner!”. I feel that this flows well, and fits nicely with the line that follows.

When the officer falls from the bridge, Kaoru exclaims ちよっと (chotto). Literally this means “a little”, but used in conversation it usually means something closer to “wait” or “just a minute”. If used in certain contexts it could also be taken as an order. Here, however it doesn’t really mean any of those things. In this context Kaoru uses it as an expression of dismay, something more along the line of an English speaker saying “what the…” , and that is how I decided it should be

translated. Rather than a natural Japanese sounding translation such as “wait” or “just a minute” it is better that the title reflect that Kaoru is referring to the event unfolding in front of her and attempting to understand it rather than creating potential for the situation to be misread.

Kaoru’s accusation/interrogation of Jin-e demanded a bit of context-based tweaking. Although the titles I created do portray what she is saying in Japanese, I felt that a simple translation was not enough. In Japanese the situation can be read as Kaoru confronting Jin-e about crimes that they both understand he has committed, whether or not he intended to slander her family’s school (and likely he did). In English, however, the slant of the conversation had to be placed on Kaoru accusing Jin-e of these actions and then explaining the nature of the crime itself. Although a fairly straight-forward translation of the lines would have sufficed, I do not believe that it would have the same effect on the viewers if the titles reflected the Japanese nuances rather than catered to the possible misunderstandings of the English speaking audience.

Saitou, when he mocks Kenshin, begins by stating that he knew that the new prisoner was Kenshin based on his description. The Japanese expression 矢張り (yahari) says this perfectly, however, English does not

have an equivalent expression. Probably the closest thing that exists in English would be “I knew it” , but that does not cover the entirety of the meaning that 矢張り does. The Japanese expression carries layers of meaning and explanation, the English does not. So rather than translating the line as the closest expression, I translated it as “of course” . This may seem odd at first, but only until the layers are examined. The first layer is that Saitou is now a police officer, and that he has an in with Yamagata, so he knows that the higher-ups have been searching for Kenshin. Secondly, he has fought Kenshin in the past and knows both his appearance and fighting style. As such, when, being a police officer, he heard of this person who matched what he knew of Kenshin, he was certain it was him. Working for Yamagata, he had the ability to release Kenshin, and knew the reasons why his release would be warranted (to help catch Jin-e). This withholding of information from Kenshin is something shown in Saitou’ s outward expressions of arrogance. His arrogance and wounded pride from not getting the opportunity to best Kenshin ten years ago are still raw in this confrontation. It is for this reason that he continues to speak of their affiliations. Thus, I feel that having Saitou say “Of course it’ s you” shows all of the layers of knowledge and emotion behind his statement. It also shows his

personality and sounds right in English. This translation does everything that I want my titles to do.

In the same scene, Sanosuke's only line could easily be mistranslated by ignoring the context of the situation and the personality of the speaker. While the many other possible translations would not necessarily be incorrect, as they would have taken into account the meaning of the words, I feel that they would not fit. Sanosuke could say, "so that's Hitokiri Battousai" ; "That's Battousai, eh" ; "Is he really Battousai" ; "*He* is the Battousai" ; "I guess he's Battousai" , or even "I've been looking for you, Battousai" , and none would be incorrect, but they would all be lacking. Like all characters, Sanosuke has a story, and even without having been exposed to the previous media where that story was explained, anyone viewing the film can see from his manner that his past was rough. They can also observe his intense curiosity concerning who Kenshin is, from the moment Kenshin is brought into the jail. These factors combine into something that must be expressed in Sanosuke's lines. Based on his personality and the confirmation indicator だろ (darou)⁹³ at the end of his sentence, it is not farfetched to assume that he was perhaps

⁹³ だろ (darou) is used at the end of the sentences to be both forceful and to ask for confirmation from the one to whom the speaker is directing the sentence to, yet it is not impolite. If it links sentences, it can be properly translated as "probably". *Essential Japanese Grammar*, 159-160.

searching for Kenshin, much like Saitou and Yamagata. Taking that assumption into the translation having Sanosuke say “I’ve found you” in place of any of the other translations seems natural, and creates interest in the audience as to why he was searching for Kenshin in the first place.

The line いいぞ、抜刀齋(ii zo, Battousai) needs a quick discussion, since to translate it I used the opposite of my usual decision-making process. Usually I try to translate the lines to ultimately reflect the essence of what is being said. This line, however was uttered in reference to the action (the essence), but needed to be changed to fit better in the English mindset. The line is given as a back-handed compliment to Kenshin coming after Jin-e, essentially Jin-e is saying, “it’s great that you’re ready to attack, but you need another push”. However, this wouldn’t work well in English and it would be an unnecessarily long title. So in order to not lose the context of the situation I decided to translate it in keeping with the anger theme. So rather than saying “that’s good, Battousai” like Jin-e actually says, I wrote it as the English expression “Anger becomes you, (Battousai)”. This not only keeps the intensity of the situation, but portrays Jin-e’s personality and fits with what the audience would expect from the character’s reaction.

Jin-e, to prompt Kenshin toward more anger, mocks him. He then pulls Kaoru further into the situation and follows with 言いたい事は剣で言え (iitai koto wa ken de ie) and 流石だな (sasuga dana). He literally tells Kenshin to say what he wants to say with his sword, then compliments him as he obliges. 流石 (sasuga), in Japanese means something along the lines of “as expected”. To say such a thing in English, although befitting the action, is confusing and makes little to no sense. In light of this, to actually translate it as a compliment from Jin-e to Kenshin is the perfect way to add sense to it. This could be done in many ways, but I chose simply to have Jin-e say “good”. This is simple, concise and suits Jin-e well. It also can be read sarcastically or with a hint of derision, just as portrayed in the original line.

剣気をたちきるか (kenki wo tachikuru ka), seems to be a question in Japanese, since it contains the question marker particle か (ka), however, it is a sarcastic remark in the form of a question. As such, it requires careful translation. Literally it says “(can you) cut apart the sword energy?”, which no matter which way it is looked at makes no sense. However if it is looked at as something along the lines of “Can you break the jutsu?”, it makes more sense. Unfortunately, although such a line makes sense, it doesn’t seem necessary after Jin-e has already explained what needs to be done. For these reasons, I decided to

translate it as if it is the end of the previous sentence: “You must kill me to cut off the flow of energy”. This allows the line to flow better and does not leave out what Jin-e says causing viewers to wonder if a title was missed. It also reflects the situation and the decision that Kenshin will make.

The final time that Kenshin says 薫どの (Kaoru-dono), I decided to translate it is simply “Kaoru” without the honorific. I realize that it could easily be seen as an inconsistency with the translation, as I made a point to leave honorifics in tact when writing the titles, but it is not an inconsistency. In doing this I hoped to show the shift in the relationship dynamic between Kenshin and Kaoru. The entirety of the scene displayed their close connection to each other, but after Kaoru’s speech, Kenshin clearly feels differently about her. It is as if he is finally realizing for himself that he really loves Kaoru, and that in expressing her wish that Jin-e not to be killed and for Kenshin’s attempts at redemption not to be washed away; that she loves him back. Therefore, leaving out the honorific makes this line powerful. It shows the full extent of their feelings and it shows the climax of Kenshin’s journey. It is where he truly begins to wash away the identity of the Hitokiri, of Battousai and emerges as Rurouni Kenshin.

Subtitles and Enhancing Education

The applications of subtitles are not easy to see. Subtitles themselves are restricted to audiovisual media, but the traditional use of subtitles to give information is expanding. There are now same language titles for the deaf, fan-sub style subtitles that use colour, font and placement of text to express something more than a traditional translation allows, even subtitles that show the characters' thoughts in addition or contrast to what they are saying. As the field of subtitles becomes more creative and expressive, so the subtitle becomes of more academic importance. That studying subtitles is not already a compulsory part of both film and linguistic education is beyond comprehension. It is a relatively quick and easy study with rich benefits. Interestingly, the benefits do not come from the titles themselves, but from the process of creating a working title.

The process of creating subtitles is fairly arduous; the titles must show what is being said, express how it is being said and why (showing the character's personality). Additionally the context in which the title exists must reflect the original context and carry the subtext behind it to the audience. Despite all of these things that must be portrayed, a subtitle must be natural. When it is read it should be as if the brain is really hearing the character say what is written. This seems simple, but it is not. Creating a working subtitle is much like carrying out an experiment in the laboratory. There is a clear goal, and a recommended method, but there are many factors that could affect the outcome, and each one must be understood and taken into consideration before beginning. Just like in the lab the

entirety of the subtitles should form a cohesive set of data that go toward supporting the goal.

Subtitles themselves have little application outside of film studies, but the process of creating a suitable translation within a set of guidelines is very useful in any field that looks at language and within Fine Arts, as it teaches an extra level of critical thinking. The process may also be useful in mathematics based fields as it allows the logic used in these areas to be applied in a different sense than the students are used to thus forcing them to improve their communication and writing skills. The process of subtitling is complicated and has an importance that should not be underestimated. It is also a relatively simple thing to learn how to do and would be a small but important assignment in any class that looks at improving writing skills, refining communication, translation or, of course at film itself.

If one thinks about it, elementary teaching of subtitles could be done in much the same way that I did my study. Just a couple scenes could be chosen from a film. The scenes could be chosen based on what they do for the film, or what elements of the film can be seen in the scenes. A plot map or synopsis and a script of the scenes could be provided in the original language and in a rough target language translation. Naturally, the students would be required to watch the entire film in order to compile profiles for the characters for whom they are translating, and to understand the premise and context of the film, but in-depth analysis would only be required of the scenes chosen. The point of the analysis would be to gather support for why the scenes were chosen in addition to data that could be used to help define the characters, and thus how they talk. The only time the technical aspects of

subtitling, such as timing titles, using the software and so on would need to be taught would be in a film class where-in students were actually learning how to subtitle, but such a class would require a more rigid structure than the structure here proposed.

With the loose structuring provided, students would be forced to apply what they learned from analysing the film, its characters and its world in order to take the rudimentary translation and make it into a more accurate translation, then into a translation that portrays what the analysis has uncovered. Furthermore, if the translations that students created had to be further edited to fit into the traditional standards of subtitling, this would indeed be a challenging lesson. In taking all of these elements and applying them to create a cohesive whole without losing the meaning and still portraying the essence of the overall film, the students still would be lacking the entire experience, but hopefully they would realize the many layers that go into even such a basic communication.

Identifying and utilizing the layers can go a long way in translation and can take something from portraying basic meaning to portraying emotion and context as well as that core meaning. I feel that this effect is amplified when the translator has learned the source language as a second or third language and not as a mother tongue. This allows a better understanding and criticism of the internal structures and even of the words themselves, as the outsider view of the source is essential in looking at what will be more difficult to portray in the target language which, ideally would be the translator's mother tongue. Such a critical process will allow for only

the most fitting translations to be chosen from and will allow the most accurate of those fitting translations to be chosen based on further applications of the analyses.

Comprehensive studies of subtitles should be offered as part of every Fine Arts program, and should be mandatory for Film Studies students. The subtitle is an essential and invaluable part of the film experience and should be studied, understood and appreciated just as the photography and narrative structure of a film is. Additionally, all students looking at how languages are structured or with the goal of becoming a translator or interpreter should have to take a course in subtitling, or at least devote a period of time within a larger course to the process behind it and to heavily analysing the linguistic components of subtitling. This linguistic focus is essential, as the course of study dictates it, but in studying subtitles rather than say, translations of poetry, the students will have an opportunity to look at the many factors that go into creating a translation that serves a purpose beyond simply translating. By applying constraints for the translation's length and creating a target audience for the translation, these lessons can be amplified. I believe it is necessary for such structures to be introduced into language-based studies as it provides a taste not only of what the profession is like, but introduces the students to factors they may not think would be required in the job, but will make them leaders within the profession if they understand and utilize these factors.

By applying the process of subtitling in other areas I hope to make communication more accurate. Translation is after all, communication, but it seems that people forget that. With the amount of literal, word-for-word translations I have encountered I think that institutions should make it more of a point to teach

something that requires layers and processes, like subtitling in linguistic and possibly other, more mathematics based fields. Translation is not a word-for-word process. Certainly all of the individual words and the grammar structures they are suspended within must be understood, but simply re-writing that same sentence in another language is not translation. Translation is the portrayal of the original meaning of a statement in a language other than that in which it was uttered. When talking to someone, one does not simply talk. There is the tone of voice, word order, the specific words and grammatical structures employed as well as body language and the person's personality to factor into the communication. So why then, would translation ignore these factors?

The answer is that a good translation would not ignore these factors. A good translation, while portraying the meaning of the words, would portray all of these factors, all of the emotions and contexts that allow the words to exist and to carry meaning. So why is it that people expect translation to be so basic and uncomplicated? I believe it is because of the lack of focus on topics that challenge this view of translation, topics such as subtitles, in the education system. By expanding the focus of translation in the classroom to take into account all of, or at least more of the factors behind what is being said, especially if this is expected within a set of guidelines, such as is established in subtitling, will allow students to become more effective at translating. Even if taught outside of translation studies, such a topic would foster better communication in general as it would introduce students to understanding the different connotations of what they say and write. It would allow students to see all of the ways something can be said and also allow

them to develop greater ability to empathize with those whose first language is not their own. It would force people to think before they talk, and to consider what they want to say in order to fit into the context of their situation.

I did this study to show that subtitling, and indeed translation itself is a difficult task, much more difficult than one may think. I outlined all of the factors that directly affected my translations of the lines in the film, but would like to point out that the things I talked about were not the only influences. I had to consider the historical events, the setting, and patterns of speech in the film. I had to consciously decide whether to preserve them. I had to consider staying true to the portrayal of the characters in previous translations of the media. There was also the need to understand how the scenes fit into the film itself and how I would translate the rest of the film, just to create a flow and a pattern within the titles I did create and to establish and distinguish the characters. I thought about what I knew about film and art, photography, and production of films. In the back of my mind there was a lot of information that probably subconsciously affected the way I chose to translate certain things. There are a great number of factors that go into translation in general, and for subtitle translation specifically. If nothing else comes from what I have done, I want people to understand that and to gain an appreciation for the art of subtitling.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1

Literal and Natural Translations

Scene 1・剣心のシーン・鳥羽伏見の戦い、最後の日・慶応時代

Scene 1 - Kenshin' s scene - The final day of the Battle of Toba-Fushimi, Keiou Era

00.57-05.37

	Character	Line	*Literal Translation	Natural Translation
01.14	Text	<p>今から百四十年前「幕末」の動乱期 imakara hyakuyonjuunen mae “bakumatsu” no douranki</p> <p>「人斬り抜刀齋」と呼ばれる暗殺者が居た “Hitokiri Battousai” to yobareru ansatsusha ga iru da</p> <p>倒幕派の命により京都を暗躍しその修羅の如き、強さと冷徹さから人々に怒れられた toubakuha no inochi ni yori kyoto wo anyaku shi sono shura no gotoki, tsuyosa to reitetsusa kara hitobito ni okorerareta</p> <p>時は天下分け目の戊辰戦争 toki wa tenkawkakeme no boshin sensou</p>	<p>140 years before now, during a period of civil unrest known as the “Bakumatsu”</p> <p>There lived an assassin referred to as “Hitokiri Battousai”</p> <p>(He participated in)the carnage caused by the secret manoeuvring of the Toubakuha in Kyoto, (he caused) anger in the strong and level-headed people</p> <p>In the time of the fateful Boshin War</p>	<p>140 years ago, in final days of the “Bakumatsu”</p> <p>There was an assassin known as “Hitokiri Battousai”</p> <p>With great strength he brought carnage and was feared by all</p> <p>A critical time in the Boshin War</p>

		一八百六八年一月京都賭場伏見の 山中 senhappyakurokujuuhachinen ichigatsu Kyoto Toba-Fushimi no yama naka	January 1868 Kyoto, in the Toba- Fushimi mountains	Jan 1868, Toba-Fushimi, near Kyoto
01.47	男の声	いたぞ！ Itazo!	(They're) here!	Shinsengumi!
01.48		新撰組だ！ Shinsengumi da!	The Shinsengumi!	
01.59	斉藤	人斬り抜刀斉 Hitokiri Battousai	Man-cutter/manslayer of unequal skill	Hitokiri Battousai
02.03		どこだ？ Doko da?	Where (are you)?	Where are you?
02.05		どこにいる？ Doko ni iru?	Where (do you) exist?	Where are you!
02.18	男の声	新撰組三番隊長斉藤一！ Shinsengumi san-ban taichou Saitou Hajime!	(It's the) Shinsengumi third unit captain Saitou Hajime!	Unit Captain Hajime!
02.21		隊長！ Taichou!	Captain!	Strike him down!
02.38	斉藤	勝負だ、抜刀斉 shoubu da, Battousai	(It's a) game, Battousai	So you want to play, Battousai/ Is this a game to you, Battousai?
03.47	男の声	勝ったぞ～！ Kattazo-!	(We have) won!/Victory!	Victory to the Imperial banner!
03.48		錦の御旗じゃ nishiki no mihata jya	(The) brocade banner (is here)	
04.00		薩長軍の勝利じゃ	(it's the) Satsuma Choushuu alliance	Victory to the Choushuu Satsuma

		sacchou-gun no shouri jya	army's victory	Alliance!
04.11	剣心	来たか？ Kita ka?	(something) has come/ (something) has been caused	Have we finally
04.14		新しい時代が atarashii jidai ga	(A) new age (has been)	brought about
04.22		やっと yatto	Finally	a new age?
04.32	斉藤	非村抜刀斉 Himura Battousai	Manslayer Himura	Manslayer Himura
04.47		これで終わりだと思ふなよ kore de owarita to omouna yo	This is not over, do not think that it is	Do not think this is over
04.50		たとえ世の中は変わろうとも tatoe yono naka wa kawarou domo	Even if the world has changed	Even if the world changes
04.53		剣に生き ken ni iki	(We) live by the sword	We have lived by the sword and we must die by it
04.56		剣に死ぬ ken ni shinu 以外俺たちに道はない igai oretachi ni michi wanai	(We) die by the sword (There is) no other path (for us)	there is no other way
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06.01	刃衛	なぜだ nazeda	Why...	Why...
06.05		なぜ俺を生き残った Naze ore wo iki nokotta	Why have I been left alive/ why do I remain alive	Why do I remain?
06.30		何だこの刀は nan da kono katana wa	What is this sword here?	What is this sword...
06.59		これが人斬り抜刀斉の Kore ga Hitokiri Battousai no	(This sword) belongs to Hitokiri Battousai	It belongs to Hitokiri Battousai

Scene 2・薫のシーン・橋で会う・明治時代
Scene 2 - Kaoru's scene - Meeting on the bridge - Meiji Era
24.36-26.54

	Character	Line	*Literal Translation	Natural Translation
24.38	薫	ネコちゃんだ neko-chan da	(It's a) kitty	Here kitty
24.43		～、ニャン neko-, nyan	Kitty, meow	Meow!
25.06		ちょっと chotto	Just a minute	Just a minute
25.19		待ちなさい！ Machinasai	(I order you to) wait!	Wait!
25.29		お前が抜刀齋か？ omae ga Battousai ka?	(Are) you Battousai	Are you Battousai?
25.34		なんの目的で、 nan no mokuteki de,	For what purpose	Why are you going around
25.36		神谷活心流の名を語って kamiya-kasshin-ryuu no na wo katatte	In the name of Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu	committing crimes,
25.39		悪事を働くか akuji wo hataraku ka	(have you done) evil deeds	and slandering my father's school?
25.51		お前のような奴がいるから父 は。。。 omae no you na me ga iru kara chichi wa	guys that act like you are the reason that my father...	It's to stop guys like you that
25.55		父が残した chichi ga nokoshita	My father left (to me)/ my father created	That my father created

25.56		神谷活心流は kamiya-kasshin-ryuu wa	Kamiya Kasshin ryuu	Kamiya Kasshin ryuu
26.04	刃衛	お前の父親がどうしたと omae no chichi-oya ga doushita to	What did your father (do)? / Who cares about your father?	Who cares?
26.07	薫	人を生かす剣を説いていた hito wo seikasu ken wo toiteita	(The) theory (that) swords (are to) keep people alive	Swords exist in order to keep people alive
26.11		切るのではない kiru no dewanai	Not for cutting	Not for cutting Not for killing
26.13		殺すのではない korosu no dewanai	Not for killing	Swords exist to save lives
26.15		人を、人を生かす剣を hito wo, hito wo seikasu ken wo	Swords (are to) save people's lives	
26.23	刃衛	木刀でしかも女の身で俺に立 ち向かうとは bokutou de shikamo onna no mi de ore ni tachimukau to wa	(you're only a) woman, moreover (with a) wooden sword (you will find it difficult) to stand up to me	You're only woman and with a wood sword you can't stand up to me
26.26	薫	だまれ！ Damare!	Silence!	Shut up!
26.31	刃衛	こんな棒切で何ができる？ Konna boukire de nani ga dekiru?	What can you do with that wooden sword?	What can you do to me? Swords live on blood
26.39		血を浴びてこの刀は生きる物 chi wo abite kono tou wa ikirumono	By bathing in/drinking blood swords (are made to be) living things	Maybe you'll understand that in the next world
26.46		あの世で悟れ	Maybe you will come to realize this in	

		ano yo de satore	the next world	
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Scene 3•差之助のシーン•牢は苦しくないぞ
Scene 3 - Sanosuke's scene - Jail ain't so bad
41. 37-44. 18

	Character	Line	*Literal Translation	Natural Translation
	男の声	———		
	Text	悪 aku	Evil	Evil
43.11	斉藤	十字傷の男 juuji kizu no otoko	Man with the cross-shaped scar	A man with an X-shaped scar, Of course it's you
43.18		矢張りお前が yahari omae ga	As I thought (it's you)	
43.22		久しぶりだな hisashiburi da na	Long time no see/ It's been a while	It's been a while, eh... Battousai Has it really been 10 years Since Toba-Fushimi?
43.25		人斬り抜刀斎 Hitokiri Battousai	Hitokiri Battousai	
43.28		鳥羽伏見の戦い以来、 Toba-Fushimi no tatakai irai,	(Not) since The Battle of Toba-Fushimi	
43.32		もう十年になるから mou juunen ni naru kara	(It's) already been 10 years	
43.38		話がある。。。 hanashi ga aru...	Stories exist, there are things to talk of	We need to talk
43.43		出る dero	Get out (of your cell)	Get out
44.15	差之助	人斬り抜刀斎だろう Hitokiri Battousai darou	(So that's) Hitokiri Battousai	I've found you, Battousai

Scene 4•剣心対刃衛•死と変の戦い
Scene 4 – Kenshin vs. Jin-e – A battle of death and change
1. 51. 44–2. 04. 15

	Character	Line	*Literal Translation	Natural Translation
1.52.06	刃衛	目が覚めたようだな me ga sameta you da na	It appears that you have opened your eyes	I see you've woken up
1.52.16		まあ、そうにらむな maa, sou niramu na	But, it appears (you are) glaring (at me)	Don't look at me with such hatred,
1.52.20		お前を人質にすれば抜刀斎は怒る omae wo hitojishi ni sureba Battousai wa okoru	In order to cause Battousai to get angry (and fight me as the Hitokiri) I have taken you hostage that that may happen	I have only taken you hostage to anger Battousai
1.52.24		怒りを奴を往年の人斬りに立ち戻らせる ikari wo me wo ounen no Hitokiri ni tachi modoraseru	When that guy is angry he will once again turn into the Hitokiri/manslayer he was many years ago	His anger will turn him into the man-slayer I once knew
1.52.39		そろそろおでましのようにだ sorosoro odemashi no tou da	Soon, (his) appearance	He will come soon
1.52.54	薫	剣心 kenshin	Kenshin	Kenshin
1.53.11	刃衛	怒ってるな okotteru na	Aren't you angry	Have I angered you?
1.53.13	剣心	薫どのを巻き込んだ貴様と Kaoru-dono wo makikonda kisama to	(you have) implicated Kaoru-dono, you son-of-a-bitch	How dare you drag Kaoru-dono into this!
1.53.19		それを阻止できなかった俺自	Of course I am angry, (for this action) I cannot forgive you, or myself (for	I cannot forgive myself

		身にな sore wo soshi dekinakatta ore jishin ni na	allowing it to happen)	
1.53.24	薫	剣心 Kenshin	Kenshin	Kenshin
1.53.33	刃衛	いいぞ、抜刀斉 ii zo, Battousai	Good, Battousai	Anger is good, Battousai
1.53.36		怒れ、怒れ！ Okore, okore!	Angry, angry/(Are you) angry?	Feel the anger!
1.53.40	剣心	薫どの！ Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!
1.54.07	刃衛	そんな刀で俺が殺せるか sonna tou de ore ga koroseru ka	(Have I caused you to want to) kill me with that blade?	You can't kill me in that state
1.54.44	薫	剣心！ Kenshin!	Kenshin!	Kenshin!
1.54.47	刃衛	背車刀まで読めなんだか kaisha tou made yomenanda ka	You were unable to read the Kaishatou (reverse wheel blade)	You cannot read my jutsu
1.55.18	薫	剣心！ Kenshin!	Kenshin!	Kenshin!
1.55.25	刃衛	まだだな～ mada dana-	Not yet...	Not yet...
1.55.31		まだお前は昔の抜刀斉には遠 く及ばない mada omae wa mukashi no Battousai niwa douku oyobanai	(You are) already falling short of the (skillset of) the Battousai of long ago	You are not yet the Battousai I knew

1.55.49	剣心	薫どの！ Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!
1.55.50	刃衛	心の一方を強めにかけた、 Shin-no-ippo wo tsuyome ni kaketa,	Shin-no-ippo is gaining strength	My Shin-no-ippo is taking hold,
1.55.53		肺まで麻痺する程度にな hai made mahisuru teido ni na	(Her) lungs (are) stopped to the degree of being paralyzed	her lungs will become paralyzed
1.56.01		持ってせいぜい二分 motte seizei ni-fun	At the most she has two minutes	in no more than two minutes
1.56.10	剣心	刃衛！ Jin-e!	Jin-e!	Jin-e!
1.56.12	刃衛	時間がないぞ jikan ga nai zo	Time does not exist	Time is running out
1.56.14		言いたい事は剣で言え iitai koto wa ken de ie	If you want to talk, say those things with your sword	Talk with your sword
1.56.24		流石だな sasuga da na	(Although your skill grows with your anger) as expected (it is not enough)	As expected
1.56.27	剣心	命がほしければ、 inochi ga hoshikereba	If you want (to keep) your life...	Release Kaoru-dono,
1.56.30		薫どのに掛けた心の一方を解 け Kaoru-dono ni kaketa Shin-no-ippo wo toke	Release Shin-no-ippo from Kaoru-dono	if you want to keep your life
1.56.33	刃衛	俺にはもう解けん ore ni wa mou token	I have already said (the) solution	I already told you
1.56.37		方法は二つに一つ自力で解く か houhou wa futastu ni hitotsu	The method (of release of the jutsu is that she must) either release it herself, or	She must release it herself

		jiriki de toku ka		Or I must die
1.56.42		術者を殺して jutsusha wo koroshite	(You must) kill the caster	
1.56.46		剣気を打ちきるか kenki wo tachikiru ka	Can you break the jutsu?/How will you break the jutsu	Do you believe you can save her?
1.56.53	剣心	ならば! Naraba!	In that case/ if it is the case....	In that case, I will kill you
1.57.46	刃衛	勝負だ shoubu da	(It's a) game	Let's play,
1.57.48		緋村抜刀斎 Himura Battousai	Hiura Battousai	Himura Battousai
1.58.07	剣心	遊び終わりだ asobi owari da	Playing is over	I'm done playing
1.58.16		殺してやるから掛ってこい! Koroshite-yaru kara kakate koi!	To kill you bastard, come and launch (your) attack/ I cannot kill you without provocation, attack me!	Here you die!
1.59.27	刃衛	これが抜刀斎のかまえかな? kore ga Battousai no kamae ka na?	wonder (if that is) Battousai's stance/ I wonder if that is Battoujutsu	He is becoming the old Battousai
1.59.56	剣心	飛天御剣流抜刀術 Hiten-mitsurugu-ryuu Battoujutsu	Hiten-mitsurugi-ryuu (his sword-drawing technique and school)	Hiten-mitsurugi style Souryuusen
1.59.59		双龍閃 souryuusen	Souryuusen (heavenly dragon flash)	
2.00.04		肘の関節を砕き筋をたった hiji no kansetsu wo kudaki suji wo tatta	I have crushed your elbow and indirectly injured your muscle	Your elbow has been broken
2.00.07		これでお前の剣の命は終わっ	(right now/right here) your life with the sword is over	You will never use a sword again,

		た kore de omae no ken no inochi wa owatta		therefore,
2.00.14		そして soshite	therefore	
2.00.18		これで息の根も kore de iki no ne mo	The root of breathing also	I will end your life
2.00.29		薫どのを守るため Kaoru-dono wo mamoru tame	In order to protect Kaoru-dono	In order to protect Kaoru-dono
2.00.34		俺は今一度人斬りに戻る ore wa ima ichidou Hitokiri ni modoru	I shall once again become a man-slayer	I shall once again become a man-slayer
2.00.40	刃衛	殺せ korose	Kill (me)	Finish it
2.00.42	剣心	死ね shine	Die	Die
2.00.49	薫	剣心、やめて！ Kenshin, yamete	Kenshin, stop!	Kenshin, don't!
2.00.59	刃衛	解きやがった toki yagatta	(I am surprised that) she broke (the jutsu)	Impossible
2.01.02	剣心	薫どの Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono
2.01.06	薫	人斬りに戻らないで Hitokiri ni modoranai de	Don't return to being a man-slayer	You don't need to kill
2.01.13		だめ、殺したら dame, koroshitara	It's useless, killing is	Killing solves nothing,
2.01.20		殺しちゃだめ koroshicha dame	Please, don't kill (him, it solves nothing)	

2.01.23		剣心 Kenshin	Kenshin	Please,
2.01.29		あなたが、 anata ga,	You,	Kenshin
2.01.34		殺してしまった人のために koroshiteshimatta hito no tame ni	For the sake of those you have killed	For the sake of those you have killed
2.01.41		あなたが anata ga	You,	
2.01.47		今まで、 ima made	Until now	until now
2.01.50		助けた人のために tasuketa hito no tame ni	For (the sake of) those you have helped	For the sake of those you have helped,
2.01.57		人を切らなくても hito wo kiranakutemo	Stop cutting people	Stop the killing
2.02.03		だれか助ける事のできる dareka tasukeru koto wo dekiru	You can do things to help people	There are still ways to help people
2.02.09		それが、 sore ga,	(for the world) that (exists now)	In this world that you have fought for
2.02.14		あなたが、 anata ga,	you	
2.02.19		剣心が目指した Kenshin ga mezashita	Kenshin (have) aimed at/ Kenshin (have a new purpose)	You have a new purpose
2.02.23		新しい世の中でしょ atarashii yo no naka deshyo	In (this) new world	In the new world
2.02.41	剣心	薫どの Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono

2.02.48	刃衛	決着を付けるぞ～ kechaku wo tsukeru zo	Just end it	Finish this,
2.02.53		抜刀齋 Battousai	Battousai	Battousai
2.02.59	剣心	もうよせ mou yose	Now, it ends	Let's end it
2.03.02		左手しか使えぬおめしに勝気 はござらん hidari te shika tsukaenu omeshi ni kachiki wa gozaran	(Your) left hand (is still) useful summon(ing) determined spirit	You can still use your left hand
2.03.09	刃衛	終わっちゃいねえよ owaccha i-ne yo	It's not already over/ just finish it	It's not already over
2.03.22		お前の本性は人斬りよ～ omae no honsei wa htokiri yo-	Your real nature is that of the man- slayer	You are Hitokiri Battousai
2.03.25		同じ人斬りが言っていたから まちがいいねえよ onnaji Hitokiri ga ittenda kara machigai inee yo	I know/can say that this is not a mistake because am also a manslayer	We are the same manslayer
2.03.31		所詮人斬りは人斬り shosen Hitokiri wa Hitokiri	After-all a man-slayer is a manslayer	Once a killer, always a killer
2.03.38		お前がいつまで流浪同じなぞ とございっているなのか omae ga itsumade ruo onnaji na zo to gozaitteiru nano ka?	Will you continue to wander saying polite things like gozaru? (or will you once again become the Hitokiri that you are?)	You cannot keep up your polite charade
2.03.41		地獄の淵で見ててやろう jigoku no fuchi de miteteyarou	I will watch from hell (for the day that you are the manslayer once again)	I will wait in hell for the day

Appendix 1.2

Stylized Translation

<p style="text-align: center;">Scene 1・剣心のシーン・鳥羽伏見の戦い、最後の日・慶応時代 Scene 1 - Kenshin's scene - The final day of the Battle of Toba-Fushimi, Keiou Era 00. 57-05. 37</p>				
	Character	Line	Natural Translation	Stylized Translation
01.14	Text	<p>今から百四十年前「幕末」の動 乱期 imakara hyakuyonjuunen mae "bakumatsu" no douranki</p> <p>「人斬り抜刀斎」と呼ばれる暗 殺者が居た "Hitokiri Battousai" to yobareru ansatsusha ga iru da</p> <p>倒幕派の命により京都を暗躍し その修羅の如き、強さと冷徹さ から人々に怒れられた toubakuha no inochi ni yori kyoto wo anyaku shi sono shura no gotoki, tsuyosa to reitetsusa kara hitobito ni okorerareta</p> <p>時は天下分け目の戊辰戦争 toki wa tenkawakeme no boshin</p>	<p>140 years ago, in final days of the "Bakumatsu"</p> <p>There was an assassin known as "Hitokiri Battousai"</p> <p>With great strength he brought carnage and was feared by all</p> <p>A critical time in the Boshin War</p>	<p>140 years ago, during the Bakumatsu</p> <p>There was an assassin called "Hitokiri Battousai"</p> <p>He was the strength of the regime, bringer of carnage, feared by all</p> <p>The decisive battle of the Boshin War</p>

		<p>sensou</p> <p>一八百六八年一月 京都賭場伏見 の 山 中</p> <p>senhappyakurokujuuhachinen ichigatsu Kyoto Toba-Fushimi no yama naka</p>	Jan 1868, Toba-Fushimi, near Kyoto	Jan 1868, Toba-Fushimi, near Kyoto
01.47	男の声	<p>いたぞ！</p> <p>Itazo!</p>	Shinsengumi!	Shinsengumi!
01.48		<p>新撰組だ！</p> <p>Shinsengumi da!</p>		
01.59	斉藤	<p>人斬り抜刀斉</p> <p>Hitokiri Battousai</p>	Hitokiri Battousai	Hitokiri Battousai
02.03		<p>どこだ？</p> <p>Doko da?</p>	Where are you?	Where are you?
02.05		<p>どこにいる？</p> <p>Doko ni iru?</p>	Where are you!	Where are you!
02.18	男の声	<p>新撰組三番隊長斉藤一！</p> <p>Shinsengumi san-ban taichou Saitou Hajime!</p>	Unit Captain Hajime!	Unit Captain Hajime!
02.21		<p>隊長！</p> <p>Taichou!</p>	Strike him down!	Strike him down!
02.38	斉藤	<p>勝負だ、抜刀斉</p> <p>shoubu da, Battousai</p>	So you want to play, Battousai/ Is this a game to you, Battousai?	Is this a game, Battousai?
03.47	男の声	<p>勝ったぞ～！</p> <p>Kattazo-!</p>	Victory to the Imperial banner!	Victory to the Emperor!
03.48		<p>錦の御旗じゃ</p>		

		nishiki no mihata jya		Victory to Sacchou!
04.00		薩長軍の勝利じゃ sacchou-gun no shouri jya	Victory to the Choushuu Satsuma Alliance!	
04.11	剣心	来たか？ Kita ka?	Have we finally	Have we finally
04.14		新しい時代が atarashii jidai ga	brought about	brought about
04.22		やっと yatto	a new age?	a new age?
04.32	斉藤	非村抜刀斉 Himura Battousai	Manslayer Himura	Manslayer Himura
04.47		これで終わりだと思うなよ kore de owarita to omouna yo	Do not think this is over	Do not think this is over
04.50		たとえ世の中は変わろうとも tatoe yono naka wa kawarou domo	Even if the world changes	Even if the world changes
04.53		剣に生き ken ni iki	We have lived by the sword and we must die by it	We have lived by the sword and we must die by it
04.56		剣に死ぬ ken ni shinu 以外俺たちに道はない igai oretachi ni michi wanai	there is no other way	there is no other way
--	--	--	--	--
06.01	刃衛	なぜだ nazeda	Why...	Why...
06.05		なぜ俺を生き残った Naze ore wo iki nokotta	Why do I remain?	Why am I alive?
06.30		何だこの刀は	What is this sword...	This sword...

		nan da kono katana wa		
06.59		これが人斬り抜刀斎の Kore ga Hitokiri Battousai no	It belongs to Hitokiri Battousai	Is the Hitokiri's

Scene 2・薫のシーン・橋で会う・明治時代
Scene 2 - Kaoru's scene - Meeting on the bridge - Meiji Era
24.36-26.54

	Character	Line	Natural Translation	Stylized Translation
24.38	薫	ネコちゃんだ neko-chan da	Here kitty	Here kitty,
24.43		ネコ～、ニャン neko-, nyan	Meow!	Meow!
25.06		ちょっと chotto	Just a minute	What...
25.19		待ちなさい！ Machinasai	Wait!	Wait!
25.29		お前が抜刀齋か？ omae ga Battousai ka?	Are you Battousai?	Aren't you Battousai?
25.34		なんの目的で、 nan no mokuteki de,	Why are you going around	Why are you going around
25.36		神谷活心流の名を語って kamiya-kasshin-ryuu no na wo katatte	committing crimes, and slandering my father's school?	committing crimes, and slandering my father's school?
25.39		悪事を働くか akuji wo hataraku ka		
25.51		お前のような奴がいるから父 は。。。 omae no you na me ga iru kara chichi wa	It's to stop guys like you that	It's to stop guys like you that
25.55		父が残した chichi ga nokoshita	That my father created	That my father created
25.56		神谷活心流は kamiya-kasshin-ryuu wa	Kamiya Kasshin ryuu	the Kamiya school
26.04	刃衛	お前の父親がどうしたと omae no chichi-oya ga	Who cares?	Your father...?

		doushita to		
26.07	薫	人を生かす剣を説いていた hito wo seikasu ken wo toiteita	Swords exist in order to keep people alive	Swords exist in order to help people
26.11		切るのではない kiru no dewanai	Not for cutting	Not for cutting
26.13		殺すのではない korosu no dewanai	Not for killing	Not for killing
26.15		人を、人を生かす剣を hito wo, hito wo seikasu ken wo	Sword's exist to save lives	Swords exist to save lives
26.23	刃衛	木刀でしかも女の身で俺に立 ち向かうとは bokutou de shikamo onna no mi de ore ni tachimukau to wa	You're only woman and with a wood sword you can't stand up to me	You can't stand up to me with a wooden sword
26.26	薫	だまれ！ Damare!	Shut up!	Shut Up!
26.31	刃衛	こんな棒切で何ができる？ Konna boukire de nani ga dekiru?	What can you do to me?	Give up, woman
26.39		血を浴びてこの刀は生きる物 chi wo abite kono tou wa ikirumono	Swords live on blood	Swords live on blood
26.46		あの世で悟れ ano yo de satore	Maybe you'll understand that in the next world	Maybe you'll understand that in the next world

Scene 3・差之助のシーン・牢は苦しくないぞ
Scene 3 - Sanosuke's scene - Jail ain't so bad

41. 37-44. 18

	Character	Line	Natural Translation	Stylized Translation
	男の声	-----	---	---
	Text	悪 aku	Evil	Evil
43.11	斉藤	十字傷の男 juuji kizu no otoko	A man with an X-shaped scar, Of course it's you	Man with an X-shaped scar... Of course it's you
43.18		矢張りお前が yahari omae ga		
43.22		久しぶりだな hisashiburi da na	It's been a while, eh...	It's been a while, eh...
43.25		人斬り抜刀斎 Hitokiri Battousai	Battousai	Battousai
43.28		鳥羽伏見の戦い以来、 Toba-Fushimi no tatakai irai,	Has it really been 10 years	Has it really been 10 years
43.32		もう十年になるから mou juunen ni naru kara	Since Toba-Fushimi?	Since Toba-Fushimi?
43.38		話がある。。。 hanashi ga aru...	We need to talk	We need to talk
43.43		出ろ dero	Get out	Get out
44.15	差之助	人斬り抜刀斎だろう Hitokiri Battousai darou	I've found you, Battousai	I've found you, Battousai

Scene 4•剣心対刃衛•死と変の戦い

Scene 4 - Kenshin vs. Jin-e - A battle of death and change

1. 51. 44-2. 04. 15

	Character	Line	Natural Translation	Stylized Translation
1.52.06	刃衛	目が覚めたようだな me ga sameta you da na	I see you've woken up	You're awake
1.52.16		まあ、そうにらむな maa, sou niramu na	Don't look at me with such hatred,	Why such hatred?
1.52.20		お前を人質にすれば抜刀齋は 怒る omae wo hitojishi ni sureba Battousai wa okoru	I have only taken you hostage to anger Battousai	I only took you to anger Battousai
1.52.24		怒りを奴を往年の人斬りに立 ち戻らせる ikari wo me wo ounen no Hitokiri ni tachi modoraseru	His anger will turn him into the man- slayer I once knew	His anger will turn him into the Battousai I once knew (2 lines)
1.52.39		そろそろおでましのようにだ sorosoro odemashi no tou da	He will come soon	He will come soon
1.52.54	薫	剣心 kenshin	Kenshin	Kenshin
1.53.11	刃衛	怒ってるな okotteru na	Have I angered you?	Oh, are you angry?
1.53.13	剣心	薫どのを巻き込んだ貴様と Kaoru-dono wo makikonda kisama to	How dare you drag Kaoru-dono into this!	Kaoru-dono is innocent
1.53.19		それを阻止できなかった俺自 身にな sore wo soshi dekinakatta ore jishin ni na	I cannot forgive myself	I cannot forgive myself
1.53.24	薫	剣心	Kenshin	Kenshin

		Kenshin		
1.53.33	刃衛	いいぞ、抜刀斉 ii zo, Battousai	Anger is good, Battousai	Anger becomes you, Battousai
1.53.36		怒れ、怒れ！ Okore, okore!	Feel the anger!	Embrace your anger!
1.53.40	剣心	薫どの！ Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!
1.54.07	刃衛	そんな刀で俺が殺せるか sonna tou de ore ga koroseru ka	You can't kill me in that state	You can't kill me like that
1.54.44	薫	剣心！ Kenshin!	Kenshin!	Kenshin!
1.54.47	刃衛	背車刀まで読めなんだか kaisha tou made yomenanda ka	You cannot read my jutsu	You couldn't read my jutsu
1.55.18	薫	剣心！ Kenshin!	Kenshin!	Kenshin!
1.55.25	刃衛	まだだな～ mada dana-	Not yet...	Not yet...
1.55.31		まだお前は昔の抜刀斉には遠く及ばない mada omae wa mukashi no Battousai niwa douku oyobanai	You are not yet the Battousai I knew	You are not yet the Battousai I once knew
1.55.49	剣心	薫どの！ Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!
1.55.50	刃衛	心の一方を強めにかけて、 Shin-no-ippo wo tsuyome ni	My Shin-no-ippo is taking hold,	My Shin-no-ippo is taking hold,

		kaketa,		
1.55.53		肺まで麻痺する程度にな hai made mahisuru teido ni na	her lungs will become paralyzed	her lungs will become paralyzed
1.56.01		持ってせいぜい二分 motte seizei ni-fun	in no more than two minutes	in no more than two minutes
1.56.10	剣心	刃衛！ Jin-e!	Jin-e!	Jin-e!
1.56.12	刃衛	時間がないぞ jikan ga nai zo	Time is running out	Time is running out
1.56.14		言いたい事は剣で言え iitai koto wa ken de ie	Talk with your sword	Talk with your sword
1.56.24		流石だな sasuga da na	As expected	Good
1.56.27	剣心	命がほしければ、 inochi ga hoshikereba	Release Kaoru-dono,	Release Kaoru-dono,
1.56.30		薫どのに掛けた心の一方を解 け Kaoru-dono ni kaketa Shin-no- ippo wo toke	if you want to keep your life	if you want to keep your life
1.56.33	刃衛	俺にはもう解けん ore ni wa mou token	I already told you	I've told you
1.56.37		方法は二つに一つ自力で解く か houhou wa futastu ni hitotsu jiriki de toku ka	She must release it herself Or I must die	She must release it herself Or you must kill me
1.56.42		術者を殺して jutsusha wo koroshite		
1.56.46		剣気をたちきるか	Do you believe you can save her?	to cut off the flow of energy

		kenki wo tachikuru ka		
1.56.53	剣心	ならば！ Naraba!	In that case, I will kill you	If that's the case...
1.57.46	刃衛	勝負だ shoubu da	Let's play,	Let's play,
1.57.48		緋村抜刀斎 Himura Battousai	Himura Battousai	Himura Battousai
1.58.07	剣心	遊び終わりだ asobi owari da	I'm done playing	I'm done playing
1.58.16		殺してやるから掛ってこい！ Koroshite-yaru kara kakate koi!	Here you die!	Here you die!
1.59.27	刃衛	これが抜刀斎のかまえかな？ kore ga Battousai no kamae ka na?	He is becoming the old Battousai	The old Battousai...
1.59.56	剣心	飛天御剣流抜刀術 Hiten-mitsurugu-ryuu Battoujutsu	Hiten-mitsurugi style Souryuusen	Hiten-mitsurugi ryuu Souryuusen
1.59.59		双龍閃 souryuusen		
2.00.04		肘の関節を砕き筋をたった hiji no kansetsu wo kudaki suji wo tatta	Your elbow has been broken	Your elbow has been broken
2.00.07		これでお前の剣の命は終わった kore de omae no ken no inochi wa owatta	You will never use a sword again,	You will never use a sword again,
2.00.14		そして	therefore,	With this,

		soshite		
2.00.18		これで息の根も kore de iki no ne mo	I will end your life	I end your life
2.00.29		薫どのを守るため Kaoru-dono wo mamoru tame	In order to protect Kaoru-dono	In order to protect Kaoru-dono
2.00.34		俺は今一度人斬りに戻る ore wa ima ichidou Hitokiri ni modoru	I shall once again become a man-slayer	I shall once again become a man-slayer
2.00.40	刃衛	殺せ korose	Finish it	Finish it
2.00.42	剣心	死ね shine	Die	Die
2.00.49	薫	剣心、やめて！ Kenshin, yamete	Kenshin, don't!	Kenshin, don't!
2.00.59	刃衛	解きやがった toki yagatta	Impossible	Impossible
2.01.02	剣心	薫どの Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono
2.01.06	薫	人斬りに戻らないで Hitokiri ni modoranai de	You don't need to kill	You don't need to kill
2.01.13		だめ、殺したら dame, koroshitara	Killing solves nothing,	Killing Solves nothing,
2.01.20		殺しちゃだめ koroshicha dame	Please	please,
2.01.23		剣心 Kenshin	Kenshin	Kenshin
2.01.29		あなたが、 anata ga,		

2.01.34		殺してしまった人のために koroshiteshimatta hito no tame ni	For the sake of those you have killed	
2.01.41		あなたが anata ga		For those you have killed until now
2.01.47		今まで、 ima made	until now	
2.01.50		助けた人のために tasuketa hito no tame ni	For the sake of those you have helped,	For the sake of those you have helped,
2.01.57		人を切らなくても hito wo kiranakutemo	Stop the killing	Stop the killing
2.02.03		だれか助ける事のできる dareka tasukeru koto wo dekiru	There are still ways to help people	You must continue helping people
2.02.09		それが、 sore ga,	In this world that you have fought for	In this world that you have fought for,
2.02.14		あなたが、 anata ga,	You have a new purpose	You have a new purpose
2.02.19		剣心が目指した Kenshin ga mezashita		
2.02.23		新しい世の中でしょ atarashii yo no naka deshyo	In the new world	
2.02.41	剣心	薫どの Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono	Kaoru
2.02.48	刃衛	決着を付けるぞ～ kecchaku wo tsukeru zo	Finish this,	Finish this,
2.02.53		抜刀齋 Battousai	Battousai	Battousai

2.02.59	剣心	もうよせ mou yose	Let's end it	It's over,
2.03.02		左手しか使えぬおめしに勝気 はござらん hidari te shika tsukaenu omeshi ni kachiki wa gozaran	You can still use your left hand	You can only use your left hand
2.03.09	刃衛	終わっちゃいねえよ owaccha i-ne yo	It's not already over	It's not over
2.03.22		お前の本性は人斬りよ～ omae no honsei wa htokiri yo-	You are Hitokiri Battousai	You are Hitokiri Battousai
2.03.25		同じ人斬りが言ってんだから まちがいいねえよ onnaji Hitokiri ga ittenda kara machigai inee yo	We are the same manslayer	We are the same
2.03.31		所詮人斬りは人斬り shosen Hitokiri wa Hitokiri	Once a killer, always a killer	Once a killer, always a killer
2.03.38		お前がいつまで流浪同じなぞ とございっているなのか omae ga itsumade ruo onnaji na zo to gozaitteiru nano ka?	You cannot keep up your polite charade	You cannot keep up your charade
2.03.41		地獄の淵で見ててやろう jigoku no fuchi de miteteyarou	I will wait in hell for the day	I will wait in hell for that day

Appendix 2

From Watsuki to Ohtomo, The Men Behind the Franchise

Rurouni Kenshin (henceforth *RuroKen* or simply *Kenshin*) is an ultra-popular franchise and there needs to be some credit given to those who created it and kept it going. Interestingly, it is quite difficult to get the opinions of these men or any information on them. Here, however I shall, as well as I can, introduce the mangaka⁹⁴ Nobuhiro Watsuki and the director Keishi Ohtomo. The information I have is limited to the information they have given in a few interviews and what I could dig up on the internet.

The *RuroKen* concept was created, like so many other manga, as a stand-alone story by aspiring mangaka Nobuhiro Watsuki. He had always loved manga and even American comics, and had won the Hop Skip Award for a one-shot manga he drew in high school.⁹⁵ *Kenshin*, however, gained success and became a full-series manga.⁹⁶ Interviews and the reading of the little personal chat pages throughout the *Kenshin* manga reveal that Watsuki is a history buff. As such, he wanted to create a manga set in Japanese history. He did not, however want to draw the elaborate

⁹⁴ A mangaka 漫画家 is someone who writes manga. Unlike in Western comics this person usually both writes and draws the comics. There are however sometimes pairs where one writes and the other draws (such as Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima of *LoneWolf and Cub* or Tsugumi Ohba and Takeshi Obata of *Death Note*), in such pairs both are referred to as mangaka as the Japanese do not have separate terms for the separate functions.

⁹⁵ Interview at French Comic Convention, 2011: “J’adore en effet des comics américains. Mais je les adore justement tellement que je n’arrivais pas, je pense, à écrire moi-même une histoire de ce type.” among other quotations.

⁹⁶ *Rurouni Kenshin*, was Watsuki’s first serialized manga. Interview at Anime Expo 2002, French Comic Convention 2011, Owl in the Rafters write-up 2010.

hairstyles that would entail and so settled on the Meiji Era as a setting.⁹⁷ Like many fans I think that this was the right decision. Watsuki wanted his characters to be human and real, to evoke emotion in the readers,⁹⁸ and the best way to do that is to place them in a period of change. The upheaval created in the world around the characters helps define the characters, creating empathy in the audience.

The decision to set *RuroKen* in the Meiji Era was further strengthened by Watsuki's resolve to make the characters human. He stated that he didn't feel that people could be human in times of war and so post Meiji Restoration seemed not only a logical, but the only choice. At first, Watsuki, although personally enjoying history, was not aiming for much accuracy outside of his characters' dress and a parallel time-line with some major historical events. Watsuki was initially unprepared for the large amount of research he would end up putting into this work. He stated later that he began researching because as the manga was placed in the past, he would not feel comfortable allowing it out for distribution without a certain level of accuracy.⁹⁹ Watsuki is not only famous for writing *RuroKen*, his other works were quite popular in Japan, although this success was limited in the Western

⁹⁷ Anime Expo 2002 "I did the manga because I wanted to draw kimonos and swords, so don't count all of the details to be completely accurate."

⁹⁸ Anime Expo 2002: "Yahiko is like me. He is not strong, but he wants to be.": "The model for Kenshin was one of the old manslayers of the revolutionary era (Bakumatsu). This man was an assassin and slew...He had a tough life, and in his years he started to repent for all of the killings, but he kept his will and was executed by the government."

Rurouni Kenshin omnibus 1, 62 "What this hiokiri could not let go of was his duty to his fallen comrades and to the men he had killed."

⁹⁹ Interview at French Comic Convention, 2011: "Il est vrai qu'au début de Kenshin, je n'étais pas spécialiste de cette période, même si j'en appréciais beaucoup de nombreux aspects, surtout celle du Bakufu en fait"; "nous n'essayons évidemment pas de faire un ouvrage historique précis. Nous utilisons seulement des éléments du passé pour en faire une histoire. C'est de la fiction, le but est de divertir."

Anime Expo 2002 "...in the year and a half between the story and the start of the series, I spent a lot of time reading them (books about Meiji)."

market. His name lives on in the work of his assistants, notably Eiichiro Oda, creator of the über popular *One Piece*, and Hiroyuki Takei, of the modestly successful *Shaman King*,¹⁰⁰ and in the *Kenshin* reboots that are his current project.¹⁰¹

Keishi Ohtomo, is a director I know little about. There is also very little about him floating around on the Internet. Most of what I know is from his IMDB page and a few videos I discovered. He got his start in television, and from familiarity with the Japanese apprentice system for such careers I know that it must have been a difficult move from television to film for Ohtomo. Certainly, his American education allowed him to fast-track his career and go around some of the traditional stumbling blocks in the Japanese system.¹⁰² The television shows he worked on were popular, and the historical accuracy in some of them, especially *Ryomaden* is seen in the *Kenshin* films with the attention to detail Ohtomo presented.

I don't think there could have been a better choice for director than Ohtomo, about the *Kenshin* films he says:

“We give it shape, not by imagining the characters in our heads, but by understanding the characters as they do battle. What we're trying to do is make a movie out of flesh and blood. The most important thing is that all of the characters express themselves through the battles they find themselves in”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ I have read both of these works and, although I dropped *Shaman King* (and never felt the need to finish it), as I feel it is for a different audience than myself, *One Piece* is an ongoing obsession.

¹⁰¹ Interview about *Rurouni Kenshin: Restoration*, feature in *Jump SQ #5* 2012

¹⁰² Xinegang interview on the follow-up *Kenshin* films, begins with a blurb about Ohtomo's film education in Los Angeles, a similar blurb is featured in the Otaku Mode interview.

¹⁰³ Xinegang interview, Aug. 18,2014.

I believe that this is the essence of *Rurouni Kenshin*. There are battles both within and without of each character and it is in through capturing the essence and the pain of t battles that the audience can understand the characters in *RuroKen*, and the world that they live in.

Appendix 3

Feudal Japan at a Glance

Japan had an exceptionally long Feudal Period for a country that is now so developed. The story of *Rurouni Kenshin* takes place during and immediately following the Bakumatsu (幕末) period, when Japan's Feudal Period came to an end. As such the contrast of the advancing Western culture and the traditional culture that had existed for so long in Japan is portrayed wonderfully in the story. This is not just in the photography of the film, nor in the costumes and other physical vestiges of the contrast between the old way and the new, but is embodied in the characters themselves. To understand this fully, it is essential to understand what Feudal society was in Japan, and here I shall provide the absolute minimum that I feel pertinent to this understanding.

The Bakumatsu was a short period at the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (徳川幕府). The word Bakumatsu, literally means end of the Shogunate, it is made from an amalgamation of the words 幕府 (bakufu), the Japanese term for the political structure the West calls a Shogunate, and 末 (matsu), meaning "final", "last" "the end". The word Bakumatsu itself is important, as it signalled the end of not just the almost 300 year reign of the Tokugawa family, but of the entire Shogunate system,

established nearly a millennia before.¹⁰⁴ With this in mind, the feudal system itself will now be briefly explained.

Feudal Japan, not unlike other early societies was based firmly upon rank, referring to social class, profession, sex and to whom one was related. However, “[t]he basic social division, both in theory and in law, was between two main classes, the *Samurai*, or warriors, and the commoners”¹⁰⁵, which is not to say there weren’t more classes, just that this division was most important. Of course there was the Imperial family, descendants of the kami, the Samurai and other daimyo and the peasant, artisan and merchant classes as well as the untouchables and religious professionals. It is just that the divisions that mattered to most of the citizens of the country were whether their class was Samurai (enforcer of laws, military), or commoner (producer, subject, labourer).

The laws established and enforced by the Shogunate were upheld for no other reason than to underline the differences between the two classes. The Samurai had special privileges, but those were subject to keeping up the appearance of honourable behaviour and the fulfilment of their social obligations.¹⁰⁶ The peasants, although heavily repressed, were respected as the most useful members of society, since they produced all of the food and goods. The laws were created in an effort to end the messiness of the civil wars that had plagued Japan for so long and as an attempt to unify the Samurai under one Shogun (General), as opposed to

¹⁰⁴ The exact year is 1336, the establishment of the Ashikaga Shogunate, finally establishing military rule after a century and a half of trying to gain control from the Emperor. This is talked about periodically in Yamazaki’s essay and *The Samurai A New History of the Warrior Elite*, Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁵ *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Chapter 8 of *Samurai Revolution*.

many.¹⁰⁷ This was finally accomplished by the efforts of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu in the late sixteenth and into the early seventeenth centuries.¹⁰⁸ It is into the final years of this world that the characters of *Kenshin* were born.

In the waning days of the Shogunate, Western influence was gaining. The ports had been open for many years now and foreigners were becoming more prominent in Japanese society¹⁰⁹. Factions were forming in society to expel foreigners and civil unrest was adding to and accenting the country's existing financial troubles. Many Feudal Domains, or Han (藩) were rebelling. Kenshin himself is a participant in these rebellions and in the story fights for Choushuu Domain (長州藩), the largest, most radical and most militarily superior of the Shogun's enemies. When an alliance between the Choushuu and Satsuma Domains (薩摩藩) caused the overthrow of the Shogun the Emperor was restored to power.

To Westerners, looking from a view of one living in a democracy the restoration of the Emperor to power may be seen as a step backwards for Japan. However, it was a move of extreme political importance that allowed Japan to step into a more democratic and Westernized future. Regardless of the fact that the Emperor was a figurehead, and had been for much of the existence of Japan, he was still respected by the people: "In many places people were shamed into submission by the appearance of their enemies carrying the Emperor's banner".¹¹⁰ This

¹⁰⁷ *The Samurai A New History of the Warrior Elite*, Introduction.

¹⁰⁸ I believe this is common knowledge, but for the best accounts see *The Samurai A New History of the Warrior Elite*, Chapter 8; *Shinsengumi*, Chapter entitled Historical Background.

¹⁰⁹ The Ports were opened July 08 1953, Yamazaki's essay section 2.

¹¹⁰ *The Samurai A New History of the Warrior Elite*, 294.

upholding of the Emperor as the correct source of loyalty allowed for a new political system to be eventually formed in the shadow of Western models, the first step in the progress Japan needed in order to become what it is today.¹¹¹ It is into this building of a new, Westernized political ideal that the story of *Rurouni Kenshin* thrusts the audience.

Appendix 4

The Meiji Restoration and Boshin War

The Meiji Restoration (明治維新), is arguably the most important event in Japanese history. It ended the long Feudal Period and the oppressive Shogunate (将軍) system the populace had lived under for so long. The Restoration was a long and complicated series of events that raised questions not only of nationalism and personal loyalty, but questions about foreign influence and racism, things that had not been present in Japan since its policy of isolation was enacted. The dissolution of the class system and the breaking apart of the laws that had for so long held Japan together furthered the general chaos. All of this combined into a melting pot of increasing terror and violence, and this is where the *Kenshin* story, and the story of many of its characters begins.

Until 1796 the Japanese economy was fairly stable, and actually rivaled that of the countries of Europe, by virtue of its exclusive trade with The Netherlands and

¹¹¹ See Chapter 20 of *Samurai Revolution* for Katsu Kaishuu's advice and information on what would eventually become the Japanese political system.

China.¹¹² However, the stability and success that came with it created a population whose demand far outweighed the supply that the country could meet, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century there were massive food shortages. The tax system failed to change with the population dynamic and the rich peasants kept getting richer and more educated while draining the poor peasants dry.¹¹³ All of these were factors that led to the slow dissolution of the Samurai class. As the Daimyo got poorer and continued to spend far more than their means, the Bakufu had to accept larger and larger loans from merchants. Those in power were unable to pay for the services of their retainers and Samurai, who naturally began to hire their skills out to those who could afford it.¹¹⁴ Even when Samurai were paid, their fixed stipends no longer covered their needs, as like the taxes, the stipends did not adjust with inflation.¹¹⁵

Although this had been going on for some time, the effects were not truly felt before Commodore Perry sailed into port and demanded trade between Japan and America. Even though this was roughly fifty years before the events at the heart of the Restoration Movement, it could be argued that the Restoration may not have even happened without foreigners in Japan. The opening of the ports caused general unrest and fear that Japan might become a colony like parts of China had.¹¹⁶ It also allowed for schools of thought to form that either embraced or encouraged Western

¹¹² *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 39.

¹¹³ *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 43-47.

¹¹⁴ This is the subject of many media in Japanese pop culture, notably *Lone Wolf and Cub* by Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima and several Akira Kurosawa films including *Yojimbo* and *Seven Samurai*.

¹¹⁵ *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 53.

¹¹⁶ *The Rise of Modern Japan* 56-8, Chapter 3, 4; Yamazaki, Sections 2, 3; Most information from the *Age of Modern Japan*, and all military information from the other sources can also be found in Yamazaki's essay.

technology and military prowess, and schools that not only opposed this, but also wanted to exterminate all foreign influence (and in some cases the actual foreigners) in Japan.¹¹⁷ I feel that this distrust of foreigners, more than any domestic factors, except possibly, the dissolution of the Samurai class spurred on the Restoration efforts.

Amid these problems, there was an expanding military force. The force was needed primarily to keep order among the people, but was also used to exercise what authority could be exercised over the foreigners in Japan.¹¹⁸ The force grew rapidly, and between the growths of Bakufu forces, private armies and individual Han expanding their forces was the outgrowth of specialized forces such as the Shinsengumi. With this expansion of military forces came the order to dissolve the Samurai class and the training of peasants for military purposes.¹¹⁹

Naturally, many of these changes were met by general outrage and, in some cases outright rebellion from the people. Unfortunately “In Tokugawa Japan there was no conception of a loyal opposition, and failure to obey constituted authorities, like all acts of insubordination, was regarded as a threat not only to those in office but to the very regime itself”.¹²⁰ In the case of the Restoration movement, the perceived threat was just what the regime had been worried about. There was a general falling apart of the system already, with powerful Han like Choushuu (長州藩), Tosa (土佐藩) and Satsuma (薩摩藩) splitting off and starting rebellions and

¹¹⁷ *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Chapter 4.

¹¹⁸ See anything about the Shinsengumi or the supporters of sonnoujoui (尊王攘夷).

¹¹⁹ *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 80-83.

¹²⁰ *The rise of Modern Japan*, 99.

Han that were traditionally loyal to the Shogun distancing themselves.¹²¹ The situation created could only result in disaster.

The first major revolutionary movement came in 1865-1866, when Choushuu, having the numbers and the training began a large-scale civil war (mostly between the factions within Choushuu).¹²² At the time there was still enough power possessed by the Bakufu to stop such nonsense, but because of poor organization within the upper echelons of the Bakufu forces, the Choushuu were not defeated. By not defeating Choushuu, the Bakufu showed weakness and lost most of the respect of the Han remaining on its side. This loss of respect for the Bakufu greatly aided the rebellion efforts and allowed for the later events of the war to transpire. It seemed that Katsu Kaishuu's words that "Military power depends on the clarity of moral principles, and not on military training or machinery"¹²³ were coming true. By 1866, the problem of foreigners was foremost in the minds of the nation, and the traditionally anti-foreign, and still rebellious Choushuu had the mind to take action.¹²⁴

From late 1867, after a series of largely failed and mostly hollow political reforms, Choushuu and Satsuma took action.¹²⁵ The timing couldn't be better. The Bakufu had little or no support and poor organization in its military structure. Important Han had abandoned the Bakufu for financial reasons (Fukushima 福島藩,

¹²¹ *Samurai Revolution*, Chapter 19, this chapter details the Choushuu Satsuma alliance and all of the factors behind it.

¹²² *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan*, Chapters 3, 4.

¹²³ *Samurai Revolution*, 340.

¹²⁴ *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 206, the Russians were causing problems in Northern Japan, and other foreigners were just generally disruptive in port cities and foreign-held areas.

¹²⁵ *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan*, 56.

Kokura 小倉藩), or because of factions within them splitting the political affiliations of the people (Fukui 福井藩, Mito 水戸藩). More important, however, may have been the loss of support of the large Han who traditionally, as branches of the Tokugawa, supported the Bakufu (Owari 尾張藩, Mito).¹²⁶ All of this culminated in 1868, at the Battle of Toba-Fushimi (鳥羽伏見の戦い).

Toba-Fushimi was won before it started, it was a bloodbath, even among feudal wars. The introduction of modern firearms to battle was not new, they were present at the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate at Sekigahara (関ヶ原の戦い), almost three centuries in the past. The training to use these firearms and the scale on which they were used, combined with the most modern firearms technology, however, was new and was a deciding factor. The Bakufu troops were at a decided disadvantage on all of these fronts, not to mention their poor organization. The only thing the Bakufu had in its favour was sheer numbers and the advanced skill of its soldiers with swords.¹²⁷ It was by exploiting the Bakufu's disadvantages that the Satsuma-Choshuu troops (薩長群) were able to prevail. By cleverly flanking and ambushing the Bakufu troops, gaining Yodo (淀藩) support near Osaka (大阪) and then by gaining the support of the Tsu (津藩) soldiers in the retreat, the Bakufu forces were shattered by the Choshuu.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ It is interesting to note that the Shogun himself was from Mito, and yet was abandoned by his own Han.

Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu, 201-202.

¹²⁷ *Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 422.

¹²⁸ A detailed analysis of the Battle of Toba-Fushimi is available from pages 430-437 in *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu* and Book 2 of *Samurai Revolution* and Chapter 10 of *The Samurai A New History of the Warrior Elite*, Yamazaki's essay Sections 5 and 6.

It is important to remember that Toba-Fushimi, as terrible as it was, was a battle waged more for the purpose of cleaning-up than for any tangible reasons. The Emperor had, in actuality been restored to his former position of power since Oct 14 in the third year of Keio, Western year 1867, when Shogun Yoshinobu formally resigned his position.¹²⁹ Since his resignation, power was, in theory placed in the hands of the young Emperor Matsuhito, however, “in practice it was not the emperor...but those who spoke for him who actually ruled the country”.¹³⁰ Although Toba-Fushimi was a clean-up effort, it was also an assertion that the new political regime was the correct regime. Without Toba-Fushimi, that Bakufu may have been able to win back its old support and favour as the new regime became more corrupt. However, in slaughtering the Bakufu, such efforts were prevented. The further efforts to eliminate opposition, ending almost two years later, sealed the political fate of Japan and her Emperor.

¹²⁹ *Shinsengumi*, 157.

¹³⁰ *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan*, 4.

Appendix 5

Saitou Hajime and the Shinsengumi

The character Saitou Hajime (斉藤一) is very loosely based on a historical person of the same name. Both the *Kenshin* adaptation of Saitou and the actual Saitou were members of the nefarious Shinsengumi (新撰組) and both Saitous went on to roles in the post-restoration world under pseudonyms. In order for an understanding of the *Kenshin*-adapted Saitou to be understood I believe there must be a short explanation on who the Shinsengumi were, what they did and what their role was in Japan at the time.

The Shinsengumi were a military corps composed primarily of those of the common classes. That is to say, composed of farmers and tradesmen, not, as was traditionally a requirement for military participation, those of the bushi (武士) or Samurai (侍) class. Officially the Shinsengumi were a police force to protect the citizens, and the Shogun (将軍) himself from rounin (浪人)¹³¹ and usurpers. Unofficially their purpose was more sinister “to eliminate the rounin who would overthrow the shōgun’s government”¹³². To complete this mission their ranks included highly skilled swordsmen, all of whom were given the sanction to kill

¹³¹ Rounin are wandering Samurai. Originally the term was reserved for those of the Samurai class who did not serve a Lord, but, as time went on it became a term that encompassed all military personnel that either did not actively serve a Han or for the remnants of those who had lost a battle.

¹³² *Shinsengumi*, 23.

under the Japanese concept of *kirisute gomen* ¹³³ (切捨御免), regardless of the fact that for the most part the soldiers were not Samurai.¹³⁴

The creation of the Shinsengumi was primarily made necessary by the dissent caused when the Tokugawa Bakufu (徳川幕府) was forced by Commodore Perry to open to trade. Since it was Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康), the first Shogun of the Tokugawa line that had closed Japan, the opening of Japan by his descendants was seen as weak and disrespectful.¹³⁵ Such actions, naturally incited rage in those who were loyal to traditional Japan and allowed for dissident Han (藩) to finally begin moving against the Bakufu. The amount of civil unrest and the threat of powerful Hans that were either neutral toward or opposed to the Tokugawa necessitated military action.

Such action as was required, was, however, hindered by the dwindling of the Samurai. This most powerful of classes was slowly dying out. The growing frequency of peasant rebellions and the strength of the merchant class was pushing the Samurai out of existence. Additionally, the lack of war in the last two-hundred-odd years saw most of the Samurai quite unfit for military endeavours.¹³⁶ The lack of military strength available pushed many lords, and eventually the Bakufu itself to recruit peasants into the military. The Bakufu, for fear of becoming a foreign colony, ignored the urgings of Katsu Kaishu (勝海舟) that it call for foreign aid, and instead

¹³³ *Kirisute gomen* (切捨御免) is a right given to those of the Samurai class to cut down any of a lower class whom they believe has disrespected them. The right is to be exercised immediately following the offence and cannot be carried out farther into the future. The body is left as a reminder to show respect to those above one's self.

¹³⁴ *Shinsengumi*, 23-4.

¹³⁵ *Shinsengumi*, 27, Book 1, Part 1 of *Samurai Revolution*.

¹³⁶ *Shinsengumi*, 89.

made mostly unnecessary administrative reforms to the traditional system as it saw fit.¹³⁷ It was a recipe for disaster, but none could have foreseen on what scale.

Among the many disasters was the formation of the Shinsengumi. It was to be a special force, for a special purpose, but lack of funds and discipline turned it into a band of terror. Far from following orders, the Shinsengumi killed citizens and Samurai alike, and indulged in crime simply to incite their enemies into attacking. In the early stages it was absolutely uncontrollable. The first leader of the Shinsengumi even went so far as to declare loyalty to the Emperor himself rather than to the Bakufu.¹³⁸ After these events emerged what is often credited as being the Shinsengumi today, notably the characters and events that the media most often portray. These same characters are, in most incarnations, heavily romanticized, and from these characters can be pulled Hajime Saitou.

There is surprisingly little information on Saitou himself, most information on the Shinsengumi features the higher-ranking Kondou and Hijikata. However, it is known that Saitou was a young member of the corps, was in a commanding position and was a member of a retainer house of the Matsudaira (松平), itself a branch of the Tokugawa. As such he was an incredibly skilled swordsman and accustomed to taking orders. Additionally he was one of Kondou's original followers and despite being severely injured in several major battles, out-lived Kondou. He was just the sort that the Shinsengumi needed.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ *Shinsengumi*, 33.

¹³⁸ *Shinsengumi*, 38 The were two sepearte incidents; the first, elimination of the original head Kiyokawa, and his supporters after he declared loyalty to the Emperor (*Shinsemngumi*, 33-43). The second, the elimination od Serizawa Kamo, a man who almost singlehandedly created the ill-reputation of the Shinsengumi with his misbehaviour (*Shinsengumi*, 53-85), and the inspiration for Jin-e.

¹³⁹ *Shinsengumi*, 53.

The information on Saitou puts him at the attempted assassination of the merchant/politician Miura by the men of Sakamoto Ryouma (坂本龍馬). The assassination was a retaliation for the assassination of Ryouma himself, believed to have been ordered by Miura, who in reality had nothing to do with it.¹⁴⁰ He was wounded there, yet participated in battle with artillery units around Toba-Fushimi later. At Toba-Fushimi he was once again wounded.¹⁴¹ After Toba-Fushimi, the Shinsengumi continued their efforts, and Hijikata himself conceded that the Shinsengumi must now enter modern warfare on the heels of their enemies (they needed to acquire firearms and be trained to use them). As part of this the Shinsengumi began operating outside of its orders and permissions, only to be forced back into them and broken.¹⁴²

It can be assumed that Saitou followed Hijikata to the end, even after the execution of Kondou, since he was placed in command after Hijikata was incapacitated then handed the post back when required of him¹⁴³. However there is not much said of him after he stays behind in Aizu (会津藩), refusing to abandon his comrades.¹⁴⁴ It is not known (or at least not given by any sources I have found) if he participated in the final battle of the Boshin War at Goryoukaku (五稜郭)¹⁴⁵.

From what is known of the Shinsengumi and their actions, many points of Saitou's personality, as portrayed in the *Kenshin* story can be found. First there is his obvious skill with the sword, just as the real Saitou possessed. Next there is his

¹⁴⁰ *Shinsengumi*, 162-166; *Samurai Revolution*, 344 on.

¹⁴¹ *Shinsengumi*, 176.

¹⁴² *Shinsengumi*, 179 on; *Samurai Revolution*, 497-501.

¹⁴³ *Shinsengumi*, 199.

¹⁴⁴ *Shinsengumi*, 200.

¹⁴⁵ The Battle of Goryoukaku is portrayed beautifully, although fancifully in the anime *Bakumatsu Kikansetsu Irohanihoheto*.

loyalty. Whereas the real Saitou was loyal to his cause and his comrades, the Saitou portrayed in *Kenshin* has a more personal loyalty. He is portrayed as one loyal to his own cause; in the case of the *Kenshin* story, this would be what he perceives as justice. Saitou, having suffered defeat in his previous alignment, decides to be loyal to himself, and his personal cause. He does not like Kenshin, but since what Kenshin is doing does not conflict with his loyalty or mission, he is not necessarily portrayed as a villain, but certainly he is an antagonist of sorts. His unyielding loyalty complements well his sarcastic taunting of Kenshin.

In many ways, Kenshin and Saitou are the same, but they had different allegiances, and Saitou had the misfortune of being on the losing side. This loss, makes him bitter toward Kenshin, toward this man, who in circumstances different than the ones they have lived through, may have been his comrade. Other than this rivalry, however, there is little need for Saitou's character to even exist in the *Kenshin* media. The only other need for Saitou's character to exist would be in keeping the historical context ever present, and serving as a reminder of the past. In this sense Saitou's existence, especially as a former Shinsengumi is very effective.

Appendix 6

Keigo, Honorifics and Japanese Manners

In Japanese, there are different levels of speech. However, generally speaking there is only Keigo (敬語) formal speech, of which there are three levels, and informal speech. The speech that one speaks in the Japanese system is determined by one's social position relative to the person to whom one is speaking, or one's intention. For example, when talking to someone above one's self in position, such as an elder, one's boss, or even a senpai (先輩, one with more experience than one's self), one will use Keigo. The most basic Keigo is teineigo (丁寧語), characterized by simply keeping the full conjugational endings on verbs and using the word です (desu) when appropriate. This form is generally used in classrooms or with strangers, as most people will use either casual speech among friends and equals, or more respectful speech with those above them.

There are two higher levels of Keigo, and in order to look at the film *Rurouni Kenshin*, one must have an introduction to these levels. The first level is Sonkeigo (尊敬語), respectful language. Sonkeigo is the most useful level of Keigo, and the one that will be heard the most. It is used toward superiors and by those employed in the service industry. It can also be used safely in situations where one does not know which level of speech to use, the person with whom the interaction is with will generally correct the speaker if correction is needed. This form of Keigo is often

introduced as Honorific Verbs,¹⁴⁶ which are used to describe the actions of others in a respectful manner. This seems odd to non-Japanese speakers, but in a Japanese context makes perfect sense, and when speaking or listening to Japanese becomes clear.

The final level of Keigo is Kenjougo (謙譲語), or Humble Speech.¹⁴⁷ This speech is rarely used today, however, in *RuroKen*, it is a characteristic of Kenshin's speech pattern. As the counterpart of Sonkeigo, Kenjougo is a type of speech in which one refers to one's own actions in a humble manner. Oddly, this shows a very large amount of respect to the person with whom one is talking. So, every time Kenshin ends a sentence in でござる (de gozaru) he is affirming the action that he has already talked of and showing an extra bit of respect to the person to whom he is speaking. Although this manner of speaking is impractical and would be considered weird if done in real-life, it is perfectly acceptable in the world Kenshin lives in.

Moving away from Keigo, I would like to quickly outline Japanese honorifics. Honorifics are never used in reference to one's self, only when referring to others. Honorifics are a greatly contested issue in Japanese translation, even among people who simply watch the media and speak little or no Japanese themselves. There really are no equivalents in English to the Japanese honorifics, and each one is an important indicator of the relationship between the speakers. As such, I leave them in my translations, unless there is a very specific reason not to.¹⁴⁸ Honorifics are attached to someone's name to show respect for them, and to indicate to others

¹⁴⁶ *Genki II*, Lesson 19.

¹⁴⁷ *Genki II*, Lesson 20.

¹⁴⁸ See Kenshin's line "Kaoru-dono" being rendered as simply "Kaoru".

what your relationship to that someone is. The most common honorific is probably –san. –San is a term of general respect and can be used with any random person, and also with those who are clearly above one’s self in rank. For example, as an employee talking to Company President Yamada, one would have to consider what exactly to call Yamada. Naturally, simply 部長 (Buchou) would suffice but 山田部長 (Yamada Buchou) would be better. However, if one also had rank in the company, one could say the slightly unnatural, yet not incorrect 部長さん (Buchou-san). However, unless one was talking passively about Yamada, one would never say simply 山田さん (Yamada-san), as the informality of leaving out Yamada’s title would be rude. In fact, even in such a situation, 山田部長 (Yamada Buchou) would be the preferred term of address, but not necessary. The only form of address that would be wholly unacceptable would be 山田部長さん (Yamada Buchou-san), as it is stiff, unnatural and really doesn’t make much sense, it would be like saying “Mr/Ms/Mrs Company President Yamada ” and then throwing on a bit more respect. This would seem excessive and probably quite funny to native Japanese speakers. It would in fact seem like one was trying entirely too hard to curry favour.

List of Honorifics

さん -San a general honorific, safe for almost any situation, roughly but not equivalent to the English Mr/Ms/Mrs.

ちゃん、チャン -Chan usually used for female children or teens. It is generally a term of endearment, occasionally it is used with males to make cutesy nicknames. It is used almost exclusively toward those younger than one's self and/or to whom one is close.

くん、クン -Kun usually used for male children or teens. It is generally a term of endearment, but can also be used to make fun of someone, as a diminutive, or to make a nickname. It is used almost exclusively toward those younger than one's self and/or to whom one is close.

どの -Dono a term of respect derived from the word 殿(tono), a title for Feudal Lords. In modern use it is generally used to show respect towards women in a way more meaningful than -san. The use of -dono is restricted almost entirely to popular media.

さま、様 -Sama a very respectful honorific, used almost exclusively when talking to or of Kami or people of great power, such as the Emperor. In pop culture it is often found tacked onto the shortening of a celebrity's name as a sign of appreciation and endearment from the celebrity's fans. Occasionally is used to refer to one's self in an extremely arrogant manner.

Although, not necessarily honorifics, senpai (先輩) and kouhai (後輩) are Japanese terms that should be understood. They are terms that are equivalent to the English terms senior and junior, respectively. Unlike in English, however, they are used in a variety of situations. Most commonly in school, where students refer to each other's class years using the terms, and also to their ranks relative to each other in clubs and activities. So, one may talk to one's senpai between classes and refer to them as senpai, however, if one was in a club with said senpai, and had been in the club longer, or had more experience, within the context of the club one's senpai would become one's kouhai. These titles can also be used in a business environment, but generally job titles are used instead.

Honorifics can also be attached to nouns when using Keigo. Although, like verbs, some have special forms or words that are used based on historical precedent, generally the prefixes お(o-) ご (go-) or み (mi-) (all are the kanji 御) are attached. Other honorifics exist, but they are, for the most part very specific and therefore will not be introduced.

Appendix 7


Character Profiles


Bannon recommends analyzing and understanding the characters of a film before attempting to translate for them.¹⁴⁹ I agree as I find it much easier to translate if the characters themselves are understood. Since the spirit of a subtitle is not simply to purvey meaning, but to show the emotion and the personalities of the characters uttering what is said, it is essential to understand the characters. The easiest, and possibly the best way to understand a character is by creating a profile. In the case of the *Kenshin* media, the profiles were easy to come by from the previous incarnations of the franchise. However, some essential details were changed to make them fit into the film. In the spirit of this, I would like here to present charts for the characters that show up in the scenes I translated, even though I did do profiles for all major characters.


For a character profile, I have a basic table format that I like to use, the format provides all necessary information, and a visual. This format allows for all of the traits that may influence the character's thoughts, actions and speech patterns to be seen at glance:

Picture	Name(s)
Age, sex:	
Occupation:	
Skills/traits:	
Background information:	


¹⁴⁹ *The Elements of Subtitles*, 13, 20.


	<p>Himura Kenshin 緋村検心 Hitokiri Battousai 人斬り抜刀斎</p>
<p>Age, sex:</p>	<p>28, male</p>
<p>Occupation:</p>	<p>Wanderer, formerly assassin</p>
<p>Skills/traits:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current master of Hiten Misturugi Ryuu 飛天御剣流, ○ Skilled with a sakabatou 逆刃刀 ○ Made a vow refusing to kill ever again ○ Follows his sense of justice ○ Seeks forgiveness for his crimes ○ Ignores past rivalries when possible ○ Wants to embrace Kaoru's philosophy of 人を生かす剣 ○ Uses overly formal speech どの、でござる
<p>Background information:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formerly an assassin for Choushuu during the Meiji Restoration ○ Fought the Shinsengumi at Toba-Fushimi, rivalry with Saitou Hajime ○ Recruited as a child into the service of the Ishin Shishi 維新志士 ○ Trauma from the horrible things he has done drives him to seek a better life and help others

	<p>Kamiya Kaoru 神谷薫</p>
<p>Age, sex:</p>	<p>17, female</p>
<p>Occupation:</p>	<p>Assistant Instructor of the Kamiya Dojo</p>
<p>Skills/traits:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follows her father's philosophy of 人を生かす剣 within the 活人剣 school of thought ○ Harbours resentment toward Jin-e for slandering her family's school and undermining its philosophy ○ Is a skilled swordsman, practicing Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu 神谷活心流, although being a woman often her skill is doubted ○ Open and caring, naïve ○ Quite courageous when standing up for her beliefs ○ Terrible at cooking, and ridiculed for it
<p>Background information:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Father was killed, leaving her to run the school alone ○ Her attempts at rebuilding a student base were thwarted when the fake Hitokiri went about using the school's name while murdering ○ Yahiko is dojo's only student/lodger ○ Financial struggle because she is alone and has little or no income

	<p>Sagara Sanosuke 相楽差之助 Fight Merchant Zanza Higashidani Sanosuke 東谷差之助¹⁵⁰</p>
Age, sex:	19, male
Occupation:	Street fighter, bum
Skills/traits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Great at brawling and fights for fun ○ Hires himself out in search of a good fight ○ Rash, rude, but loyal ○ Uses slang language a lot ○ Wears 悪 on his back as a reminder of his past and his goals (not introduced in the film) ○ Skilled user of the zanbatou 斬馬刀
Background information:	<p>His past is not introduced in the film, but a look at previous media provides that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ He was a member of the Sekihoutai Army 赤報隊 ○ Sagara Souzou was his “brother” and protected him from death when the Sekihoutai were executed as scapegoats ○ For Kenshin’s role as a Hitokiri and supporter of the Ishin Shishi, he wishes to defeat him for Souzou ○ When Kenshin defeats him, he realizes that he doesn’t need to live for revenge and decides to defend the new era as Souzou would’ve wanted

¹⁵⁰ Sanosuke has several names, including both the family names Higashidani and Sagara. This is actually common practice in Japan as people’s names would often change with their status or profession or actual location.

	<p>Saitou Hajime 齊藤一 Fujita Gorou 藤田五郎</p>
<p>Age, sex:</p>	<p>33, male</p>
<p>Occupation:</p>	<p>Police officer, formerly Captain of the Shinsengumi 新撰組 Third Unit</p>
<p>Skills/traits:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skilled at ittou ryuu 一刀流 ○ Carries on with seeking the justice he has always fought for and to destroy corruption at its roots ○ Won't let his rivalry with Kenshin die
<p>Background information:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fought for the Shinsengumi on the losing side of the Restoration Movement ○ Traded sides after the war and through his actions earned a place in the new world ○ Working under Yamagata to solve the Hitokiri case concerning Jin-e ○ Constantly seeks to perpetuate his rivalry with Kenshin

	<p>Udo Jin-e 鵜堂刃衛 Kurogasa 黒笠</p>
<p>Age, sex:</p>	<p>34, male</p>
<p>Occupation:</p>	<p>Thug/Hitokiri imposter, formerly a soldier/ Shinsegumi</p>
<p>Skills/traits:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uses the Nikaidou Heihou Style 二階堂兵法 ○ Master of Shin-no-ippo 心の一方 ○ No sense of loyalty, just wishes to kill ○ Believes that swords reach their potential only through bringing death
<p>Background information:</p>	<p>In the film, he serves as a thug under Kanryuu, in the manga and anime, he is an independent assassin, and a former member of the Shinsengumi, this back-story is not given in the film</p> <p>In fact, in the film, all that is given for his back-story is that he was at Toba-Fushimi and survived, his affiliation was not given, nor were his ideals shown</p>

Appendix 8

Anime Names

Anime Names are the next topic I would like to discuss, and they are an important topic in *Kenshin*. In general, Anime Names tell something about the thing they name; it can be something as simple as naming a character after a historic person or thing, or it can be more complicated such as where the kanji of the name give the personality traits of the person with the name, or provide an origin story for a style of fighting. Since English uses Roman letters rather than a pictographic system, this can be confusing at first, but it is quite fun to try to figure out once one understands how it works. In light of this, I will here take the opportunity to discuss some of the Anime Names in *Rurouni Kenshin*.

るろうに剣心 (Rurouni Kenshin) Rurouni is an amalgamation of the words 浪人 (rounin), meaning “wanderer” or “wandering Samurai” and 流浪 (rurou), meaning “vagrancy” or “wandering”. 剣心 (Kenshin) is created with the characters for “sword” 剣 (ken, tsurugi) and “heart” or “soul” 心 (shin, kokoro). Kenshin’s last name is 緋村, written with the characters 緋 (hi) meaning “scarlet” or “blood” and 村 (mura), meaning “village”. So Kenshin’s name would be read as “scarlet/bloody village sword heart”. This is an Anime Name that describes the attributes of the character.

拔刀齋 (Battousai) is made from the characters 拔 (me, ba) meaning “without”, 刀 (tou, katana) meaning “blade” or “katana”, and 齋 (sei, e) meaning “equal”, “the same”. Therefore, it can be read most directly as “blade without equal”. So, combined with the actual term 人斬り (Hitokiri), “manslayer” (literally “people cutter”), it can be read as “manslayer of unequal skill with a blade”.

逆刃刀 (sakabatou), made from the characters 逆(saka), “reverse”, 刃 (ha, ba), “edge of a knife or sword” and 刀(tou, katana), “blade” or “katana”, Literally the “reverse edge blade”, it is Kenshin’s weapon. Essentially it is a katana with the outer edge sharpened, rather than the inner edge, and it symbolises Kenshin’s vow and his journey.

飛天御劍流 (Hiten Mitsurugi Ryuu), this is Kenshin’s sword school, as indicated by the character 流 (ryuu) meaning “style”. The school itself is literally called “beautiful sword of the heavenly dragon style”, or “school of the august blade of the heavenly dragon”. Made of the characters 飛 (hi, tobu), “to fly”, 天 (ten) “heaven”, which together can be read “heavenly dragon”; 御 (o, go, kyo, mi), an honorific for nouns, “august”, “beautiful”, and 劍 (ken, tsurugi) “sword”, “blade”. In addition to the styles themselves, many of the names of individual moves are also Anime Names.

神谷薫 (Kamiya Kaoru) Kaoru's name may or may not be an Anime Name, as Kamiya is an actual Japanese family name and Kaori (different reading for the same character) is a common name for Japanese girls. However, it is still interesting to know what the characters mean. 神谷 is the characters for kami (a Japanese concept, similar to a diety), and "valley", 薫 means "fragrant" or "sweet", so her name can be literally read as "fragrant valley of the gods"

神谷活心流 (Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu), the sword school founded and run by Kaoru's father, naturally it bears the family's name. Since it is already known that the family name means "valley of the gods", the rest of the name remains. 活 (katsu) means "living", or "to resuscitate", 心 (shin, kokoro) means "heart" or "soul", just as in Kenshin's name. 流 (ryuu) refers only to a style or school of martial arts. So put it all together it means "valley of the gods living soul style", or "valley of the gods soul resuscitating style".

相樂差之助(Sagara Sanosuke), is made from the real family name Sagara and a name that describes the character. 差 (sa), "difference", 之 (no) an indicative particle and 助 (suke, sho) "to help" or "assist". Although it is not as straight forward as Kenshin's name, or others featured in the Kenshin Media, it essentially says that he is Kenshin's loyal partner. As long as they continue to share a philosophy, he will continue to help Kenshin in this new era.

斬馬刀 (zanbatou), this weapon, although fabled to have actually existed, is another Anime Name. Made from the characters 斬 (zan) “decapitation” 馬 (uma, ba) “horse” and 刀 (tou, katana) “blade” or “katana”, it is quite literally “blade that decapitates horses”. It is an oddly fitting weapon for Sano, considering his brash personality.

鵜堂刃衛 (Udo Jin-e), like with Kaoru I am not sure whether Jin-e’s name is actually an Anime Name or not. It is not a real name, but it does seem somewhat nonsensical when the characters are examined. 鵜 (u) is a Japanese cormorant, which are sometimes trained to help fishermen, 堂 (dou) is a “temple” or “shrine”, so his family name would be “cormorant temple”, which I do not think has any significance in Japanese culture, but maybe it means something in relation to Serizawa Kamo, the man on whom Jin-e is based. Jin-e’s given name, however, makes a bit more sense. 刃 (ha, yaiba), meaning “blade” or “edge of a sword” and 衛 (e) “soldier”, he is “soldier of the blade”, a fitting name and quite clever on Watsuki’s part.

二階堂兵法 (nikaido heihou), Jin-e’s fighting style, made from the characters 二階 (nikkai) “second story”, “second rank”, 堂 (dou) “shrine” or “temple”, and 兵法 (heihou) “strategy”, “tactics”, can be read roughly as “strategy of the second temple”.

Like most anime, manga and their spin-off media, the *Kenshin* franchise offers an opportunity for a deeper understanding of Japanese language and culture. Whether the opportunity is simply in the oft-encountered Anime Names, or in the actual grammatical structures and cultural norms presented in the media, there is

always the chance of learning something new. In learning something new, there can be had a deeper understanding of Japanese culture in general with the special bonus of the opportunity to improve one's language and, in extension, translation skills.

Appendix 9

Assorted Roughs

In this final section, I would like to provide some of the rough work that I did so that the process of translation can be better seen. I will provide one of the first edits of the scenes for comparison with the final. Notice there are many transcription mistakes, so it should be noted that working from a script is much, much easier and less time consuming, although it would still need to be checked against what is actually said in the film.

In the first scene, it was hard to understand what Saitou says as he kind of slurs his words together. Additionally, I did not decide to add in the end part with Jine or the opening text of the film until much later in the process. The lighter text is sensei's edits.

0.57-5.37

01.14 テクスト：一八六八年一月 京都・鳥羽伏見の山中
senhappyakurokujuuhachinen ichigatsu Kyoto Toba-Fushimi no yama naka

01.47 男の声：(射た->いた) ぞー！ (Ita->ita) zo

01.48 新撰組だ！ Shinsengumi da

01.59 斉藤：人斬り抜刀斎 Hitokiri Battousai

02.03 どこだ？ Doko da

02.05 どこにいる？ Doko ni iru

02.18 男の声：新撰組三部隊長斉藤一！ Shinsengumi san ban taichou Saitou Hajime

02.21 隊長！ Taichou

02.48 斉藤：（尚武->勝負）だ、抜刀斉 （Shoubu->shoubu) da, Battousai

03.47 男の声：勝ったぞ Katta zo

03.48 錦の御旗じゃ Nishiki no mihata jya

04.00 男の声：（悟り->XX 軍； supposed to be a name of the winner group, but it is not clear）の勝利じゃ （Satori-> XX gun) no shouri jya

04.11 剣心：（人->来た）か (hito->kita) ka

04.14 新しい時代が Atarashii jidai ga

04.22 （やった->やっど）(yatta->yatto)

04.32 斉藤：非村抜刀斉 Himura Battousai

04.47 （俺->これ）で終わりだと（思んだ->思うな）よ （ore->kore) de owarida to (omonda->omonna) yo

04.50 （はとやろうがかろうどの->たとえ世の中は変わろうとも） （Hato yarou ga kaurodono no-> tatoe yo no naka wa kawarou tomo)

04.53 （変に往き->剣に生き）、(hen ni iki->ken ni iki)

04.56 （変->剣）に死ぬ（意外->以外）俺たちに道はない （hen-ken) ni shinu (igai->igai) oretachi ni michiwanai

In the second scene, what Jin-e says was particularly hard to make out. Between his poor enunciation and the odd word choices he sometimes makes, he is a difficult character to translate for. As can be seen, some of the things I heard were not even close to what he actually says. Kaoru, on the other hand was very easy to transcribe and to translate for.

24.36-26.54

24.38 薫：猫ちゃんだ Neko chan da

24.43 猫一、ニャン Neko, nyan

25.06 ちょっと Chotto

25.19 待ちなさい！ Machinasai

25.29 お前が抜刀齋か Omae ga Battousai ka

25.34 なんの目的で、Nan no mokuteki de

25.36 神谷活心流の名を語って Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu no na wo katatte

25.39 悪事を働くか akuji wo hataraku

25.51 お前のような奴がいるから父は. . . Omae no you na yatsu ga iru kara chichi wa

25.55 父が残した Chichi ga nagoshita

25.56 神谷活心流は kamiy Kasshin Ryuu wa

26.04 刃衛：お前の父親（は→が）どうしたと omae no chichioya (wa->ga) doushita to

26.07 薫：人を生かす剣を説いていた hito wo seikasu ken wo toiteita

26.11 切るのではない kuru no dewanai

26.13 （殺そののではない->殺すのでもない）(koroso no dewanai->korosu no demonai)

26.15 人を、人を生かす（け→剣）を Hito wo, hito wo seikasu (ke->ken) wo

26.23 刃衛：木刀でしかも女の身で俺に立ち向かうとは。Bokutou de shikamo onna no mi de ore ni tachimukau to wa

26.26 薫：（止まれ->だまれ）！（tomare->damare)

26.31 刃衛：こんな棒切れで何ができる Konna boukire de nani ga dekiru

26.39 血を（挙げて->浴びて）（ことかた->この刀）を生きる物 Chi wo (agete->abite) (kotokata->kono katana) wo ikirumono

26.46 あの世で悟れ ano yo de satore

In the third scene I actually had very little trouble hearing what was said. But in choosing the correct kanji I was quite unskilled.

41.37-44.18

色々な声

43.11 齊藤：十字（傷ず->傷）の男 Juu ji (kizu->kizu) no otoko

43.18 矢張りお前が Yahari omae ga

43.22 （居さしぶり->久しぶり）だな (isashiburi->hisashiburi) da na

This was a typo, not a misheard word

43.25 人斬り抜刀斎 Hitokir Battousai

43.28 鳥羽伏見の戦い以来、Toba-Fushimi no tatakai irai

43.32 もう十年になるから mou juu nen ni naru kara

43.38 （放しあげる→話がある）．．． (hanashi ageru->hanashi ga aru)

I chose the wrong kanji for hanashi

43.43 （であろう->出ろ) (dearou->dero)

44.15 左之助：人斬り抜刀斎だろう。Hitokiri battousai darou

The final scene was an arduous affair. Not only was it quite long, the background sound combined with Jin-e's lack of enunciation and the amount of words that are not really words (the fighting styles and moves) made it quite a challenge. Once again I had trouble choosing the correct kanji, and with the syllables in some words.

1.51.44-2.04.15

1.52.06 刃衛：(目を覚めて->目が覚めた) ようだな (me wo samete->me wo sameta) you da na

1.52.16 まあ、そう (にわむら->にらむな) Ma, sou (niwamura->noramuna)

1.52.20 お前を人質にすれば抜刀斎は怒る Omae wo hitojichi ni sureba Battousai wa okoru

1.52.24 怒りを奴を往年の人斬りに (たちもだらせる->立ち戻らせる) Ikari wo yatsu wo onen no Hitokiri ni (tachimotaraseru->tachimodoraseru)

1.52.39 そろそろ (おでんは知られるだ->おでましのようだ) Sorosoro (odenwa shirareruda->odemashi no you da)

1.52.54 薫：剣心 Kenshin

1.53.11 刃衛：怒ってるな okotteruna

1.53.13 剣心：薫どのを巻き込んだ貴様と Kaoru-dono wo makikonda kisama to

1.53.19 それを阻止 (できなつた->できなかつた) 俺自身にな sore wo soshi (dekinatta->dekinakatta)

1.53.24 薫：剣心 Kenshin

1.53.33 刃衛：(悲壮->いいぞ、) 人斬り抜刀斎 (hisou->ii zo,) (Hitokiri) Battousai

1.53.36 剣心：(怒ろ->怒れ、) 怒れ！ (okoro->okore) okore

1.53.40 薫どのが！ Kaoru-dono

1.54.07 刃衛：そんな (心->刀) で俺 (を->が) 殺せるか Sonna (kokoro->tou) de ore (wo->ga) koroseru ka

1.54.44 薫：剣心！ Kenshin

1.54.47 刃衛：(彼奴はと思うでよめなんだ->かいしゃ刀まで読めなんだか； It is not clear, but かいしゃ刀 sounds like 刃衛's speciality. 読めなんだか means "you couldn't read it") (aitsu wa to omoude yome nande->kaishatou made yomenandaka)

よめ=嫁 or 夜目？ I'm not sure if he's trying to make a point or a sarcastic remark yome=yome (wife) or yome (darkness)

1.55.18 薫：剣心! Kenshin

1.55.25 刃衛：まだだな～ Mada da na

1.55.31 まだお前は昔の抜刀齋には遠く及ばない mada omae wa mikashi no Battousai ni wa touku oyobanai

1.55.49 剣心：薫どの! Kaoru-dono

1.55.50 刃衛：（心の一步->真の一法? ; It is not clear, but a kind of technique 刃衛 has. You might find out if you read the comics in Japanese.）を（強めて->強めに）かけた、(shin noippou ->shin or shin no ippou) wo (tsuyomete->tsuyome ni)

1.55.53 肺まで麻痺する程度にな hai made mahisuru teidou ni naru

1.56.01 （以て->持って）せいぜい二分 (motte->motte) seizei nifun

1.56.10 剣心：刃衛 Jin-e

1.56.12 刃衛：時間がないぞ Jikan ga nai zo

1.56.14 （言いたい->言いたい）事は剣で言え (ittai->iitai) koto wa ken de ie

1.56.24 流石だな Sasuga da na

1.56.27 剣心：命がほしければ, inochi ga hoshikereba

1.56.30 薫どのに掛けた（心の一步→真の一法?）を解け Kaoru-dono ni kakete (shin noippou->shin no ippou) wo toke

1.56.33 刃衛：俺にはもう（解けに->解けん）ore ni wa mou (toke ni->token)

1.56.37 方法は二つに一つ自力で解くか Houhou wa futatsu ni hitotsu jiriki de toku ka

1.56.42 術者を殺して Jutsusha wo koreshite

1.56.46 剣気をたちきるか Kenki wo tachikiru ka

1.56.53 剣心：ならば! Naraba

1.57.46 刃衛：（尚武->勝負）だ (shoubu->shoubu) da

1.57.48 緋村抜刀齋 Himura Battousai

1.58.07 剣心：遊び終わりだ Asobi owari da

1.58.16 殺して（殺る->やる）から掛かってこい Koroshite (yaru->yaru) kara kakattekoi

1.59.27 刃衛：これが抜刀術の（かまえるか->かまえか）な Kore ga Battousai no (kamaeru->kamae ka)

1.59.56 剣心：飛天御剣流抜刀術 Hiten Mitsurugi Ryuu Battou jutsu

1.59.59 そう龍閃（そうりゅうせん?） Souryuusen (souryuusen)

- 2.00.04 (非人を間説→肘の関節) を砕き筋をたった (hinin wo masetsu->hiji no kansetsu)
- 2.00.07 これでお前の剣の命は終わった Kore de omae no inochi wa owatta
- 2.00.14 そして Soshite
- 2.00.18 これで息の根も Kore de iki no ne mo
- 2.00.29 薫どのを守るため Kaoru-dono wo mamoru tame ni
- 2.00.34 俺は今一度人斬りに戻る ore wa ima ichidou Hitokiri modoru
- 2.00.40 刃衛：殺せ Korose
- 2.00.42 剣心：死ぬ Shine
- 2.00.44 薫：剣心、(止めって->やめて) ! Kenshin, (yamette->yamete)
- 2.00.59 刃衛：解きやがった (or 時やがった? Delete) tokiyagatta (toki ya gatta)
- 2.01.02 剣心：薫どの Kaoru-dono
- 2.01.06 薫：人斬りに戻らないで Hitokiri no modoranaide
- 2.01.13 だめ、殺したら Dame, koroshitara
- 2.01.20 (殺して->殺しちゃ) だめ (koroshita->koroshichya) dame
- 2.01.23 剣心 Kenshin
- 2.01.29 あなたが Anata ga
- 2.01.34 殺して (しまた->しまった) 人のために Koroshite (shimata->shimatta) hito no tame ni
- 2.01.41 あなたが、Anata ga,
- 2.01.47 今まで、Ima made
- 2.01.50 助けた人のために Tasuketa hto no tame ni
- 2.01.57 人を切らなくても Hito wo kiranakutemo
- 2.02.03 だれ (が->かを) 助ける事 (か->が) できる Dare (ga->ka wo) tasukeru koto (ka->ga)
- 2.02.09 それが、Sore ga
- 2.02.14 あなたが、Anata ga
- 2.02.19 剣心が目指した Kenshin ga meszashita
- 2.02.23 新しい世の中 (ですよ->でしょ) Atarashii yo no naka (desu yo->desho)
- 2.02.41 剣心：薫どの Kaoru-dono
- 2.02.48 刃衛：決着を付けるぞ～ kechakku wo tsukeru zo
- 2.02.53 抜刀齋 Battousai
- 2.02.59 剣心：もう (寄せ->よせ) Mou (yose->yose)

2.03.02 左手しか使えぬ (使え同じの->おぬしに) 勝気 (を->は) ござらん
Hidari te shika tsukenu (onna ji no->oneshi ni) kachiki (wo->wa) gozaran

This sentence was transcribed wrong at this time, and both Sensei and myself were aware, however it took a lot of relistening to finally get what was actually said here

2.03.09 刃衛：終わっちゃいねえよ Owaccha ine yo

2.03.22 お前の本性は人斬りよ～ Omae no honsei wa hitokiri yo

2.03.25 同じ人斬りがいったんだはあらまし～ね Onnaji hitokiri ga ittenda waaramashi ne

2.03.31 (祖先->所詮) 人斬りは人斬り (へ->Delete) (sosen->shosen) Hitokiri wa Hitokiri (e)

2.03.36 お前が (いつも->いつまで) (であるの同じなぞとござい言われるか->「ぬうのおり (It is not clear, supposed to be “new world” or “no killing” etc.)」などとはざいていられるか) (itsumo->itsumade) (de aru no onnaji nazo to dazai itterareru ka->”nuunoori”) nado to hozaiteirareruka)

2.03.41 地獄の淵で (見って->見て) てやろう Jigoku no fushi de (mitte->mite) te yarou

These last few lines of Jin-e's took a very long time to figure out. In fact these lines probably took as much time as the rest of the transcription combined. Even at this point the lines are still wrong.

Next is an edit for translation rather than transcription. This is just one of many scripts, with notes included. I hope that just seeing these small glimpses at the process will bring an understanding and appreciation to others concerning the work and the art that is subtitling and translation.

*the literal translation is so called because it is the closest to what is actually being said while still meaning something in English. The brackets are clarifications and the commas or slashes are separating alternate, but equally correct translations.

Scene 1•剣心のシーン•鳥羽伏見の戦い、最後の日•慶応時代

Scene 1 - Kenshin's scene - The final day of the Battle of Toba Fushimi, Keiou Era

character	line	*Literal translation	Natural translation
text	一八六八年一月 京都•鳥羽 伏見の山中	January 1868 Kyoto, in the Toba Fushimi mountains	Jan 1868, Toba Fushimi, near Kyoto
男の声	いたぞ！	Shoot! Actually, the intonation of the word, identifies it as the verb 居る to exist, not the verb いる to shoot, or the verb 入る to enter. I missed this intonation, until it was pointed out, but now I think that maybe the natural translation (right) should change.	Fire!
	新撰組だ！	(It's the) shinsengumi!	Shinsengumi!
NOTE: The subtitles for these lines would be inverted to signal that the shinsengumi were entering the battle and the order was to shoot at them.			
斉藤	人斬り抜刀斎	Man-cutter/manslayer of unequal skill, Hitokiri Battousai	Hitokiri Battousai
	どこだ？	Where (are you)?	Where are you?
	どこにいる？	Where (do you) exist?	Where are you!
NOTE: The literal translation of Kenshin's title sounds odd in English and takes up a lot of space that could go to better use.			

<p>Rather than translating it, the subtitle should follow the precedent set in the previous media's translations of either not translating the line, or of translating it as "Manslayer Battousai". I have decided to translate hitokiri to manslayer only in the cases where it is used abstractly; in cases where it is used to address Kenshin, I shall leave it as Hitokiri Battousai. Additionally, the two "Where are you?" lines could be combined into one subtitle, or they could be split into two subtitles as above to show Saitou's exasperation.</p>			
男の声	新撰組三番隊長斉藤一！	(It's the) Shinsengumi third unit captain Saitou Hajime! Sensei, pointed out that many people will not know who Saitou is, or the internal organization of the Sinsengumi, so if I do not leave in the fact that he was a unit captain, people may think he was in charge of the whole Shinsengumi, which, of course, he was not	Shinsengumi Captain Saitou Hajime!
	隊長！	Captain!	Strike him down!
<p>NOTE: The line has been translated as strike him down to reflect the action seen on screen rather than what is actually being said.</p>			
斉藤	勝負だ、抜刀斉	(It's a) game, Battousai	So you want to play, Battousai/ Is this a game to you, Battousai?
男の声	勝ったぞ～！	(We have) won!/Victory!	Victory!
	錦の御旗じゃ	(The) brocade banner The use of じゃ as a verb, rather than 居る indicates simply a statement that there is an imperial banner, not that it is	Raise the Imperial banner! I feel however, that in English it will make more sense to have the title read to raise the banner, rather than simply

		being raise. Since it is simply being pointed out, it is connected to the previous line and would read quite literally as “We have won, there is the Imperial banner” or “The Imperial banner (signifies that), we have won”	state that there is a banner
	。。。軍の勝利じゃ (さっちょう) 薩長	...army's victory Satsuma Choushuu alliance	Victory to the Choushuu Satsuma Alliance!
NOTE: It took me a long time to figure out that he was saying 薩長, even though I knew about what battle it was and who was participating, it never occurred to me that he would say that until you pointed out that they were saying the name of the victors. Even at that point I slowed the audio down to about a third of the speed and had to listen to it many times over before I stopped hearing words that would not fit in the context, or words that were words at all. I am still not completely sure that the final syllable is 軍 as you heard and not 部, but I think it makes sense as 運, because the more I listen now, the more I actually can hear him enunciate and say 薩長, which is who won in actuality and in the comics, anime, OVAs, and now in the film. Since he does say 薩長, I think it is safe to say that the logical 運 is the last bit.			
剣心	来たか?	(something) has come/ (something) has been caused	Have we/ we have brought about
	新しい時代が	(A) new age (has been)	A new age
	やっと	Finally	Finally
NOTE: these titles would be rendered “have we finally... brought about... a new age?”			
斉藤	非村抜刀斎	Manslayer Himura	Himura Battousai
	これで終わりだと思うなよ	(you) think (right here/this thing here) is over What Saitou says here is simply that it's not over, the verb 思 う to think threw me off, and	Do you really believe it's over?

		I read it in the very Anglicized way above. However, what he really says, is that it is not over, and Kenshin should not think that it is	
	たとえ世の中は変わろうとも	Even if the world has changed	Even if the world has changed
	剣に生き	(We) live by the sword	We have lived by the sword
	剣に死ぬ 以外俺たちに道はない	(We) die by the sword (There is) no other path (for us)	and we must die by it For us there is no other way

Scene 2・薫のシーン・橋で会う・明治時代

Scene 2 – Kaoru’s scene – Meeting on the bridge – Meiji Era

character	line	*Literal Translation	Natural translation
薫	猫ちゃんだ	(It’s a) kitty	Here kitty,
	猫～、ニャン	Kitty, meow	meow
	ちょっと	Just a minute	Hey!
	待ちなさい！	(I order you to) wait!	Wait!
	お前が抜刀齋か	(Are) you Battousai	Aren’t you Battousai?

	なんの目的で、	For what purpose	Why have you done
	神谷活心流の名を語って	In the name of Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu	In the name of Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu
	悪事を働くか	(have you done) evil deeds	Such evil

NOTE: the lines after “Aren’t you Battousai” would be rendered more like (in three lines), “In the name of Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu, I ask you, why have you done such evil?” In the comics and anime, and I think, here too, Jin-e is going around pretending to be Battousai and saying that he is of the Kamiya school. He is not of the Kamiya school and Kaoru, having heard that he is doing unspeakable things while posing as a student of her father’s school attempts here to confront him and find the reason behind this behaviour. Unfortunately for her, Jin-e is bloodthirsty and quite insane and will have none of this behaviour. However she attempts to defend herself and her school. So in Japanese what she says is more accusatory and direct, but if it was phrased that way in English it would sound unnatural. Therefore, I decided to have her lines phrased more like a question that hints at the situation, but also allows for a bit of an explanation of it to follow

	お前のような奴がいるから父は。。。。	Guys like you are the cause of my father Although she is saying that guys who go around doing the kinds of things that Jin-e does are the cause of her father creating Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu, the viewers may not understand wht he is doing, or why Kaoru recognizes him specifically...	It’s because of bastards like you, ...Therefore, this line should change to reflect what he did, or to create a blanket statement about the philosophy of the Kamiya school
	父が残した	My father left behind	That my father created
	神谷活心流は	The Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu	Kamiya Kasshin Ryuu
刃衛	お前の父親がどうしたと	What did your father (do)? This line actually exists only to show how much Jin-e doesn’t care about what she is saying, so the translation should reflect that, rather than what he actually says, since it won’t seem sarcastic or uncaring in English	Your father...
薫	人を生かす剣を説いていた	(The) theory (that) swords (are to)	He believed that

		keep people alive	
	切るのではない	Not for cutting	Swords are neither for cutting
	殺すのではない	Not for killing	Nor for killing
	人を、人を生かす剣を	Swords (are to) save people's lives These four sentences are one connected explanation and the translation should reflect that	But for protecting
刃衛	木刀でしかも女の身で俺に立ち向かうとは	(you're only a) woman, moreover (with a) wooden sword (you will find it difficult) to stand up to me	You can't defeat me with a wooden sword
薫	だまれ！	Silence!	Shut up!
刃衛	こんな棒切で何ができる？	What can you do with that wooden sword?	Give up, woman
	血を浴びてこの刀は生きる物	(a) sword is a thing bathed in blood Here Jin-e says that by bathing in or eating blood a sword is made to be alive, he is refuting Kaoru's statement that swords don't need to kill by arguing that they are effectively purposeless unless they kill	Swords live on blood
	あの世で悟れ	That is this world's truth Jin-e's speech pattern is odd, and his actor kind-of slurs his words together which makes it difficult to tell if he has ended a sentence, or is continuing one. It turns, out that this is a continuation of the previous sentence. So he basically says "A sword is worthless unless it kills,	As does the world/ the world understands this (why can't you?)

		maybe you will understand this in the next world” with the implication that he is now going to kill her	
NOTE: Jin-e’s final line, I don’t really understand it. Both in Japanese and in English I can’t really get what he means. Turns out it was because I mistook it for a separate sentence, it wasn’t.			

Scene 3•差之助のシーン•牢は苦しくないぞ
 Scene 3 – Sanosuke’s scene – Jail ain’t so bad

character	line	*Literal translation	Natural translation
色々な声	―――	---	---
斉藤	十字傷の男	Man with the cross-shaped scar	A man with an X-shaped scar,
	矢張りお前が	As I thought (it’s you)	Of course it’s you
	久しぶりだな	Long time no see/ It’s been a while	It’s been a while, eh...
	人斬り抜刀斎	Hitokiri Battousai	Battousai
	鳥羽伏見の戦い以来、	(Not) since The Battle of Toba	Since Toba Fushimi

		Fushimi	
	もう十年になるから	(It's) already been 10 years	Has it really been 10 years
NOTE: the lines after Saitou's greeting would be inversed to read "Has it really been 10 years since Toba Fushimi" this will be a statement rather than a question since he really just says it to show his personality and expects no answer.			
	話がある。。	Stories exist, there are things to talk of	We just want to talk with you..., let's chat
	出る	Let's leave In using the verb 出る, Saitou is being unfriendly,so rather than saying let's go, or continuing the sentence with the right, it should be more along the lines of "Get out (of the cell)"	Then you can go
差之助	人斬り抜刀斎だろう	(So that's) Hitokiri Battousai	I've found you, Battousai

Scene 4•剣心対刃衛•死と変の戦い

Scene 4 – Kenshin vs. Jin-e – A battle of death and change

character	line	*Literal translation	Natural Translation
刃衛	目が覚めたようだな	It appears that you have opened your eyes	I see you've woken up
	まあ、そうにらむな	But, it appears (you are) glaring (at me)	don't look at me with such hatred
	お前を人質にすれば抜刀斎は怒る	You are a hostage (in order to make) Battousai angryJin-e uses the verb form すれば, a causative, which implies that he is actually	I have taken you hostage to anger Battousai

		explaining to Kaoru that in taking her hostage he hopes to make Kenshin angry. However in order to say that in Japanese he has separated the cause and effect with the causative form, which makes it seem as if he is saying "If I take you hostage, Kenshin, in anger will be caused to become Battousai". This does not sound good in English and is long and confusing, so I think the right will be more appropriate.	
	怒りを奴を往年の人斬りに立ち戻らせる	When that guy is angry he will once again turn into the hitokiri/manslayer he was many years ago	His anger will turn him into the man-slayer I once knew
	そろそろおでましのようだ	Soon, (his) appearance	He will come soon
薫	剣心	Kenshin	Kenshin
刃衛	怒ってるな	(I see) you're angry This provokes Kenshin and acts more like a question- Aren't you angry?	Have I angered you?
剣心	薫どのを巻き込んだ貴様と	(you have) implicated Kaoru-dono, you son-of-a-bitch	How dare you drag Kaoru-dono into this!
	それを阻止できなかつた俺自身にな	(What you have done) has not been able to hinder, I will (??) myself These two lines, therefore act as more of an answer to Jin-e's question/provocation and read	You have only hurt yourself Since the two lines can be placed together, as an answer to Jin-e, these lines should change in the translation.

		more like “of course I am angry. I cannot forgive myself for allowing you to implicate Kaoru-dono, and I am angry that you have done such a thing in the first place”	
薫	剣心	Kenshin	Kenshin
刃衛	いいぞ、抜刀斉	Good, Battousai	Anger is good, Battousai
剣心	怒れ、怒れ！ Kind-of sounds like okoro okore	Angry, angry/(I’m very) angry	You’ll pay for this!
	薫どの！	Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!
刃衛	そんな刀で俺が殺せるか	(Have I caused you to want to) kill me with that blade? Here Jin-e is asking a rhetorical question to Kenshin-he uses the question marker か, but does not use the correct intonation to indicate a question	You must kill me— Since it’s a rhetorical question, this needs to change to something more like “You think you can kill me with that”
薫	剣心！	Kenshin!	Kenshin!
刃衛	かいしゃ刀まで読めなんだか when slowed down, まで sounds more like おもで-it’s not though it’s はいしゃとう (背車刀)	You were unable to read my technique (NAME OF TEQ) If it is おもで then it would be: You were unable to read that my technique (has already) injured her/taken hold	—or she will die
In the line そんな刀で俺が殺せるか。。。かいしゃ刀まで(or おもで)読めなんだか I feel that one again an actual translation would not serve well. In English it would be better for a more dramatic revelation with these lines, a sentence cut off that when finished gives a shock to the audience. Also it shortens the space taken up by the title, something that one always wishes to do, while not taking from the context. The only thing really missing is the title of the technique, which, when given to the viewers often causes more confusion than understanding, and causes fighting between translators on whether to			

translate the name of the technique or to leave it in the original language.			
薫	剣心！	Kenshin!	Kenshin!
刃衛	まだだな～	Already or not yet	Not yet...
	まだお前は昔の抜刀齋には遠く及ばない	(You are) already falling short of the (skillset of) the Battousai of long ago	You are not yet the Battousai of long ago
剣心	薫どの！	Kaoru-dono!	Kaoru-dono!
刃衛	心の一方を強めにかけた、	Shin no ippo is gaining strength	My Shin-no-ippo is taking hold,
	肺まで麻痺する程度にな	(Her) lungs (are) stopped to the degree of being paralyzed	her lungs will become paralyzed
	持ってせいぜい二分	At the most she has two minutes	In no more than two minutes
剣心	刃衛！	Jin-e!	Jin-e!
刃衛	時間がないぞ	Time does not exist	Time is running out
	言いたい事は剣で言え	If you want to talk, say those things with your sword	Talk with your sword
	流石だな	As expected this comment is in reference to Kenshin's growing anger, but it is also referring to the fact that although Jin-e expected his anger to revert Kenshin to Battousai, it has not done so yet so it reads like, "Although your skill grows with your anger, as I expected, it is not yet enough"	As expected
剣心	命がほしければ、	If you want (to keep) your life...	If you want to keep your life
	薫どのに掛けた心の一方を解け	Release shin-no-ippo from Kaoru-dono	Release Kaoru-dono

NOTE: the lines will be written in inverse- "Release Kaoru-dono, if you want to keep your life"

刃衛	俺にはもう解けん	I already told you how to solve this Jin-e states that he is not the solution of release, or rather that he cannot release the spell	I already told you
	方法は二つに一つ自力で解くか	The method, one way or another of release Here he says that he has already said that there is one of two solutions, with the implication that none of them can be him releasing the spell With 自刀で解くか Jin-e effectively states that Kaoru must release it herself, or (next line) he must be killed	The method of release
	術者を殺して	(is)To kill the jutsu caster When he has the dramatic pause he is allowing for the implication that Kaoru cannot break the spell herself, thus Kenshin must kill him if he wants to save her.	Is to kill me
	剣気をたちきるか 剣気 refers to the magic energy that sustains the spell	(Did you) cut (the) sword energy ? Now that I understand what 剣気 means I realize that this needs to change to something more like "Can you break the jutsu?" I use jutsu, because although jutsu does mean spell, spell sould very corny and fairy tale-like in English, whereas jutsu sounds more bad-	Cut me down!

		ass and like something a warrior would say	
NOTE: these lines would be written more like “I have already told you that to release the jutsu, you must kill me” followed by an exclamation to finalize this fact, and of determination to die. Or if all three are considered together as “ to release the jutsu the caster’s energy must cease its flow”			
剣心	ならば！	In that case/ if it is the case... The structure ならば , is generally attached to a verb, but the Japanese zero-pronoun structure allows it to exist alone in this context ith an implied attachment to the actions that Jin-e has just talked of so it reads more like “If what you say is the case then I will have to carry out the action of killing you”	So I shall!
刃衛	勝負だ	(it’s a) game Sensei said that, just like in English this is an expression used when fighting. While literally a match or a game, the English equivalent expression “let’s play” or “let’s go” works well.	Let’s play,
	緋村抜刀斉	Himura Battousai	Himura Battousai
剣心	遊び終わりだ	Playing is over the choice of “let’s play” works especially well because Kenshin retorts that he is done playing	I’m done playing
	殺してやるから掛ってこい！	To kill you bastard, come and launch (your) attack/ I cannot kill	Here you die!

		you without provocation, attack me! Sensei said that the expression 掛ってこい！ is also used exclusively in fighting, as a provocation. She said that it is used generally by samurai as an extension of their beliefs: Come at me so that I in turn may attack you, but has permeated media as a common expression between two fighting characters	
刃衛	これが抜刀斎のかまえかな	I wonder (if that is) Battousai's stance/ I wonder if that is Battoujutsu	He is the old Battousai
剣心	飛天御剣流抜刀術	Hiten-mitsurugi-ryuu (his sword-drawing technique and school)	Hiten-mitsurugi style
	双龍閃	Souryuusen (heavenly dragon flash)	Souryuusen
	肘の間接を砕き筋をたった	I have crushed your elbow and indirectly injured your muscle	Your elbow has been broken
	これでお前の剣の命は終わった	(right now/right here) your life with the sword is over	You will never use a sword again,
	そして	therefore	therefore,
	これで息の根も	The root of breathing also	I will end your life
	薫どのを守るため	In order to protect Kaoru-dono	In order to protect Kaoru-dono
	俺は今一度人斬りに戻る	I shall once again become a man-slayer	I shall once again become a man-slayer

NOTE: the final three lines here shall be written "In order to protect Kaoru-dono, I shall once again become a man-slayer, and I shall end you life"

刃衛	殺せ	Kill (me)	Finish it
剣心	死ね	Die	Die
薫	剣心、やめて！	Kenshin, stop!	Kenshin, don't!
刃衛	解きやがった	I'm glad we could solve this/ it would be good if we could finish this What he says here is hard to translate, he is stating that he is surprised that Kaoru was able to release the jutsu, and that because of that he is not at all pleased. But he says it in a sarcastic way that makes it sounds like he is stating that he is pleased that the situation is resolving itself. The か sound actually being a が sound really helped to clear up that he was not saying he was pleased.	Finish it...
剣心	薫どの	Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono
薫	人斬りに戻らないで	Don't return to being a man-slayer	You don't need to kill
	だめ、殺したら	It's useless, killing is	Killing solves nothing,
	殺しちゃだめ	Finish with killing (it's useless) Although だめ means useless or without purpose, in this context, Kaoru is using it as stop. She is begging Kenshin not to kill Jin-e, telling him that it would serve no purpose but to defeat what he now is.	It's useless
	剣心	Kenshin	Kenshin,

	あなたが、	You,	
	殺してしまった人のために	For the sake of those you have killed	For the sake of those you have killed
	あなたが 今まで、	You, From now on this confused me because I read it as the beginning of a new sentence, when it is really a continuation. She is saying “For all of those that you have killed up to now, you, Kenshin, must not kill Jin-e”	From now on...
	助けた人のために	For (the sake of) those who need help This is where the new sentence begins, not the previous line. So here she says “For all of those that you have already saved, even if you must cut, do not kill” or, more likely “For all of those that you have already saved, keep your sword sheathed in order that you may save more lives”	In order to help people...
	人を切らなくても	But not through cutting people	Sheath your sword
	だれか助ける事のできる	You can do things to help some/anyone	In order to help people
	それが、	This (thing) over there Next new sentence. She says that “This world now is the world you have fought for, isn’t it” with the implication that killing Jin-e will cause Kenshin, and his world to revert	Please,

		back into what it once was.	
	あなたが、	You,	Kenshin,
	剣心が目指した	Kenshin (have a new) purpose	You have purpose
	新しい世の中でしょ	In (this) new world	In this new age
剣心	薫どの	Kaoru-dono	Kaoru-dono
刃衛	決着を付けるぞ～	Attach the end(??) 決着 is an idiomatic expression referring to endings, effectively he is saying "end it"	Finish this
	抜刀斉	Battousai	Battousai
剣心	もうよせ	Now, final moves	Let's end it
	左手しか使えぬおめしに勝気はござらん	(Your) left hand (is still) useful summon(ing) determined spirit	You can still use your left hand
刃衛	終わっちゃいねえよ	It's already over/ just finish it	It's already over
	お前の本性は人斬りよ～	Your real nature is that of the man-slayer	You are Hitokiri Battousai
	同じ人斬りが言ってんだからまちがいいねえよ	I know/can say that this is not a mistake because am also a manslayer	You will always be a man-slayer,
	所詮人斬りは人斬り	After-all a man-slayer is a manslayer	Once a killer, always a killer
	お前がいつまで流浪同じなぞとござっているなのか	Will you always go around saying gozaru and such polite things? It is ridiculously hard to understand what he says here. Every time I listen a couple syllables are different, or one that was heard before is missing. Even sensei	Can you go around forever as you pretend to be?

		<p>couldn't figure it out. So I slowed down the audio and chose what I heard most of, that was actually a sentence with real words and that's what I stuck with. So what he says is most like "will you continue to wander saying polite things like gozaru? (or will you once again become the hitokiri that you are?)"</p>	
	<p>地獄の淵で見ててやろう</p>	<p>I guess I'll see you in the depths of hell or I'll see you in hell, you bastard Sensei pointed out that this is a continuation of the previous sentence and not a new sentence; so it continues with the implication that Jin-e made and says something like "I will watch from hell for the day that you are the manslayer once again"</p>	<p>Until we meet in hell</p>

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