

helped. (I'm all rusty...)

I'm thinking of a Hard FAQ, as well as a Dot Eater FAQ.

25th of October 2003:

Ver 1.70: Added translations of the Gallery and Sound Test. Modified slightly the translations of the texts at the beginning of each chapters. Added a few "Alternative Methods".

23rd of February 2004:

Ver 1.80: Added a DVD score line. Added attack methods for Shigi, Uzura, and Misago. Described how to chain the Utatsugumi "inside" during 4-2. Tuned up the Chain Grid, which seems still off within the chapters by around 150k. (Chapter 2, 3 and 4) I have gotten a slight score update. I might do a much better one soon though. I'm getting started on the Hard FAQ.

5th of May 2004:

Ver 1.90: Added the introduction chapters that were hidden on the DC GD ROM and in the GC booklet. Changed minor things in the FAQ - corrected sentences and such.

I) About this FAQ

I'm writing this FAQ because Ikaruga is so much fun that it is worth explanations. Most gamers will play this shooter until they clear it (which means about 3 hours), but even considering some might try to get better scores, the majority of the gamers will stop playing this game way too soon for my tastes. Rank S++ is not the end, but the BEGINNING.

That said, keep in mind that I am not the God of Shooting Games (I fancy myself as being one of the top 20 players worldwide at this game, though). If a little help in achieving 30 Millions is OK with you, then read on...

MAPPING:

- 1) w are small white enemies.
- 2) b are small black enemies
- 3) I'll make out the big enemies with W's and B's

BB
BBBB or WWW
BB

- 4) Your ship will be noted (w) or (b).
- 5) I will sometimes include the edge of the screen, like this:

----- (more or less long, depending on the place I need)

Every other thing should be obvious enough.

II) The basics

The most basic concept of this game concerns the colors. Each color represents an attack polarity. There are black enemies and white enemies.

Your ship is one of the very few ones that can successfully change between the polarities.

Moreover, it has an absorbing system. If you are of the white polarity, it will

absorb white bullets and lasers and convert them into raw energy. Black bullets would however destroy your ship. Change your color to black and you are then able to absorb black bullets and lasers and whatnots, but white shots are now lethal to you.

Last but not least, attacking black enemies with the black polarity will inflict normal damage upon the enemy, but if you attack with white, it deals double damage. The reverse is true as well: white shots will inflict normal damage to white enemies, while black shots deal double damage.

Now for some advanced little things:

1) Your ship is very, VERY small. As in about 4 pixels long and 1 pixel large.

2) Don't underestimate the points you can do only absorbing enemy shots. To give you an example, over the first few enemies of the first chapter, you can earn over 30000 points only absorbing the residual shots. Your high score in Easy over the first section of the game is 385420 points, in Normal you want over 413020 points. My best is 418220 points. And that's only the difference over 22 chains.

3) The Practice Mode is your best friend. To access a chapter in the Practice Mode, you must survive until the desired chapter without making any credits. For example, if you made your first credit at Chapter 3 in Easy Mode, it will open you Chapter 1, 2 and 3 in the Easy Section of the Practice mode.

4) Don't watch the Ikaruga DVD yet. It's only going to make you realize how incapable you are at shooting games. ;) It also will indicate you the ultimate conquest methods, and you're going to "imitate" the better players instead of actually getting better.

5) All the enemies in Ikaruga have names. Follows a description, for I included them in the shoot-through.

- a) Utatsugumi: Round, weak enemies.
- b) Toratsugumi: Very small, they never shoot. Come in sets of 3. Weak.
- c) Renjaku: They look a little like you. Some shoot, some don't.
- d) Torafuzuku: Big. Shoot bullets or laser beams. Resist 12 homing lasers.
- e) Ajisashi: The big cruisers of Chapter 1. Resistant.
- f) Iuka: Triangular ships, their moves are erratic. Are suicidal.
- g) Misosazai: Only appear in Chapter 2. Shoot lasers straight down.
- h) Toki: Slightly bigger, they shoot as fast as you. Resist 2 homing lasers.
- i) Chougenbou: The lords of Chapter 5. Resist 24 homing lasers.

III) Chapter 1

Difficulty: Easy

Boss: Eboshidori

Rank S achieved at 3,000,000

Rank S++ achieved at 3,400,000

Max score : approx. 4,240,000

DVD Score (WIZ): 4,287,340

"I am not alive, thus I can't die.
I won't give up even if my Ideal isn't fulfilled.
My will, just as my regrets, won't ever end"

The game starts with 6 white Utatsugumi from the right, then 6 black ones from the left. In Easy Mode, you don't need to think long about it, in Normal and

Hard Mode, just shoot them down with the appropriate color and absorb all their residual shots.

After that another 6 white Utatsugumi appear from the right, then another 6 black ones from the left. This time however they move slightly differently. No problems here. If you have absorbed all residual shots until now you should hear "Energy Max!". That's the spirit.

Then come 36 Toratsugumi. Wait a moment before shooting or you're bound to break the chain. 18 white ships to your left, 18 black ones to the right. See :

```
-----  
www bbb  
www bbb  
www bbb  
www bbb  
www bbb  
www bbb  
--> <--
```

Take out the rightmost black column, then place yourself at mid-height and release. It kills the 12 black ships. Absorb, scroll slightly down, turn white, and shoot all out, releasing once again.

If you've been fast enough, 3 extra Toratsugumi come right then 3 others left.

You have made (max) 22 chains and have 385420 points in Easy Mode, or around 410020 in Normal and Hard Mode.

IDEAL

"Alas, the Ikaruga departs.
What could make those people move,
Who were secluded against their will?
This is probably none other than
The very basic will to live"

3 white Renjaku from the left, then from the right. Shoot them down either with your black shot (in Easy Mode) or shoot the first 3 with white, absorb, then release the power on the next 3 (and absorb) in Normal and Hard Mode.

3 black Renjaku from the right, then from the left. No problems there.

3 white Renjaku from the left, then 3 black ones from the right. In Easy Mode, you should stay either black or white and shoot all enemies. In Normal and Hard Mode, release white, absorb, turn black and release.

3 white Renjaku that stay at the left, 3 black ones that stay at the right. They start shooting after a few seconds. In Easy Mode, no problem whatsoever. You may want to absorb the black shots though. (or at least part of it). In Normal and Hard Mode, turn white, kill the white enemies and absorb, turn black and repeat.

Now come 6 Renjaku at the same time: (they stay at the top of the screen)

```
-----  
b w  
b w b w
```

You'll be most certainly starting black at the very right, so -stay- black, kill the two whites at the right edge, then -stop- shooting until you get in front of the last white. If you're fast enough, you will destroy all 3 whites before they start shooting. Since you're black, you can then calmly kill the black ones, and absorb their shots. (and their residual shots in Normal Mode). In Hard Mode, apply the same method, but don't stay too close to the enemies or

you won't be able to dodge the residual white shots.

Now the patterns get a little more complicated. 3 white Renjaku will appear : one at the right, one at the left, then another one at the left. Turn white because they will start shooting. (same method in every Mode)

Then another 3 white Renjaku will appear : two at the right then one at the left. HOWEVER, before the last white ship has appeared, a single black Renjaku will scroll slaloming down. Which means that you have to pay attention to his shots, and that you can't simply keep shooting blindly.

Once you have killed the last white ship, several black Renjaku will scroll down the screen. Ultimately, it will look out like this :

```
-----  
b8      b9  
  
      b7  
b5      b6  
      b4  
b2      b3  
      b1  
-----
```

The best would be to kill b2 and b5, then to wait for b8 and b9 to appear, then release the power of your gage. However, in Easy Mode, your gage won't be full. That's why you have to turn white before releasing the power. But in Normal and Hard Mode, your gage -will- be full. Stay Black and after killing b2 and b5 empty your gage.

If you have been fast enough, you will be rewarded with 3 white Renjaku (they shoot!) coming down fast from the left, and then short after that 3 black ones (they also shoot) coming down fast from the right. If you think ahead, you'll kill the white ones with your black shot, so that you can move fast enough to the left (thus evading the white shots) and kill the black ones with your black shot too (since they shoot).

Immediately after, you will disappear through the clouds for a second. If you haven't killed the black ships by now, they will turn invulnerable! You will have to wait for black ennemies again to complete the chain before attacking white ennemies again. This leads to a huge point loss.

At this point of the game, you should have 39 chains. (maximum)
Try to get 900,000 at this time of the game. This will force you to learn how to absorb effectively ennemy shots.

Once you reappear from the clouds, immediately 3 white Toratsugumi appear at the upper right corner, then 3 black ones at the upper left. It shouldn't be a problem.

Now it gets tricky. 24 Utatsugumi appear at the same time, then start moving. They start in this position:

```
-----  
      bwbw      wwbw  
bwbwbwbw      wwbwbwbw  
bwbwbwbw      then move to wwbwbwbw  
      bwbw      wwbw  
  
(12345678)      BEWARE!!!      (21436587)  
-----
```

They keep switching between both positions.

It doesn't look hard, but if you want to make a big score, you will have to attack fast. VERY fast.

Once they've appeared, they won't move for one second. During that time, you have to kill one column of two and one column of four enemies (6 enemies : 2 chains).

Each time they move, one color will shoot, which adds to the difficulty. First color that shoots is white. That's why I prefer starting with them.

This is how I kill them : I am black and kill column 3 and 1. I sweep the screen to the right, killing 2, 4 and 6. The enemies move once again, I stay black because the black enemies have shot. I move at the utmost right to kill column 8, then sweep left to kill 7 and 5.

If you don't feel too confident about this, just kill all Utatsugumi of one color first. You won't then have to worry about shots of another color than yours. If you're in Normal and Hard Mode, you will have absorbed enough residual shots to have a full gage, so change color and use it.

Have you been fast? One set of 3 white Toratsugumi should appear from the upper left, then one set of 3 black ones from the upper right, and if you've been REALLY fast another white set should appear from the upper left.

HOWEVER, these "Bonus Enemies" only try to remove your attention from BIG enemies that now come up in the screen.

Look at the situation:

```
-----
b BB      WW w
BBBBBwWWWW
  BB      WW
          If you have
          been fast
          w -->
          w -->
          w -->
-----
```

The Torafuzuku count for one in the chain. So killing them + the two Utatsugumi around makes exactly one chain.

Check your gage : if you play in Easy, it's probably empty. If you play in Normal or Hard Mode, it's either full in case you didn't use it against the enemies before, or half-filled if you used it and absorbed what you could.

If you play in Easy Mode, put yourself just in front of one of the big ships, take the same color, and kill it with its two little satellites. Pay attention to the other shots from the side. Once you've killed the Torafuzuku, the Utatsugumi will flee (if they're still alive, so be sure to shoot them down) and let another Torafuzuku appear (complete with two Utatsugumi, makes another chain). You won't be able to damage it for one second (while it enters the screen and takes its place). Then go kill the other ones.

You can alternate between the two: first start with white, then go kill the black while the second white appears, then go kill the second white while the second black appears, then the second black. It makes 4 chains.

If you play in Normal or Hard Mode : check your gage. Is it full? Use it on the big enemy of the SAME color as yours (say, on the white if you're white). It IS better to start with white, because the white Torafuzuku shoots first. It will explode and liberate 50 residual shots, that's about half your gage. Absorb them, then immediately empty your gage again (still white!), move to the

other side, change color. The black one should be weak but still alive, deliver the killing blow (you are now both the same color), you'll get once again 50 residual shots! Empty your gage immediately again (you are black, the homing lasers all try to destroy the second white Torafuzuku), change your color to white, move to the left, destroy it, absorb, empty your gage (still white!), turn to black, move to the right and destroy the last few black ships.

It isn't easy to explain, because that makes a lot of steps, but if you actually try that method, it's very easy to do. What can I say? Practice Mode!

Alternative Method:

As you kill the 3rd extra chain (white) fly straight down under the black Torafuzuku. As soon as your shots start hitting him, flight up/left, then sweep to the right. It kills the whole black chain, as soon as you killed one white Utatsugumi release white! As you absorb the residual bullets, fly down/left and release white once again. Change to black, as soon as you're under the second black Torafuzuku fly straight up and kill all 3 black ennemies, release black and fly to the right in case you missed one white enemy.

You CAN get up to 9 extra sets with this method, I can do it several times in a row on my good days. The key point is how much you absorb from the white Torafuzuku, and how you place yourself after that. If you don't fly down/left, your homing missiles will either kill the black Toraf, leaving you with a meager 1 homing left for the second white Toraf, or they will waste one homing worth of damage on a little Utatsugumi, which means you'll need more time to kill the black Toraf, hence loosing out 1 if not 2 extra sets. Practice!

If you have been fast enough, more Bonus Ennemies (Toratsugumi) will be coming.

CASE ONE

CASE TWO

b -> <- b
b -> <- w
w -> <- w

b -> <- b
w -> <- b
w -> <- w

the ennemies
scroll down

OR

Consider this a set. Even considering you have been incredibly fast, the most you can get are 9 sets. That makes 18 chains, which are over 450000 points! (In 2P mode, I have seen 10 sets)

The key to killing them is to place yourself in the middle, slightly to the left in case one and slightly to the right in case two.

In Hard Mode, of course, things look grim. You can try changing color between each set, but that takes loads of training. I try to limit myself to one color.

OK, let's check the chains: you should be somewhere between 53 chains and 74 chains. 74 chains being the maximum, if you can achieve them, you are really good. This should get you around 1,840,000.

Next to come are 3 black Renjaku flying from the middle to the right, followed by 2 white ones flying from the middle to the left. The best method to kill them is to turn white, place yourself left, and shoot like mad while you move to the right. It looks like this:

```

-----
w-> w->
<-b <-b <-b

(w)----->

```

After that comes another white Torafuzuku, it shoots after one second an enormous laser. In Easy Mode, you may want to absorb some of it for later use. In Normal or Hard Mode, your gage is already full (or almost full). You're white. As soon as you can hit it, release your power and absorb all you can from the residual shots.

If you successfully destroy it, a ring of Utatsugumi will come up and move in a circle, quite fast. At the same time, mini-rows of Toratsugumi will appear. The faster you have been, the more enemies appear.

It looks like this -eventually- if you let them all appear:

```

-----
  b w
  w b
 bww
w w b w
b b w b
b w b b
b b w b
  w w b w
    bww

```

The best is to place yourself like the following. Notice that if you do it soon enough, only 2 or 3 mini-rows will have the time to appear before you can start shooting, letting you more space and time to plan your next moves.

```

-----
  b w
  w b
 bww      <-- the mini-rows have only gotten started!
  w      w
  b      b
  b      (w)b
  b      b
  w      w
    w

```

Once you're placed there, shoot away. The Utatsugumi will literally move into your line of fire, in a convenient order (3 whites, then 3 blacks, then 3 whites, then 3 blacks). You just have to pay attention as to WHEN you start firing. They move very fast.

Once you've killed the ring of enemies, slalom between the Toratsugumi and kill them in the right order so as to make more chains. I will give you my attack pattern:

```

-----
  b 9      <-- After killing 9, release power!

```


8 b I have been white the whole time.
b 7
6 b
b 5
4 b
b 3
2 b
b 1

Already the next enemies are coming to you and want to turn you into metal scrap. These are two Ajisashi with several cannons on them (each cannon is one unit in the chain, the big ship is worth one unit too). After a while 14 mini-rows of Toratsugumi will start appearing, this time moving differently. If you destroy the Ajisashi, two more will appear. But you will have to destroy all that in the right order, and fast enough to boot, to get Bonus Enemies.

Let's see. If you destroyed all the mini-rows, it looks like this:

bBBb
BB <--- The black Ajisashi moves down, then right.
bBBb I turn white and destroy all cannons,
bBBb then I destroy it as fast as I can.
BB
bBBb
wWWW
WW
wWWW<--- The white Ajisashi moves up, then left.
wWWW It's already moving left as I'm done
WW with the black one. I turn black
wWWW and destroy all I can, fast.

But not TOO fast! Because then the next ones would appear at the SAME TIME, and believe me, unless you're playing in the 2 Players Mode, you DON'T WANT THIS!

This is what happens when you destroy both ships too fast:

w w bBBb
bb bBBb <--- Toratsugumi are coming down!
w w bBBb
bb bBBb I need to move carefully
w w bBBb and to shoot precisely
bb bBBb to go on with the chains!!!
wWWW w w
wWWW bb
wWWW w w <--- The white Ajisashi shoots a lot.
wWWW bb It will come in my way when I'll
wWWW try to kill the mini-rows.
wWWW This situation is not good.

This would be bad enough, but the worse is the moves of the Toratsugumi: the ones at the edge move to the center, and the ones at the center move to the edge, and they repeat that process endlessly. You have to shoot a single, precise shot right in the middle, when both ships of the same row are at the

exact middle of the screen, in order to shoot them down in one shot.

If you wait a little before killing the first white Ajisashi (you remember? Scroll a little up), the second black one will appear alone, and thus the second white one will appear later, at the upper right corner.

Now look at all those enemies. The Ajisashi are worth 13 enemies ; that means that you MUST kill one mini-row of the same color to complete the chain. You may want to try limiting yourself to that for starters.

Once you have gotten enough self-confidence, try shooting them all! This is how to proceed:

The Toratsugumi should be appearing already when you are about to destroy the first white Ajisashi. Once you've destroyed it (not too early, remember), the second black one will appear. It looks then like this:

```
-----  
7  bb    bBBb  
6  w  w   bBBb <--- The best is to start destroying the mini-rows  
5  bb    bBBb      while the Ajisashi takes its place on the screen  
4  w  w   bBBb      (because you can't shoot it) so kill in order:  
3  bb    bBBb        1 then 3 then 5 (2 chains, black)  
2  w  w   bBBb  
1  bb
```

If you are fast enough killing 1-3-5, you will notice that for about half a second, there are only white enemies in the middle of the screen : rows 2, 4 and 6. You can use your auto shot (Twin Shot) for half a second, thus killing 2-4-6 very fast.

Turn white and go on with the twin shot : you'll need about 3 seconds to destroy 7 and all 13 targets of the Ajisashi. It IS possible to use the energy you have in your gage, but I'm not keen on using it there. I save it for later. But maybe that's why I'm too slow, so who knows? Try your own killing method.

Once you've destroyed all that, another white Ajisashi appears :

```
-----  
14 w  w   wWWW  
13 bb    wWWW <--- The order here is different:  
12 w  w   wWWW      start with 9-11-13 then release power!  
11 bb    wWWW      Be sure to scroll down the screen  
10 w  w   wWWW      so as to not miss 8  
9  bb    wWWW  
8  w  w           The timing here is crucial. If you tap the A Button  
                      three times -and only three times!- fast enough,  
                      you can destroy 9-11-13 blindingly fast.  
                      Turn black and shoot all out! (use your gage!)
```

You can of course apply the same order as with the black ship : 8-10-12 then 9-11-13 then Twin Shot + Special Attack for the rest.

You have until now made between 77 and 110 chains. If you made 110c, you are allowed to be proud of yourself.

If you have been fast, Bonus Ennemies (once again Toratsugumi) will appear.

```
-----  
b b b w w w b b b  
----->
```

But if you have been so fast that several lines appear, beware!

```
-----  
b b b w w w b b b  
----->  
w w w b b b w w w  
<-----  
b b b w w w b b b <---- You can get AFAIK up to 6 lines  
----->
```

And so on
and so forth

```
-----
```

I'll let you guess how to make combos here. These are Bonus Ennemies, and the difference between an average player and a good player comes out precisely in this part of the stage. A hint though : if you kill the white ships of the first and second line, you will then have 3 or 4 lines with black ships in the middle of the screen, and once you've killed all the blacks ships 4 rows of white ships will be conveniently waiting for you to destroy them... and then 2 or 3 rows of black ships... and so on.

It was believed for a very long time that 132 chains were the absolute maximum, but a few players achieved 133, even 134 chains. I have no idea how, though. That is, I know how, but I can't mimick that method. I always seem to mess it up as one point or the other...

Anyway, your score should be between 2,800,000 (110c) and 3,450,000 (132c).

"WARNING, the big ennemy is approaching at full throttle.
According to the data, it is identified as Butsutekkai"

Now comes Eboshidori. This Boss has a white sword and a black shield.
First it attacks you with the sword. Look:

```
-----  
b WWWWW b <--- the black little satellites are useless.  
WWWWWWW They do shoot, but you should ignore them.  
WWWWWW  
S  
(5-way shot)
```

(b)

```
-----
```

Absolutely no problems here. If you want to kill it faster, stay black. But don't release the power of your gage! Once the Sword has been destroyed, he uses the Shield.

```
-----  
w WWWWW w w WWWWW w
```

WWWWWWW

WWWWWWW

WSSSS

WSSSS

SS

(b)

<--->

then

(w)

The shield shoots black shots, quite a lot of them at that. But if you stay at the bottom of the screen, you can stay white and evade all the shots without major problems.

However, you don't want to do this. What I do: as soon as the Black Shield starts shooting, I empty my gage (I'm white), then turn black and stay really close to the shield to absorb as much shots I can, all the while firing. I need one full white gage plus about 2 seconds to kill the shield, and get between 56% and 100% of my gage full.

And THEN you can start damaging Eboshidori himself.

He has a white satellite at the left and a black one at the right. Ignoring them is the key to killing the boss faster.

I stay black. I empty my gage (useless in Pal GC Mode), and shoot all out. When Eboshidori throws the white grenades, I slowly retreat to the bottom of the screen (the closer you are, the faster they explode). All the while evading the shots, I scroll up the screen and wait for the black grenades. I stay on them and absorb. The whole process is repeated once, then I release the power in my gage and shoot him at blank point. He dies before firing the 5 way white shots. IF I see that he will have the time to shoot, I scroll fast down, then fast up between the shots. My record (for now) : 75 seconds left.

Alternative Method:

Stay black as long as you can. Empty your gage (once again, on a Pal GC this won't work) and shoot all out. When the white grenades are about to explode, quickly change to white and sit on them to absorb as much as possible. As soon as you can, change back to black and sit on the black grenades. When you're done absorbing black, release and change to white to sit on the next few white grenades. Change to black, absorb, release. 74 are possible, plus you get quite some points for all the absorbing you've done (20-30k).

In 2 Players Mode, one player can stay white and "cover" the other player while said other player uses the black shot. Then inverse the roles against the black shield. Then kill Eboshidori while being both black. He may have more energy, you are not only two, but you have probably two full gages. The extra life bar he has won't be much help to him.

IV) Chapter 2

Difficulty: Normal

Boss: Buppousou

Rank S achieved at 4,600,000

Rank S++ achieved at 5,000,000

Max score : approx. 6,260,000

DVD Score (WIZ) : 6,266,910

The stage starts with Utatsugumi:

3 whites at the right.

3 blacks from the right

3 blacks from the left

3 whites from the right
6 whites from the left
6 blacks from the left

It makes 8 chains. The faster you killed them, the more enemies you'll get later.

Next are Isuka. Those are a real pain, but once you are able to look through their moving and shooting patterns, this area becomes an exciting challenge.

```
-----  
  |           |  
--|->      <-|--  
  v           v
```

(w)

Basically, Isuka come out from the corners of the screen, circle you once and fly away. Example: If they entered from above at the left, they will fly down, under you, move right, fly up, then left (they cross your fireline) and disappear at the left edge.

You'll notice that at about the place where the directions cross on my ASCII map, you will regularly see 3 ships of the same color "meeting" for a brief moment. I'm sure there is a way to move between each of those spots and kill all Isuka appearing. Whenever I try to do this, I either die or break the chain. Right now I'm looking for the spots where I can safely destroy the Isuka that hover there.

OK, there are 44c possible, the pattern is complicated and I haven't been able to duplicate it safely until now. If you can find the review of the Ikaruga Appreciate DVD, the movie is up on that page. (It's at Insert Credit)
There are 2 alternative methods on <http://www7.plala.or.jp/tb/>
NOTE: those methods can be easily changed into a 42c pattern, which requires very little training to achieve! You might want to have a look.

Here is an easy 40c method, if you're good you may even achieve 41c:
Kill the first 8 chains as fast as possible. Be white, upper corner right, kill 1c, turn black, get back to the center, kill 2c, turn white, kill 3 chains and release. Fly immediately left.
Let the first black Isuka fly past you. Kill the next 3 white ones, then at the same spot the 3 next black ones, then 3 white ones. Now come 4 black ships. Kill 3 and follow the last one to the right, stop shooting. When you're under the upper right cross (on my ASCII map) shoot continuously. You should get 3 black Isuka then 3 white, fly all the way left to kill 3 black then 3 white ones. Get back to the center. Kill a black chain, a white chain, another black chain, 4 white ships come. Kill 3 of them, follow the fourth left and once again, when you're under the upper right cross shoot all out. You'll get 3 white ships, then 3 black ones, then flying left 3 white ones, avoid one white and shoot 3 blacks, 3 whites, 3 blacks. If you're lucky you should get at the upper left cross one white ship flying all down, about at the center another white that flies left upwards, and a last white at the right that flight almost straight upwards. This is the last chain you can get, but it's not easy.

After that, two white ships (Misosazai) will shoot continuous laser beams,

while several Utatsugumi "parade" in front of you. Look:

```
-----  
      W w W  
      b | w | w  
      bb | w | ww  
      bb | w | ww  
      b  |   | w  
      |   |  
      (w) |  
      |  
-----
```

Most of the time you will have made a chain with black Isuka just before those enemies appear. If you missed 1 or 2 black Isuka to make a chain, complete your chain and ignore the rest of the black ships!

If you made a complete chain just before those, start with the black Utatsugumi then move to the right and kill the 6 white ones at the rightmost.

Now new ships arrive:

```
-----  
      w WwwwW w  
      w w | www | w w <-- The Isuka at the side arrive slightly later.  
          | www |           They also disappear very soon : release power!  
          | bwb |  
          | b b |  
          | b b |  
          | b b |           <--- at about this height, they change direction!  
      b | (w) | b           Be sure to kill them before they escape you.  
      b  |   |  b  
-----
```

If you stay in the middle, you can shoot the black Toratsugumi with calculated Single Shots, then dispose of the rest of the white enemies with your Twin Shot. Finally, when the white Isuka come at the sides, release the power in your gage (you had more than enough time to fill it thanks to those big lasers)

Until now, you can safely have 22 chains, but if you tried to destroy the erratically flying Isuka too, you should have between 38 and 44 chains. (44c should be the maximum. I said SHOULD.)
Your score should be around 840,000 (38 chains) up to 1,000,000 and something.

TRIAL

"The more stubborn your own will is,
The more Trials you will be blessed with.
Of course, if you can avoid the Trials before your eyes,
It is also possible for you to flee them.
But the real purpose of a Trial
Is to make your soul stronger."

You're greeted with 2 rings of Utatsugumi. One of them moves clockwise, the other counterclockwise.

```
-----  
      b  
-----
```

```

  w  b  w
b w      w b    <--- As you see, every two seconds,
  b          b      4 ships of the same color will
w w  (w)    w w    be aligned. Place yourself down
  b          b      right in the middle and shoot!
  b w      w b
    w  b  w
      b

```

You start in the middle of these rings. Either stay there and shoot enemies two by two, or try something cheeky : move down until you've moved under both rings, place yourself in the middle and shoot the 4 enemies in front of you. (That's what I do)

Depending on how fast you have defeated those, you will get bonus enemies. These are "additional" rings that close down on you. Imagine them like inverted ripples : they come in a large circle and all move towards the center of the screen.

The strategy here is to kill (with SINGLE SHOTS) a few of them so as to get a way out of the circle. I generally kill one chain then get out of the circle. Then I place myself just under the middle point of the screen, wait for the 9 Utatsugumi left to be concentrated in a single point, and shoot them all 9 with a single shot.

```

      b
    b  w  b
  b w      w b    <--- As you see, I take the enemies down
  w          w      with the -same- color they are.
b w  bx9    w b    This is important in Normal Mode,
  w  (b)    w      and even more so in Hard Mode!
  b w      w b
    b  w  b
      b

```

The maximum you can get there are 5 circles. (w, b, w, b, w) Max 28 chains. Your score should be around 1,600,000. (66-68c)

After the circles, you come to an area with big blocks seemingly glued one to another. This however isn't the case. Your ship CAN fly -between- the blocks. Useful to know if you want to tackle the Dot Eater Rank.

```

WWWWWWW  WWWWWW
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX <--- Don't worry, this wall will open itself in due time.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX <--- the white blocks shoot.

```

```

XXXBBBXXXBBBXXX
                <---- the black blocks shoot.
WWWXXXWWWXXXWWW    when destroyed, two black Utatsugumi appear.
<--WWW  BBB
WWWBBBWWWBBBWWW
  BBB  WWW-->
WWWXXXWWWXXXWWW

```

This area is easy, but you need to be fast and precise if you want to achieve a lot of chains.

How to get 12 chains in Normal Mode:

Your gage is already full, you turn black and kill 3 white blocks, get in and kill 3 black blocks (as white), get black again and kill 3 white blocks, turn white and kill the 3 black blocks that are on the screen, stay white and release your gage. Complete your chain with white blocks, then kill the 2 black blocks and the following 4 Utatsugumi, then the 9 white blocks.

The key point is to kill the first blocks very fast. Be fast enough and you can get 13c out of this part.

After that, a few more blocks! This time with Utatsugumi dropping down the screen. It's easy, but you have to be fast to get all the chains.

In Easy Mode, there aren't that many bullets on the screen. In Normal, you will have to switch fairly often. In Hard Mode, sometimes you won't dare killing the enemies, because it would mean your certain death.

After all that, you'll see two "Generators". These are "plants" that are mass-producing Toratsugumi. Of course, you don't want to kill the generators. Just stay in the middle and destroy as much as you can!

```
-----  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
GGGbbbb wwwwGGG  
  XXXb wXXX  
    b w  
  XXXb wXXX  
    b w  
  XXXb wXXX  
    (w)  
-----
```

VERY IMPORTANT:

When the second wall starts to open, you need to prepare for the next area. If you want many chains, you will have to prepare your chain status. You need to have killed 2 white ships before starting the next area. Once you are at the level of the last unbreakable blocks (the one before the Generators) finish your chain then kill two whites enemies, then go up the screen and enter the next area.

Within the whole blocks area, you should have done 12 + 19 Chains, and have killed 2 white ships. If you did more, you're very good!

Your score should reach 2,500,000 soon if not already.

Now comes an area that looks easy, but if you want to earn several chains you're going to sweat (especially so in Hard Mode).

At the side, unbreakable cannons shoot lots of bullets while turning around. Eventually, you'll notice that the shots form circles of bullets, the color is different each time.

The first enemies you'll see are Utatsugumi:

```
-----  
XX          XX  
  <----WW  
  wbw      <-- those move. After a few seconds,
```



```

      b w b           the white Torafuzuku comes
XX           XX
  b           w
b b         w w
      (w)
XXX           XXX
-----

```

You start with the obligation to kill one white ennemy to complete your ongoing chain. I'd advise to kill one of the middle. Then kill the blacks and whites at the left and right sides, then the blacks in the middle.

That leaves you with two little whites and one big white ennemy (exactly one chain, how very convenient) that you should destroy as fast as you can. Turn white and release your full gage, it should be enough.

If you destroyed the Torafuzuku soon enough, 12 Utatsugumi appear at the sides of the screen (6 blacks at your left, 6 whites at your right). You should have enough time to kill them.

Then two black Misosazai position themselves at the upper part of the screen and fire black lasers continuously. 12 white Utatsugumi are only waiting for you to destroy them.

```

-----
BB ----->          <-- the black Torafuzuku comes later. Read on.

XX  B      B  XX
ww  |      |  ww
ww  |      |  ww
ww  |      |  ww
XX  |      |  XX      once your gage is full, turn white.
   |      |           Place yourself in the middle, slightly down.
   |      |           <--- Release! You should hit all 12 white enemies.
      (w)
-----

```

In Normal Mode, the residual shots from the white Utatsugumi give you enough energy to fire once again, you are still white! And thus destroy the black Misosazai. It summons 12 black Utatsugumi (they appear where the white ones were). Kill them all, then a black Torafuzuku will come from the left and shoot a huge laser beam. As soon as he enters the screen, scroll up and release your black gage at him (white gage in Easy Mode, because your gage isn't full). He dies, summoning yet another set of 12 enemies.

After those, you have made another 22 chains. You should be around 116 / 120 chains. If more, you're very good! You should also be over 3,000,000.

After that come little walls and blocks and enemies... and still cannons that shoot like mad at you. The usual.

Here is the complete mapping of the section:

```

BBBBBBXXXWWWWWW <-- those enemies are "BB"s and "WW"s
BBBBBBXXXWWWWWW      1 line means 3 enemies, so 1 chain.
      WWW      ww
XX      WWW      ww
  bb     WWW      ww
  bb     BBB      XX

```

```

bb   BBB   ww
XX   BBB   ww
bb   WWW   ww
bb   WWW   XX
bb   WWW
BBBBBBXXXWWWWWW <-- Line 2
BBBBBB   WWWWWW <-- Line 1

```

Not really difficult. You need to remember two things:
 After killing line 1 and 2, you should see the 6 black Utatsugumi. Kill them as fast as possible, so that you can release your gage when there still only are the 3 white blocks in the middle (important!!!!).
 Then ignore for now the black blocks, wait for the 6 white Utatsugumi, kill'em fast and destroy the 3 black blocs in the middle, ignore the white blocks for now, wait for the 6 black Utatsugumi at the side, etc.
 Once you've destroyed the "WW"'s, there should be on the screen only the last 6 "BB"'s. If you have destroyed the ennemies very fast, these are the only ennemies you can reach with your full gage, so release it! And go immediately slightly over the indestructible bloc in the middle.

The section brings you extra 19 chains. You should have between 135 and 144 chains. Which means your score is now over 3,500,000.

You are coming to the next "Generators". This time around, you see 3 of them at your left and 3 of them at your right.

```

-----
(ennemies here)

XXXXXX   XXXXXX
Gb bw bw bw bwG   The white Toratsugumi go ---->
Gb bw bw bw bwG   The black Toratsugumi go <----
Gb bw bw bw bwG <----Don't stay in the middle or you'll shoot
      (b)           ennemies that belong to the next area!!!
      XXX
-----

```

I make 15 chains there before going. You can make more (22 I'm told), but it may be bad for the rest of the level. (you have to use your power gage, and that means most of the time that it will destroy an enemy belonging to the next part and thus break your combo)

Alternative Method:

Choose a side. When you've done a few chains, wait next to the Generators. If you're next to the black Generators, change to white, kill the black Toratsugumi as soon as they're out, then kill fastly all 3 Gens. It's important! When your gage is full, fly at the bottom of the screen and release. It SHOULD destroy 2 white chains and all 3 white Generators. This method also works with the other side.

The next ennemies are two rings of Utatsugumi that fly on the exact same course (which is why I can't make a little map, since b and w are on the same spots) HOWEVER, one ring turns clockwise, and the other counterclockwise. Which means that for a split second, the ennemies are one next to the other (and not one over the other, if you see what I mean. If you don't, play the game, you'll understand)

12 ennemies of each color in those rings, so all in all 8 chains.

Then come two Torafuzuku:

```

-----
b BB      WW w
BBBB     WWWW
BBb  /wWW
  \ /      <----- They shoot big lasers at their opposite sides!
(w) / \    When you destroyed one, a second one comes.
  /  \

```

Destroy them as fast as you can! The faster you did, the more "Bonus enemies" you'll encounter. Remember the middle of Chapter 1? Try using about the same method.

Before tackling said Bonus enemies, your score should have reached 4,300,000. Which means that even if you didn't get any, you would reach Rank S++ after the boss.

Those Toratsugumi appear in rows, and slowly slalom down the screen. They start in Position 1 and arrive in Position 2 one line after, and repeat the process endlessly. You can get (AFAIK) up to 10 lines. Maybe more if you are 2 players.

```

-----
b w b w b w b w b   <-- Position 1 (move -->)
b w b w b w b w b   <-- Position 2 (move <--)
b w b w b w b w b
b w b w b w b w b
b w b w b w b w b   Since they move in opposite directions,
b w b w b w b w b   for a split second they will be aligned
b w b w b w b w b   in columns of the same color. Shoot them!
b w b w b w b w b   (of course, you can shoot them down
b w b w b w b w b   each one separately, but it's slow)
-----

```

I generally get 6 lines and make 14 chains out of them. If you get 9 lines, try making 24 chains (27 should be the maximum). But it's very difficult.

You should have around 170 chains now. I've seen 184 chains, but I think more are possible. I don't really know, I'm guessing 202-203 chains. That's a whole lot, I know. Repeat after me: "the Practice Mode is my best friend..."

HOW TO CHAIN 9 LINES:

Here a bigger map: Shoot them in that order!!!

```

-----
62 54 64 71 48 75 81 78 80
 57 53 66 70 47 74 40 77 79
61 52 63 69 46 73 39 76 30
 56 51 65 67 45 72 38 27 33
60 50 59 68 44 21 37 26 29
 55 49 58 16 43 20 36 25 32
12 13 10 15 42 19 35 24 28
 09 06 08 14 41 18 34 23 31
11 05 07 04 03 17 02 22 01
-----

```

All 9 rows can appear on the same screen, but you won't have the space to pick up the downmost row, so be careful! Let's take this one step after another:

The first row appears. Before the second row has appeared, you've killed 01, 02 and 03, thus one chain worth of -black- Toratsugumi.

On the screen:

```
-----  
06 08 14 41 18 34 23 31 (goes -->)  
11 05 07 04 17 22 (goes <--)  
    <--(b)
```

As the third row appears, you should have killed 04, 05, 06, 07, and 08.

On the screen:

```
-----  
13 10 15 42 19 35 24 28 (goes -->)  
09 14 41 18 34 23 (goes <--)  
    17 22 (goes -->)  
(b)
```

As the fourth row appears, you've already shot 09, 10, 11 and 12. Even 13!

On the screen:

```
-----  
49 58 16 43 20 36 25 32 (goes -->)  
    15 42 19 35 24 (goes <--)  
    14 41 18 34 23 31 (goes -->)  
        17 22 (goes <--)  
(b)-->
```

As the fifth row appears you've killed 14, 15, 16 and wait under 17.

On the screen:

```
-----  
50 59 68 44 21 37 26 29 (goes -->)  
55 49 58 43 20 36 25 (goes <--)  
    42 19 35 24 28 (goes -->)  
    41 18 34 23 (goes <--)  
    17 22 (goes -->)  
(b)
```

A split second later, look! That's where you shoot a short burst.

```
-----  
50 59 68 44 21 37 26 29 (goes -->)  
55 49 58 43 20 36 25 (goes <--)  
    42 19 35 24 28 (goes -->)  
    41 18 34 23 (goes <--)  
    17 22 (goes -->)  
(b)
```

When the sixth row appears, use the same trick under 22.

I'd advise you to kill 22 then wait for the right moment.

On the screen:

```
----- (30) (goes <--)  
51 65 67 45 72 38 27 33 (goes -->)  
60 50 59 68 44 37 26 (29) (goes <--)  
49 58 43 36 25 32 (goes -->)
```

```
42 35 24 (28) (goes <--)  
41 34 23 31 (goes -->)  
(was line 01)
```

(b)

When the seventh row appears, you've destroyed 23-27 then 28, 29, and have already shot to destroy 30 (so that it dies just as it appears on screen).
On the screen:

```
-----  
52 63 69 46 73 39 76 30 (goes -->)  
56 51 65 67 45 72 38 (33) (goes <--)  
50 59 68 44 37 (goes -->)  
55 49 58 43 36 (32) (goes <--)  
42 35 (goes -->)  
41 34 (31) (goes <--)  
(w) (was line 01)
```

Wait for 31, 32 and 33, then get to 34. You should already be firing when the eighth row appears on the screen. (I'll consider you killed up to 36)
On the screen:

```
-----  
53 66 70 47 74 40 77 79 (goes -->)  
61 52 63 69 46 73 39 76 (goes <--)  
51 65 67 45 72 38 (goes -->)  
60 50 59 68 44 37 (goes <--)  
49 58 43 (goes -->)  
42 (goes <--)  
41 (goes -->)  
(w) (was line 01)
```

Now comes the last line and the end of the screen! Be fast or you'll miss some ships, and it's going to be hell to think of another pattern...

As the ninth row appears on the screen, you are firing and destroying black ships, more precisely 41 and up. (I'll consider you killed up to 45)

```
-----  
54 64 71 48 75 81 78 80 (goes -->)  
57 53 66 70 47 74 77 (goes <--)  
52 63 69 46 73 76 (goes -->)  
56 51 65 67 72 (goes <--)  
50 59 68 (goes -->)  
55 49 58 (goes <--)  
<-- (w) (was line 03)  
(was line 02)  
----- (was line 01)
```

Now kill up to the last row's black ship (48) then turn black and kill the last column of whites at the left edge. (49-54)

Turn immediately white and sweep the left edge of the screen, making a little flick at the right to pick 58 (it's about to disappear!) otherwise shoot all out until you've cleared 55-66.

Now there are only 3 black ships on the screen, at the other edge. Stay white and sweep through the screen until you've shot 67-75.

You have enough time, so don't mess up the last batch of enemies. Shoot precisely 76, 77, 78, then use the twin shot to pick 79, 80 and 81.

There, all done. 27 chains. Be ready for a whole lot of training, though.

Since 9 rows are really hard to get, I'll include the shooting patterns for 1 to 8 lines.

bb ww bb 04 03 05 02 06 01 1 line, 2 chains

08 05 07 13 11 14 12 ww bb 2 lines, 5 chains
09 06 10 04 03 15 02 ww 01

15 12 18 20 27 22 26 24 25 3 lines, 9 chains
13 11 17 19 09 21 08 23 07
14 10 16 04 03 05 02 06 01

14 ww 13 26 28 23 31 19(34) 4 lines, 11 chains
09 27 12 25 29 22 32 18(35)
07 05 11 24 15 21 30 17 33
08 06 10 04 03 20 02 16 01

36 15 34 19 32 24 28 39 42 5 lines, 14 chains
35 14 33 18 30 23 26 38 41
09 13 12 17 31 22 27 37 40
07 05 11 16 29 21 25 ww bb
08 06 10 04 03 20 02 ww 01

54 51 48 45 42 43 35 27 30 6 lines, 18 chains
52 50 47 44 41 21 34 26 37
53 49 46 16 40 20 38 25 29
11 13 09 15 39 19 32 24 36
12 06 07 14 38 18 31 23 28
10 05 08 04 03 17 02 22 01

50 48 56 44 39 58 57 60 bb 7 lines, 20 chains
52 47 55 43 38 59 33 ww bb
49 46 54 42 37 40 32 24 28
51 45 53 41 36 19 31 23 26
09 13 12 14 35 18 30 22 27
07 05 11 15 34 17 29 21 25
08 06 10 04 03 16 02 25 01

54 51 60 64 44 66 37 ww bb 8 lines, 23 chains
56 50 59 63 43 68 36 ww 30
53 49 58 62 42 65 35 69 27
55 48 57 61 41 67 34 24 29
52 47 45 46 40 19 33 23 26
12 13 10 15 39 18 32 22 28
07 05 09 14 38 17 31 21 25

11 06 08 04 03 16 02 20 01

And since we know that 10 lines are possible...

Note My old pattern was almost impossible to apply.

Here is Andypro's 10 rows patterns, as he showed in a prototype video.

```
54 66 60 72 73 78 87 82 85      10 lines, 29 chains
   53 65 59 71 48 77 86 81 84
52 64 58 70 47 76 40 80 83
   51 63 57 69 46 75 39 79 30
50 62 56 68 45 74 38 27 33
   49 61 55 67 44 21 37 26 29
bb ww bb 16 43 20 36 25 32
   12 13 10 15 42 19 35 24 28
07 05 09 14 41 18 34 23 21
   11 06 08 04 03 17 02 22 01
```

"Warning! The big ennemy is approaching at full throttle.

According to the data, it is identified as Butsutekkai"

Meet Buppousou. He has a big body and only 4 sensitive areas. The two first are two red protective parts. One reacts to white shots, the other to black shots. The 2 next areas are just under those protective parts. Get the protective part to open with white shot, go past it, and turn black to hit the sensitive area. The other side needs a similar treatment : open the part with black shot, fly past it and hit the sensitive area with your white shot.

Meanwhile, Buppousou will shoot at you. A lot. Especially so in Hard Mode.

Right from the start, shoot white on the left hatch. Open it completely, turn black, release your power, fly past the hatch and shoot all out in the white sensitive area. If you have released a full gage, don't worry about the closing hatch: you WILL destroy that weak point before the hatch closes down on you.

You're black, move to the right, closest to Buppousou's right wing. It shoots white from the left, black from the right, then again white from the left, and again black from the right. You should be able to absorb most black shots.

Open the hatch to half, turn white, release power, move left. The left wing starts shooting a whole lot of white bullets, you should be able to absorb more than a full gage. Empty your gage before the hatch closes, move right, turn black, open the hatch completely. Move right to absorb the black shots, fly in front of the sensitive area once you have slightly over half your gage full, turn white (this is dangerous, so beware!) and release. It should be enough to kill the boss. Time left over 77 seconds.

My record is (for now) 80, but over 73 is OK. In Prototype Mode, 97 were proven possible.

V) Chapter 3

Difficulty: Hard

Boss: Shigi

Uzura

Rank S achieved at 5,000,000

Rank S++ achieved at 5,400,000
Max score : approx. 7,400,000
DVD Score (WIZ) : 7,675,800

You may finish this level without loosing a single life and still get a lousy Rank B+, because the 3rd Chapter is the one of the most difficult to conquer.

NOTICE : I mapped the stage as it appears in NORMAL MODE. In Easy Mode, some of the parts are a lot easier to do. This means however that you get less ennemies, hence less chains.

From the very beginning, scroll up in the screen. (You absolutely need to do this.) About 2/3 up the screen is OK.

Ennemies are divided into several units :

 b
Mixed Units: wb bw (move continuously, ships of the same colors
 w meet in the middle. Wait for the right time!)

Attack commandos: -----
 w w
When they arrive w w
where you are, w--> (w) <--w

Kill the Isuka when they meet in mid-screen.
Killing both the mixed units (Utatsugumi) AND the commandos (Isuka) is going to take some training. Eventually, you will get 22 chains.

Now I will map the rest and write explanations when necessary.

```
21 XXXXXXXXXXXX MU    <-- means Mixed Unit
20 bbb  www  XX
19  XX  www  XX
18  XX  www  www
17  MU  XXXXXXXXXX
16  XX  www  bbb
15  XX  www  3w  <-- the 3w and 3b
14  www  www  3b      come later!!!
13 XXXXXXXXXXXX MU
12 bbb          XX    <-- The XX are moving blocs.
11  XX          XX      They shot huge laser beams!
10  XX          www
09  MU  XXXXXXXXXX
08  XX  www  bbb
07  XX  www
06  www  www
05 XXXXXXXXXXXX MU
04 bbb          XX
03  3w          XX
02  3b          www  <-- the 3w and 3b
01          XXXXXXXXXX  come late!!!!
```

This is how to do it: (Refer to the map, please)

As soon as you've made the 22nd chain (just before the mapped part begins), release power. It kills L 02 www. Fill up 3 blocks of your gage, release immediately to kill L 04 bbb, fill your gage as much as you can and go quickly kill L 05 MU before going back and killing 3w and 3b. Release to destroy L 06,

07, 08 www. Fill up 3 blocks and release to kill 08 bbb.
 Destroy L 09 MU, then L12 bbb, then L 13 MU.
 Release! Destroys L 10 and L 14 (left www).
 Fill up the gage and fire when you got 9 blocks. Destroys L 14, 15 and 16 www.
 Fill up your gage 3 blocks and release to destroy L 16 bbb.
 Move in to destroy L 17 MU. Go back to destroy 3w and 3b.
 After destroying 3w and 3b, release IMMEDIATELY. Kills L 18 www right.
 Fill up 3 blocks and release! Kills L 20 bbb. Fill up 9 blocks and release!
 Kills 9w L 18, 19 and 20. Go in and destroy L 21 MU.

XXXXXX XXXXXX
 W b w b w b w B <-- the W and B are
 W w b w b w b B actually 2 small
 W b w b w b w B cannons. Beware!

Here is the order: (bigger map)

```

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX    XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX    XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
30  22 20 23          14 11 13  24 <-- immediately after 24, release white power
29                                     6    and fill up to the maximum!!!!
28  21 17 19          10  9 12  5    You can time this with the big white laser.
27                                     4    It takes a little practice. At first,
26  16 15 18          8  1  7  3    you should concentrate on 1 to 24. Don't
25                                     2    kill 25-30 until you're sure you can do it.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX    XXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX    XXXX    <--- Moves up then left, shoots laser beams.

```

After that, 2 rings of Utatsugumi. They exchange their position every second.
 This part is extremely easy when you have a full gage.
 While the enemies place themselves on the screen, you can't touch them, which
 means that THEY can't touch YOU either. Fly until the middle of the ring. Wait
 for one color to circle you, and release! You should be of the same color as
 the enemies. (this is very important!!!) Kill the rest with normal shots, as
 fast as possible. You may get Bonus Enemies.

Generally a few sets of 3 Toratsugumi. One left, one right, then another one
 left, another one right, etc. It is possible to get up to 5 extra chains, but
 honestly, I have yet to do that regularly. It kinda "happened" twice to me
 until now. The point is to destroy the whole ring of white Toratsugumi with
 your black shot, then release, all that before the black enemies surround you.
 You can alternatively destroy 9 whites, release, and finish off the whites,
 but you'll get most certainly 4 extra chains.

I'm almost sure the player known as "Jason" or "JasonS" has a 78c video. You
 might want to ask him. Be aware though that it is absolutely overkill.

You have around 70 chains. 76 is OK. Which means you should be around 2,000,000
 right now.

FAITH

"In this world there is nothing absolute,
 One may someday feel unsure
 And sometimes even feel lost.
 In order to overcome this
 One must have a strong Faith
 And know how to take action."

Big white ships called Toki fall down the screen, shooting just like you. At first 6 whites, then 6 blacks, then 3 of each. It shouldn't be a problem killing them. Use your gage at the right moment to destroy them fast.

Here is a 12 extra sets method:

Start white, place yourself on the left. Kill 3 white Toki (flying slightly up) and release your gage. Fly down to the right to absorb as many bullets as you can, change to black, kill the 3 black Toki to the right (flying slightly up), release your gage, fly down to the left to absorb as many bullets as you can. Kill the next white Toki as black, fly to the right, change to white, kill the white Toki and absorb, change to black, fly to the left, kill the last white Toki and release your gage.

Then come Isuka, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, 3 whites, 3 blacks, etc. These are Bonus Ennemies. You can get in 1P Mode up to 15 extra chains. (I've achieved 14)

Then you'll see laser beams coming from the walls. In the meanwhile you'll have to destroy a few Utatsugumi flying around.

The white lasers come from the right, the black come from the left. In 2P Mode, the first player can stay all the time black and the 2P can stay all the time white (if you both stay on the same line, you'll absorb the laser beams and save each others)

```
-----  
w w  b b  
w w w w b b b  
w w w b b b b  
white laser  
<-----  
    <--(w)
```

Then the inverse:

```
-----  
w w  b b  
w w w b b b b  
w w w w b b b  
black laser  
----->  
(b)-->
```

Then white again:

```
-----  
b b  b b  
w b b w b b w  
w b b w b b w  
white laser  
<----- <--- kill the black columns, turn black and release!  
    <--(w)
```

And then black again...

```
-----
```

```

b  b  b  b
b w b w b w b
b w b w b w b
black laser <-- Kill b left, then all the whites, then release!
----->
(b)-->

```

Maximum 45 chains. (that's about another million points)

Now the space where you can move gets smaller. White suicide ships
(Isuka again) scroll down while black suicide ships scroll up.

```

-----
| w w w |
| w w |   <---- Piece of cake: kill as many as you want.
| | |     Remember to stop when you achieved a chain!
| v |
|   |
| (w) |
|   |
| ^ |
| | |
| b b |   <---- When those are all up, slalom them down and release!
| b b |     In Easy mode, slalom down and shoot them 3 after 3.

```

It goes like this for some time. I can release my gage twice. I couldn't say how many chains you should be doing here, but one thing is sure, once you know how to do this your score improves drastically. Try at least 14 chains. If you kill all ships, you can get 42 chains, but honestly I'm at a loss as to what attack pattern you then have...

What I learned from intense playing sessions is that 95% of the time you black homing lasers will automatically go shoot black enemies. Make a few white chains, release, make another few chains, release, etc. I'm myself trying to find out how much you can achieve with this attack pattern.

Now you'll see shutters that close before you. You should be in the upper half of the screen to survive. Miss Shigi is on your tail...

You should have around 3,700,000.

As more shutters close (or seem to), you'll encounter yet again a few Isuka. You'll find 4 groups of them. Between each of these groups, you'll have to destroy 3 white Utatsugumi that block your way in the shutters.

First and second group : (try shooting only one column at first)

```

-----
w
b w   <---- In Hard Mode, the first ones will be all white.
b w   The second ones will be all black.
b b   But the third and fourth will have this form!
w b
w b
w

```

(w) ->

Third and fourth group :

w
w w
b b <--- If you stay exactly in the middle, you can use the Twin shot.
b w Once you know how to do this, other gamers will stare in awe.
w w The trick : be black under the two blacks, or white under the
b b single black (but still enough in the middle to shoot both!)
b
(w)

Then 10 shutters will close really fast, while rows of enemies block your way.
This looks bad, but it's easy to survive.

b w b w
w b 9 b
b w Here the order for 3 chains -> b 8
w b In case you missed 7 b
b w a white ship along the way, b 6
w b you can use the last one 5 b
b w to complete another chain. b 4
w b You can also simply 3 b
b w stay in the middle and wait. b 2
w b 1 b

Look carefully. Did you notice? Yes, you can make 4 chains in this part. But that takes yet another load of practice. (w chain, b chain, b chain, w chain)

Then another 21 shutters will close at random. One Utatsugumi each shutter. Miss Shigi is behind you and breaks the shutters as if they were mere twigs.

(w chain, then b, w, b, w, b, w)

OK, I've received mail about this. It really IS easy. Don't look at your ship, don't look at the shutters, look at the Utatsugumi! If you can shoot them down, you're automatically placed just right to avoid the closing shutters.

In Hard Mode... I don't know. I've survived that part a few times, avoiding the black enemies. But it requires a very high amount of practice. You CAN shoot the first one as white then quickly change to black, but then you'll have to do this for all seven chains in a row! (Ludicrously difficult to achieve)

Shigi will fly through the middle of the screen! (and open the way)
Move to the left or the right to avoid her.

Then you'll see this:

Miss Shigi

w w w w

w w w w <---- in Normal and Hard Mode, be white and release power!
----- in Easy Mode, ignore them. (your gage is empty anyway)

W W W W

(w)

Then 6 white Utatsugumi will circle around Miss Shigi and the fight will start.

B BW W

BBWW

W BW B <-- The separated W and B are extra canons
 that move around Miss Shigi and fire laser beams.

(w)

Funny little detail: Miss Shigi is actually counted as a normal ennemy, which means that you should make 2 chains with her parts.

Well, what to say? You're going to have to change color very often (especially in Hard Mode). Miss Shigi's parts give residual shots when they explode, which adds (at least in Hard Mode) to the difficulty.

Of course, during the fight, it may happen that the space you're flying in gets smaller (generally from one side) so pay attention to the walls.

IRC user "knite" pointed out that my previous description wasn't really helpful, so here follows a more detailed attack pattern:

When Shigi starts shooting, you have to be white under the right-down black cannon. As white, release homing, shoot all out. Be sure to avoid the black laser by staying a tiny little bit more to the left. Follow that black cannon, i.e. sweep to the left. When it's almost dead, change to black and kill it, it gives you a lot of bullets.

Change to white. You are right now in front of the black part of Shigi's head, so you're doing good damage. The white cannons get in front of you, so you can absorb the lasers. When your gage is full, go slightly to the right and release white homing on the next black cannon (it should be coming your way just about now). That should kill it.

Stay white but scroll a little down, because the head starts to shoot, and you don't want to die on black shots now. Avoid the black shots but stay white and fire. You can even release homing, the black head will die before you can destroy any white part.

Now you've chained the black parts! So either stay white and release when you have full homing (it's a safe way) OR wait for the white cannons to be going to the sides of the head to change to black and release black quickly. You have to get quickly back to white because the white cannons are already coming your way.

You are at around 170 chains. If more, you're very good.

BTW, if you have destroyed everything possible, you should have reached the 5,000,000 mark by now.

The faster you killed her, the more ennemies you get between her and Uzura. Those Bonus Ennemies are tricky. If you kill one, two will appear out of it. It goes on like this several times...

The white ships fall from the upper left to the lower right AND REBOUND at the end of the screen and on the walls at the edges. The black ones fall from the upper right of the screen and rebound too. What I do is concentrate on one color until I've made about 12 chains, then change.

Don't worry about dying: if you feel like there are too many enemies on the screen, go all the way right or left. You can't touch the external walls, and if you're there the enemies can't touch you either. But it's all the more difficult to make lots of chains from this spot.

I always want a full gage at the start of the boss fight against Uzura, so after a while I just kill all I can and absorb the residual shots.

Just so you know, the best score I've heard of is 7,675,800. Since there is so much to absorb lying around, I'd say roughly 6,400,000 points come from the chains. That means 250-something chains. Well. Good luck?

"There is no refuge. Unable to avoid firing."

Uzura... this boss is going to kill you so many lives it's not even funny. You will need serious practice to defeat him swiftly and without dying once.

```

      W B
    B  x  W
  W    x    B
B x  xXx  x W
W(w) x    B
    B  x  W
      W B
```

It looks like a ring of 14 towers shooting towards the center. It has 4 lines of blocks (North / South / East / West) and those lines happen to be in motion. In Easy Mode, the blocks on those lines don't move. In Normal and Hard Mode, they do. The ring of towers moves counterclockwise, then after 50 seconds clockwise. In Hard Mode, they move very fast and shoot a whole lot.

14 towers mean 7 white and 7 black towers. Defeat all of one color, and Uzura's very body will start shooting laser beams (2 blacks, 2 whites).

My record (for now) is 73. In Prototype Mode, I did take her at 91, but with 8 full gages....

One hint: as soon as you can move, place yourself in front of the next black tower but quite down on the screen, and release your power (you're white) It will kill the black tower BEHIND you, which will be later of great use (you'll get a second and a half to take a break later on)

Safe strategy:

Since the tower ring moves faster each time you destroy a tower, just shoot them down to very little life and release your gage. It should take care of about 5 or more towers at once, Uzura starts shooting, and you can release another full gage 3 seconds later that takes care of the rest.

(I got the Safe strategy from the Ikaruga Boards on GameFaqs)

My usual strategy:

I'm starting black. At 9 o'clock, I slip between the left moving block and the black tower. Staying black, I shoot the white tower in front of me and destroy

it. The wheel of death starts spinning slowly.

Now, changing to white as the white, destroyed tower gets to my side, I shoot the black tower in front of me until it has very little life-force left. I do NOT destroy it.

Changing my position slightly, but staying in the up-left part of the wheel, I wait for the next tower to come into my line of fire. Again, I shoot at it with the inverse polarity until it's almost dead, but I DON'T destroy it.

After a while, you will notice that the white tower you DID destroy at the beginning is coming again to you. When it's positioned at your left, you should be white, shoot the black tower in front of you until it dies then release your homing! (your homing will be full by now)

It destroys 5-6 other towers, and the core of the boss will start to shoot huge laser beams.

For some reason, I'm always closest to the white beam, so I jump into it, absorb like crazy and release once again when my gage is full. The boss dies.

Again, thanks to "knite" for pointing out the lack of explanations on the boss.

VI) Chapter 4

Difficulty: Very Hard

Boss: Misago (comes 3 times)

Rank S achieved at 5,600,000

Rank S++ achieved at 6,000,000

Max score : approx. 7,720,000

DVD Score (WIZ) : 7,803,280

OK, prepare yourself. This is a stage that I absolutely adore, because it's both beautiful and very hard. Plus it will make you understand very precisely how good or how bad you are at this game.

It starts with 9w and 9b (Toratsugumi). The white enemies start at the left, the black ones at the right. Either destroy the black ones first (stay white the whole time) or try to stay white in the middle and destroy all whites. I guess the first method is slightly easier, but I prefer the second method one myself.

Then come 3 white Toki at the upper left, followed by 3 black ones at the upper right. Since they shoot (and quite a lot at that) you MUST take them down with the same color.

Then come 3 black Toki from the upper left, and 3 white ones from the lower right. Followed by 3 white ones from the upper left and 3 black ones from the lower right. It looks like this:

```
-----  
B-> B-> B->  "  
(w) " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
" " " " " " "  
<-W <-W <-W <-B  
-----
```

Of course, you're not going to let them. Be black and kill the first 2 black Toki as soon as possible. Turn white and stay where I drew the ship on the map.

Release the power. You have to make sure the third black Toki dies before your homing lasers shoot down the 3 white ships!

You're white, the next 3 white enemies come. Use exactly the same method, this time turning black and emptying a black gage.

As soon as the black enemy dies, more Toratsugumi come down the screen.

```
-----  
www bb www  
www bb www           These are Bonus Enemies. Be fast...  
www bb www         <-- stay black right in the middle. 8 extra chains.  
|                   |  
->                  <-
```

(b)

If you have shot down every ship, you have 20 chains. That's the maximum.
Your score should be around 384,040. (my max 406,340)

REALITY

"And then Reality reared it's ugly head.
What did you seek...
What did you see...
What did you hear...
What did you think...
What did you do..."

The cute little flying fortress you see in the background approaching far too fast for your tastes is sweet little Misago. She has a problem, namely you, and she's going to state her mind clearly.

First, take a look at her:

```
-----  
      /-----\  
     /         \  
    /           \  
   /   XXX   \  
  /   XXXXX  \  
 \   XXXXX  /  
  \   XXX   /  
   \         /  
    \       /  
     \-----/
```

You will never see her in her entirety on the screen (except in the background) and the most impressive about her is the way she shoots. She has 6 cannons that shoot black counterclockwise, and 6 cannons that shoot white clockwise. She has a moving external wall that can squeeze you into scrap if you don't pay attention. She will show you her other secrets as you progress through the stage.

First, move between her core and the external wall and destroy the 6 black Utatsugumi at the left. Then for a while will come only white enemies (from

both left and right). And then sweet Misago starts shooting.

It's going to take a lot of practice to get used to this fire pattern, but you have to practice that stage up to the point where you do this automatically. Basically, you'll have to be black when you move upwards or to the right, and white when you move left or down.

If you play in Easy Mode, the external walls will protect you from her shots. But in Normal / Hard Mode, extra enemies will appear around her external wall, and they shoot, so you won't be secure there. It looks like this:

```
-----  
      /  _____  \ w  
      /  bbbwb  \ b  
          ww ww    w  
      /  XXX www  \ b  
      /  XXXXX bbw \ w  
      \  XXXXX bbb / b  
      \  XXX bbb  / w  
          www wb   b  
      \  www  / w  
      \  ww  / b  
-----
```

Does it look impressive? It is. And if you look at the stage description, you'll notice you can get almost 8,000,000 in this stage alone! This means killing all the enemies inside and outside the wall.

Start with getting used to the rhythms of that boss. Inside the wall, enemies appear in group of 3, so it's not a problem to get chains. The problem starts when you shoot enemies outside the wall. For now, just ignore them, OK?

Here a little list of what enemies get out and how:

- 6 black Utatsugumi from the upper left (2c)
- 24 white Utatsugumi from both left and right (8c)
- 18 black Utatsugumi from both left and right (6c)

In the middle row, 51 Utatsugumi from the upper left (17c)

- they alternate (3w, 3b, 3w, 3b, etc, end with 3w)
- they have constant speed
- if you concentrate on them only, you should survive this part easily

In the row closest to Misago, a black Utatsugumi chain will come down. Follows close a white Utatsugumi chain that comes up. Immediately after another black chain comes down, followed by a white chain. (4c)

In the row furthest from Misago, a white chain comes down, then a black chain comes up, then another white down, and then another black up. (4c)

Outside Misago in Normal and Hard Mode, 26 white Utatsugumi and 25 black Utatsugumi, alternating (w b w b w b etc). (worth 16 chains)

HOW TO CHAIN THAT PART:

Start as black, move at the top left corner. Black Utatsugumi fall in the screen, kill all 6 of them. Sweep to the right and pick up 6 white shrimps, wait at the right for 3 more. Sweep to the left and pick up 9 whites.

Sweep right and get 3 whites + 6 blacks.

Sweep left and pick up 3 whites and 3 blacks.

Get to the center and watch the top left corner. When you feel the 3rd black shrimp will enter the screen, release your full black gage. It kills 9 blacks.

Up to that point, you have 16 chains.

The outer ring of Utatsugumi appears. If you want to know how to chain those, watch the DVD run and the omake section. You can also look for Rjpageuk's 234c video in prototype mode.

Seeing that chaining that ring is probably the most insane maneuver in the whole game (it's a close call with Hard Tageri bullet eat), I won't talk about it. I can chain about 11 chains out of 24 in there, but it seems to be my best.

Anyway. Concentrate now on the ennemies "inside" the walls. You will have to change polarity very often in there, so train this area aplenty.

First, get the white chain at the right. Follows a black chain. Another white. Another black. (4c)

A black chain appears just left from the next white chain.

Pick up the white chain first (5), then as you get the black (6) a white chain appears under you, at your left. Get it. (7c)

Meanwhile another black falls down, and at its right a white one.

Pick the black chain (8), then sweep right. You kill 2 white chains. (10c)

A black chain falls down, another one is climbing up.

Shoot the falling one (11), kill the next white chain. (12c)

Now the next black chain should be just side to side with the climbing black chain : kill both of them at once. (14c)

Let the next white chain come nearer. You will notice another white chain under your ship, climbing near the core.

Get slightly lower in the screen, so that you can pick first the white chain in front of you (15), then the white chain that was under you. (16c)

You can now pick up the 2 black chains in front of you. (18c)

Two white chains are now coming, they shouldn't be a problem. (20c)

Wait for the next black chain.

As you pick it up (21) you notice a black chain climbing under you. Wait.

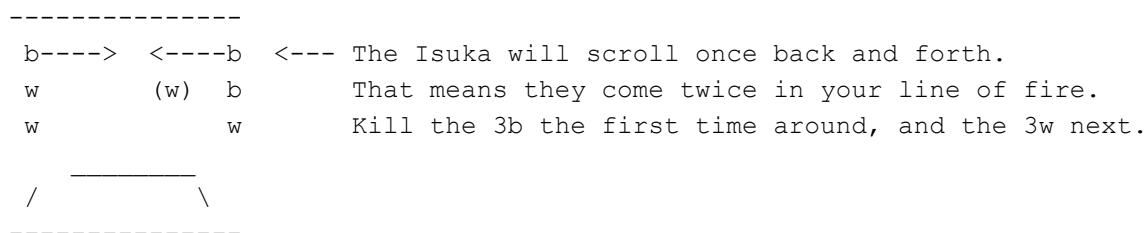
Pick up the white chain in front of you (22). Go to the LEFT.

Pick up the next black chain (23), then going to the right the black chain you have been ignoring until now. (24c)

And from the left comes the last white chain. (25c)

Once you've scrolled all up, a lot of white little ships will circle extremely close to Misago (extra 14 chains). The wall will shut, so you'll have to get outside.

If your chain status is empty (i.e. you've just completed a chain), you can try killing the black ennemies that come next.



Another load of white ennemies come from the left, as well as a few black ennemies. If you play in Normal or Hard Mode, place yourself like this:

```

-----
bbb-><-bbb
  (w)
www-><-www
  _____ w
 /           \
-----

```

Once you've killed all black ships, release your full white gage. It should give you enough time to place yourself back inside Misago. (2 + 12 chains)

You'll have to scroll Misago down. It looks the same as the first part, except the enemies are now at the left edge. Just try to stay alive at first, OK? We can talk about chains later.

OK, so you're more interested in chains?

If you ignore the enemies at the side, you should get:

- a middle row, starting and ending with white, all in all 17 chains.
- in the row closest to Misago, a black chain from below, a white chain from above, then another black chain from below and another white chain from above.
- in the row furthest from Misago, the exact contrary : white chain from below, black from above, then white from below, then black from above.
- outside Misago, 26 black and 25 white Utatsugumi, alternating. (16 chains)

HOW TO CHAIN THAT PART:

Again, I won't tell how to chain the outer ring, it IS insane.

Plus, no one in the world (until now) can get all extra 16 chains. WIZ gets 11.

From the right, a white chain. Then black. Then white. (3c)

You'll see a black chain climbing under you.

Get lower on the screen, pick it up (4) then the black chain falling. (5c)

Follow 2 white chains getting down. (7c) A white chain climbs.

Kill the next black chain (8), a black chain appears above the next white.

This is tricky:

Get lower to the left, pick up the NEXT white chain (9), then wiggling left and right pick up with single shots the climbing one. You will wiggle, because as you fly left to pick up the first white shrimp, the next one will be directly under you, so you'll have to fly right to get out of the way, only to fly once again left to pick it up, fly again out of the way, and AGAIN fly left to complete the chain. (10c) It IS tricky at first, so train that part!

You now see 2 black chains in front of you, easy. (12c)

Wait for the next chains.

Pick up the next white (13), then the next black. (14c)

You should see a black chain under you. Get in the low right area!

Pick that black chain (15c) and stay about where you are, go lower yet.

Now, in front of you are 2 white chains, and a 3rd one comes suddenly from your right. If you're not low enough, you'll die!

Pick those 3 chains (twin shot is OK) (18c).

Now pick up chains as you go left again: one black (19), one white. (20c)

Two black chains are at your upper left and fall down.

This part is dangerous in Normal and Hard Mode, because the shrimps of the outer ring are shooting at you. Pay close attention to your polarity!

Kill each black shrimp separately! No twin shot! Get 2 chains (22c)

Now pick up the next white chain (23c), wait a little.

You should have no problems getting the next black chain. (24c)

And even less problems getting the last white chain. (25c)

Once you've scrolled all the way down, Misago will drop the wall. She prepares 12 new cannons (6 black, 6 whites) and starts laser beaming around her. One set of beams spreads out clockwise (black) the other counterclockwise (white).

wXXXXXw
bXXXb
wbw

(b)

You'll have enough to do as it is, I know, but you're supposed to make chains here. What I do : place myself as white at about 2 o'clock. If you're placed correctly, a white laser hits you dead on. The black lasers look like they will hit you, but they will start moving in the other direction!
Now, from there, go clockwise while twin shooting (you're still white). As you go, you should pick up 3 black cannons.
Change quickly to black and move fast again at the up-right corner. Change again to white. As you go clockwise again, pick up the last 3 blacks. As soon as you killed the last black, release your full white gage. Remaining time between 38 and 40 seconds.

Counting the first Boss part of Misago, I have around 130 chains. If you followed this FAQ so far, you should have 124c. Your score should be slightly higher than 3,000,000.

Misago retreats and will rotate upside down. In the meanwhile, some of her minions will be dancing before your eyes, tempting you to make more chains. However, this isn't exactly easy.

b b_b w
b b_w w
w w_w b
| |_ |
v |_ | v
^ |_ | ^
| | | |
b (w) w
w b
w b

You'll understand that ASCII map when you'll see the enemies moving. The ones in the middle turn at 90- angles and switch sides between each height level. The ones at the side are tricky. If you wait a little, they look like this:

b or w
b w
b/w w/b <--- they occupy the same space.
w b
w b

For a split second afterwards, they will be in the right order!
Bigger map:

WWW BBB BBB WWW

(w)

Three things:

The "BBB" and "WWW" count for one ennemy.

You can get under them.

They turn over themselves and spread bullets.

The easiest method is to kill the black cannons first. If your gage isn't more than half-full, turn white and release your gage, turn immediately black and absorb the 7-way shots, firing all the while. In Easy Mode I'd advise you to keep whatever shots you can absorb for later. In Normal Mode, you'll absorb about 70 residual shots when the 7-way cannon explodes. Release as a black! You should finish the cannons with 20 to 24-25 seconds left.

If your gage is full:

Place yourself right in the middle of the two black cannons, go straight up. When you're at mid screen, go slightly down and to the left and release as black. Absorb the residual shots, fly up left and kill the last cannon, absorb and release still as black. Be sure to train this little trick, because it's very easy to mess up. I mess it up about 1/3rd of the time...

Even better method:

When you are at that aforementioned spot, release white and immediately scroll up then right! It should kill all black cannons, and you're then right in front of the white 7 ways cannon. Shoot all out, absorb about 10 bars, get out of the way (left-up is best) change to black and release. It kills the rest.

HOW TO FIND THE SPOT?

When the turrets are over, press pause. Look at Misago in the background.

There's a column of metal pipes and wires, see?

There is at about mid screen some kind of round platform with a kind of metal fence around it.

Just there, you should see a huge white metal pipe going up-right. (like the jugular above your collarbone)

At the height where the fence stops, position your ship over that huge pipe, ever so slightly to the left. The spot is right there.

Pic to prove it is taken from a video, but seeing I have no webspace, I'll wait for a future update to give some link.

You should have more than 4,000,000 now. If you don't, you're going to need a miracle to get Rank S++.

Misago retreats once again to show you what she's got. In the meanwhile, Isuka ships will tackle you.

They come in groups of 3 and throw themselves at you. Once they took their aim, move slightly to the side and kill them in groups of 3.

After those little groups, a whole ring (white) will do the same. Retreat under the aim point and use your Twin Shot. If you destroy them all, a black ring will come as a Bonus.

In this last part, you can make 29 chains.

If you killed all enemies except the ones outside Misago (as you scroll her up and down) you should have 209 chains.

"There is no refuge. Unable to avoid firing"

Misago... now comes the time to end it all.

She ensnares you into inside an artificial arena. At the center, her weak point, protected by 3x4=12 layers of protection. (6 whites, 6 blacks). For the walls of the arena, she fires continuous laser beams. Depending of the difficulty mode, these are:

Of one color in Easy Mode.

Of two colors in Normal Mode. (bw or wb)

Of four colors in Hard Mode (bwbw or wbwb)

First things first, you'll have to destroy her protective layers. A third of your gage will be necessary for each protection. Once you've destroyed two protective layers, you will be able to stay in the space there and fire some more.

```

-----
      XXXXX
     WWWXXXWWW
    XXWWWXWWWXX
   XXXWWWWWXXX
  XXXWWWWWXXX
   XWWWX

```

```

C (b)           C
 \             /
  \_C_____C_/
-----

```

Of course, things are not so easy. While the outer wall moves clockwise, Misago spins on herself counterclockwise (she does move a little excentered though) and reversed.

Once you have destroyed 4 layers, you can access her core. It's white. In Easy Mode, that's no problem. In Normal and Hard Mode, the core shoots extremely powerful laser beams (not the whole time though). Even if you absorb, you're most likely to get pushed back to one of the walls of the corridor and crash.

Try to have more than 57 secs left when you kill her. Once you can do that, train to find new attack patterns. This will help you get used to the cannons. Eventually you should be able to kill her with over 75 seconds to spare.

Try this: As soon as you can move, be white, move in front of the white layer. Turn black, shoot it down, follow her to the right, turn white, shoot the layer down. This gets dangerous but try it: stay in that "channel" and turn black, destroy the third barrier. Turn white and release, it breaks the last barrier and Misago should start shooting a big white laser from the core. Absorb and release, after 2 times absorb until you can safely get out, turn black and release. It should be enough to kill her. You have 76 seconds left or so. Note that you can try it with the layers at your left; at the beginning, just wait as black until it moves in front of you, then follow it. It's less dangerous and just as effective.

Difficulty: Very Easy / Very Hard

Boss: Tageri (3 forms)

Rank S achieved at 4,600,000

Rank S++ achieved at 5,000,000

Max score : approx. 5,860,000

DVD Score (WIZ) : 5,856,040

This stage is my favorite. Tageri is an excellent boss, the stage flies by very fast, and the enemies are all very impressive. The music score is also very good.

It starts with Toratsugumi suicide troops that fly exactly in your direction. Stay at the beginning at about mid-screen, and move ever so slowly down. In Normal and Hard Mode, you'll have more than enough residual shots to fill your gage about 6 times, so don't worry about releasing the power. This goes on for 127 white enemies. That means 42 chains and 1 enemy, try to get 42 chains.

Then come 3 white Renjaku shooting (they disappear fast), then another 6 white ones, then immediately after 6 black ones.

Kill the 3 first Renjaku, then place yourself 3/4ths of the screen to the right, in the lower part of the screen. Change to black. When you know that the next white Renjaku is about to appear, sweep to the left. Now everything goes fast: as soon as you've killed 5 whites, change to white to finish the last one, then immediately sweep to the right to kill all 6 black Renjaku.

Alternative method: (even better)

Kill all 127 Toratsugumi, then all 3 Renjakus. Now, leave the rightmost Renjaku alone, stay white and move to the left to kill 5 white Renjaku with your normal shot. Then immediately fly to the right, still firing white, to kill 6 black Renjaku with your normal shot. Your gage is already full, you won't have to wait at the next enemies.

After that comes a ring of white Renjaku, they shoot all in the middle. Stay in the middle, white, absorb all. As soon as your gage is full, release! And absorb (you'll hear "Energy Max"). Immediately after come 12 black ships (once again a ring). Release. You should reach the 1,300,000 mark.

After that the Toratsugumi suicide squadrons attack anew. This time they appear in a circle, but each one after the other (very fast). Kill what you can and release your power, absorb as much as possible and repeat with the next flow of enemies.

This goes on for another white 95 enemies (31 chains and 2 enemies). Stop at 31 chains! (important)

Then 3 white Toki come from the left, and slightly later 3 black ones from the right.

WW BB
WW WW BB BB

(b) then (w)

Once you've destroyed them, 3 white Toki appear at the upper edge and 3 black

ones slightly later at the lower edge. If your gage is full, simply release the power. You need at least 9 blocks to destroy them all. You reach 2,250,000.

WW W WW
 (b)

BB B BB

Alternative Method for Hard Mode!

 WW BB
WW WW BB BB The point is to release your homing missiles
 and of course to absorb like crazy!
 (w) then (b)

You need to have absorbed at least 4 or 5 blocks!

WW W WW
 (w)
 Release white, absorb the maximum.
 Then release once again white.
 Turn immediately black.

BB B BB

And then the most impressive enemies appear on the screen : the Chougenbou. They shoot about 150 bullets each second and liberate over 120 when you kill them in Normal and Hard Mode. Just stay white. Once you've killed one, it also liberates 11 Utatsugumi. Once you've killed most of them another Chougenbou appears...

<-- WWWWWWW -->
 WWWWW
 (w)

Chougenbou are "Bonus Enemies". You'll most certainly encounter 3 or 4. If you get faster, you can encounter up to 7 of them, but in order to do this you must try to take them down as a black ship. It prevents you from absorbing their huge number of residual shots...

Look at the ASCII map. There's a reason why I made it that way. Stick as close as you can to their mouth as white to get the better score. You will fill up your gage each and every second, so you can use your homing twice to kill them, then once again to kill the ring of Utatsugumi. (you are so close to the

Chougenbous that you will be INSIDE the ring when it appears)

You have something between 106 and 118 chains (maximum), and probably around 3,000,000. The last Chapter begins...

METEMPSYCHOSIS

"And then the Karma will go back
To the will it belonged to before,
And will shake awake the First One,
The first conscious being still present
At the deepest corner of one's memories.
And so, the Ikaruga departs..."

...and ends right there. Meet Tageri.

"I am the One who allows you to live.
I told you to seek to walk down the right path...
Are you telling me you don't understand this?"

He has 4 snake-like heads. They shoot a few bullets (even more when you've destroyed them) At the side, hand-like robots shoot a grid of lasers.

BB WW WW BB
H H

(w)

Sorry, but the grid of lasers I can't map. Imagine that both "H" shoot a 9-way laser, each way being of another color.

Basically, the trick is to absorb all you can and to release your gage on the each of the opposite color. But it will take time until you can move on the grid without dying once.

You have 80 seconds to destroy it. Try to remain with over 50 sec left. With a little training, you should be able to achieve between 57 and 62 seconds.

You start with a full white gage. Release on the left black head and move to the other. The hands start shooting. Absorb the white lasers and release a full gage. It should kill the right black head. Now change color and move left until the next two black lasers meet, absorb and release a full gage. Move immediately left, change to white. When the left black head has died, move to the next black lasers, change color and release. It should finish off the last white head, you should have 57-59 seconds to spare.

When all 4 heads have been destroyed, he reveals another face : one bigger big black snake head, and a white one.

"You can't feel what you see...
But you can feel what you don't see.
Is that what you're trying to tell me?"

The hands now shoot about 5-7 bullets each and every second. Meanwhile, a serpent-like little ship will aim at you and let a trail of laser behind (which you must absorb if you want to move out.) Of course, you will get a white AND a black serpent. (it would be too easy)

BBBBXXXWWWW
H H

(b)

As you see, I start with the white head. That's because the black head is the first to shoot. I can stay black and absorb the bullets for a little while before moving out of the way.

You have another 80 seconds. Try to destroy it with over 50 to spare. With training you might achieve up to 64. (very dangerous though. 63 is easier)

Look at the map. Stay here as long as you can, if you must move then fly straight up towards the white head. Then absorb as much black as you can while scrolling down. The white serpent should get out about now. Lead him down as much as possible, then fly towards it, move out at the last moment and finish off the white head. You should succeed. If not, no problem, move straight left until you're under the black head, turn white, release your full gage, move downright and this time make sure you finish the white head. Turn white, move left, and when he's coming too close to you fly left and absorb the new white serpent. Release. It should be enough. You have 53 to 60 seconds left.

"You are aware of this, too, aren't you?
Until the very end of Time, you won't ever escape this Metempsychosis"

And now his third form. Tageri is, at the core, a giant Ying-Yang ball. He inverses polarity every second (faster as he takes damage) and shoots 12 homing lasers (which means he has your super attack down pat). The hands shoot bullets vaguely in your direction. In Easy Mode only a few, in Normal Mode you should have trouble avoiding them, and in Hard Mode you MUST absorb some of them if you want to have enough space to move.

The method to win is very easy: stay in front of him, always the same color as he is. Once you've absorbed his homing lasers, release immediately. He will inverse polarity before your lasers hit him, so he will take double damage. He has something like 12 full life bars in Normal Mode. (Slightly Orange, Yellow, Light Green, Dark Green, Light Blue, Dark Blue, Light Purple, Dark Purple, Purple Grey, Grey, Dark Grey, White if memory serves right.)

For the people who want a better score, absorb the white shots from the head at the beginning. Place yourself as white on the head, release your gage when it's half filled, wait for it to go max, get to the side, switch to black, release, change immediately to white and get back in front of Tageri. It may only be an extra 20k, but it's nonetheless an extra 20k.

You have once again 80 seconds to kill him.

In Easy Mode, you kill him at 61 sec left (provided you didn't die in between)

In Normal and Hard Mode, once the timer reaches 60, FEAR will install itself in your heart: Tageri starts -shooting-. And I mean SHOOTING. To give you an idea, after 5 seconds there will be 12 white homing lasers, 90 white shots and 60 black shots on the screen, plus the ones from the hands. The bullets go slowly down the screen, in columns of 3.

```

-----
      bWWhWWb      <--- the "h" is Tageri's head.
H bbWWWWWWWWbb H
  bbbbWWWWWWbbbb
wwwwwwwwwwwwwwww
bwwwwwwwwwwwwwwb
bbbwww(w)wwwbbb
bbb          bbb
-----

```

You get the idea? It's filled with bullets.
Destroy Tageri as soon as you can and you get 55 or 56 seconds left.

"And so... walk that path until the End, so you don't regret anything.

'I am not alive, thus I can't die.
 I won't give up even if my Ideal isn't fulfilled.
 My will, just as my regrets, won't ever die... '
 We should all have known this!

Do you think we will ever see the Freedom?"

EXTRA NOTES:

Let us think for a moment. We get points for absorbing bullets. Hmm. The 12 homing lasers bring 12,000. If we add, say, 20 bullets each second, that makes 14,000 points and more each second (actually more, since Tageri is now inverting polarity every 6/10th of second).

If you kill Tageri as fast as possible, that makes :
Your Score (around 3,200,000) + {(59+60+55)*10,000} = 4,940,000. (Rank S+)

However, if you wait until the last second before killing him...
(3,200,000) + (14,000*54*10/6) + {(59+60+1)*10,000} = 5,678,000 (Rank S++)

This is how you do this:

```

-----
      bWWhWWb
H bbWWWWWWWWbb H
  bbbbWWWWWWbbbb
wwwwwwwwwwwwwwww
bwwwwwwwwwwwwwwb
bbbwww(w)wwwbbb
bbb          bbb
-----

```

OK, you're about in this situation. By now, you should have stopped shooting, because that would kill Tageri. He should have less than a third of his last life bar left. (important!)
Move slightly up, then left, down and right. This way you will (more or less)

absorb a circle of bullets, which offers you a little spare room for you to change color. (and a place to escape if the bullets from the hands come too close to you).

Since you always stay at about mid-screen, that means that the room behind your ship is almost always free. It's a nice contrast on the picture, and will give a little rest to your nerves. You won't have the constant pressure "one wrong move and everything's over!". It sounds like nothing, but absorbing this extra space should help you keep your cool.

At about 30 seconds left, you should start getting confident. Try to watch the clock few and far between. When you've seen something under 10, count the seconds. Release your gage at 2 or 1 if Tageri has only very few life-force left.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

If you die twice during Tageri's last form, he WON'T shoot at you. (Only the homing lasers and the hands). That's why you're better off killing him sooner if you notice that you can't adapt to the flow of bullets. Better safe than sorry.

In Hard Mode, this doesn't apply. You're really better off killing him ASAP. If you train long enough to almost dot-eat him, you should get over 6 million points, about 1,8 million come from absorbing the shots of his last form. But one wrong move and you're losing precious lives.

Tageri in Hard Mode is insanely hard to beat. Really. At about 54 seconds left, he changes polarity every half-second, actually even faster. You will barely have the time to change polarity and move up just enough to absorb 3 rows of bullets. You won't be able to make some free space around you. The method there is to absorb a free space over 1 or 2 rows of bullets, then change to the other color (stop moving!) so that you absorb his homing missiles, and immediately change back to absorb the last row, change again to absorb 1 or 2 rows, etc. You can slow him down if you just start hurting him (deplete about 3-4 life bars) then wait. He'll be building his speed up to the maximum at 48 seconds left and not 54. But after that you'll have 7 or 8 life bars left to deplete, and honestly you'll already have enough to do as it is.

What you do is up to you. Train like crazy in Practice Mode, it's there for a reason!

VIII) Extra Inning

Difficulty: Very Hard

Boss: Ubusunagami ouki no kai

No Rank

Max score : between 4,190,000 (arcade options) and 9,690,000 (beginner options)

A huge glowing yellow crystal floats in front of you. Yes, yellow. Not black nor white, freaking damn yellow.

"Restrained devices are deactivated, you can't shoot anymore"

YYY

YYYYY

YYY

At first you'll have to avoid / absorb shots. It shoots white clockwise and black counterclockwise. If you survive this for 10 seconds it will send you dart-like lasers (these aim directly for you).

To survive this, you can fly around him. It's fairly easy to do even when the dart-like lasers start appearing. If you're not confident in your skills, just stay about 2/3rds down the screen and change color whenever you need to.

If you survive yet another 10 seconds, it changes the strategy. Four laser beams (that move with you) plus extremely fast rings of bullets. Of course, each ring is of a different color. And of course of different speed. If he shoots a slow white ring, be sure that a fast black ring will meet you head on before the white ring had a chance to get to you.
If you survive yet another 10 seconds it sends 4 times more dart-like lasers.

Surviving this is quite easy as well. Basically, you will have to change color faster and faster, the difficulty will be provided by the dart-like lasers. If you see one of them appearing near you and if you think you have more than enough time to absorb it, do absorb it as soon as possible. They have the nasty habit of delaying their attack until the last possible moment, so take steps to avoid this.

If you survive 10 seconds of this it will stop moving the laser beams and stop sending darts. It then lets the laser beams move clockwise or counterclockwise (depends) and shoot bullets in all directions, slowly.
If you survive 10 seconds, the speed of the laser beams increases drastically.

This is, honestly speaking, the only difficulty of this boss. I still lose lives there. The point is that the closer you are to the boss, the less you will need to move to absorb all the bullets of a set color. It is easy at first, but after a few seconds your eyes will have trouble telling the colors apart (it sounds stupid, but it really IS the case). If you start putting distance between your ship and the boss, you will at first have less problems avoiding the shots -in front- of you, but you're most likely to die because of the shots -beside- you.

You CAN die even when the timer is at 0. Don't relax until the game goes automatically to the last sequence!

"Release the restrain device. Using the released power may result the possibility of destruction of the ship."

"You did your best. Was I helpful for you?"

"I am deeply grateful to you."

"Do you think... we did the right thing?
It's alright... I'm sure that sometimes,

The day will come where we understand each other.
And then we'll walk together into the far future...
Because Life is given from one generation to the next one"

EXTRA NOTES:

For each spare life, you get 500,000.
You can absorb bullets for about between 120,000 and 190,000.
Hence a maximum of 4,190,000.

If you play with other options, you can make more than 40,000,000. But these options aren't valid in the Challenge Mode, so don't use them. It will just give you a harder time to get used to the game. But it may make it easier for you to get new levels for the Practice Mode.

Theoretical Best Score :

```
4,240,000 +
6,260,000 +
7,400,000 +
7,720,000 +
5,860,000 +
 190,000 =
-----
31,670,000 +
 9,500,000 =
-----
41,170,000
```

Lives left * 500,000.

If you play in Extend 1 with 4 spare lives, that means
 $4 + 15 = 19 * 500,000 = 9,500,000$

IX) Chain Grid (slightly off I fear!)

Here I'll write down what chain and score milestones you *should* meet while playing. I'm roughly evaluating my *best* performance.

Some players score much better!

1) IDEAL

Text Sequence:	22c,	418,220.	-->	412,000 is OK
Clouds:	39c,	911,160.	-->	890,000 is OK
Mid-chapter:	74c,	1,860,000.	-->	1,728,000 is OK (70c)
After Ajisashi:	110c,	2,796,000.	-->	2,680,000 is OK (106c)
Bonus:	130c,	3,330,000.	-->	That one is up to you!
Eboshidori:	74,	4,112,180.	-->	72 is OK. Aim for 3,500,000.

2) TRIAL

Text sequence:	42c,	5,075,380.	-->	4,200,000 is OK. (38c)
Before blocks:	70c,	5,800,380.	-->	4,900,000 is OK. (66c)
+ 2 Generators:	101c,	6,585,480.	-->	5,700,000 is OK. (95c)
- 6 Generators:	142c,	7,675,480.	-->	6,850,000 is OK. (136c)
Torafuzuku:	170c,	8,455,480.	-->	7,500,000 is OK. (162c)
Bonus:	188c,	8,872,480.	-->	That one is up to you!
Buppousou:	80,	9,779,420.	-->	73 is OK. Aim for 8,500,000.

3) FAITH

Text sequence: 78c, 11,859,220. --> 10,450,000 is OK. (76c)
Isuka Up&Down: 120c, 12,945,220. --> 11,500,000 is OK. (116c)
Shutters: 148c, 13,670,220. --> 12,200,000 is OK. (140c)
After Shigi: 186c, 14,675,220. --> 13,050,000 is OK. (170c)
Bonus: 202c, 15,115,220. --> That one is up to you!
Uzura: 73, 15,954,660. --> 64 is OK. Aim for 14,000,000.

4) REALITY

Text sequence: 20c, 16,360,260. --> 14,380,000 is OK. (20c)
Misago 1: 41, 129c, 19,240,260. --> 16,800,000 is OK. (106c)
Misago 2: 27, 183c, 20,695,260. --> 17,850,000 is OK. (146c)
Isuka: 212c, 21,443,220. --> 18,600,000 is OK. (175c)
Misago Boss: 78, 23,028,560. --> 73 is OK. Aim for 20,000,000.

5) METEMPSYCHOSIS

Text sequence: 114c, 26,171,260. --> 22,900,000 is OK. (106c)
Tageri: 59-60-1, 28,761,580. --> 24,800,000 is OK. (54-56-55)
Last Boss: 8 lives, 32,905,280. --> Aim for 27,400,000 (5 lives)

X) Extras

Gallery Mode 2 Texts

Shinra: He has an almost stubborn faith in his beliefs, but at the same time his young age makes him sometimes reckless. However, in complete contrast to his outrageous looks, he can keep his temper in check. Since his goal in life is to have absolutely no regrets when his time has come, some people may think he's eager to die.

Kagari: A former Hitekkai pilot of the Hourai Army, she battled against Shinra piloting a Butsutekkai. As a second generation pilot, her genes were enhanced, which gave her an incredible resistance compared to normal pilots. She lost to Shinra in battle, and was saved from the crashing of her ship. After that, partially trusting him but partially doubting him too, she became interested in Shinra's Life Philosophy and now fights at his side, piloting the Ginkei.

Old Man Kazamori: Kazamori is the Elder of the "Ikaruga Village", which became a place where people got ridden of older folks due to the political actions of Hourai. He is wise, can see the bigger picture behind the little things in society, and can take the right decisions at the right time. He is thus a big mental support to Shinra. He built the Ikaruga with the help of Amanai, Shinkai and a few others. He threw himself into the battle because he believes someday freedom will come to the people.

Amanai: Before he was sent to the "Ikaruga Village", he was an incredibly skilled Hitekkai blueprints engineer. At first he lost the will to live when he arrived, and looked then more like a living corpse than anything else, but Kazamori could talk him into helping create the Ikaruga battleship, which he drew the blueprints for, and even assembled most of the parts. He has this somewhat crazy side, just as any genius engineer, and has

quite some difficulties to be sincere with other people, but he is good at heart.

Shinkai: A little obnoxious, somewhat crude maybe, he is the Mayor of the Ikaruga village, for he knows how to take care of people in need. He's as straightforward as he looks to be, but being no expert when it comes down to emotions, he sometimes can get on your nerves. He's a kind of a "big brother" to Shinra and is the one who introduced him to Amanai, even helping the both to become friends. He knows quite a few things about machinery, but since Amanai hates his rough ways with delicate, precise work, he's only allowed to help when the team needs brute strength.

Hourai Tenrou: She was an Esper, so when she found the Stone-like in a desert cave in the depths of her country, she was downright assaulted with strong empathic waves. She believed they were a sign of the Gods, but she harmonized them to her own psychic waves without realizing the true intentions of the Stone-like. Soon afterwards she went berserk. For all official means, she was driven by her devotion to her holy goal, but in her insanity, she decided to implement the Stone-like within her own ship, and in order to achieve that placed restrictive devices on it. Then she started the war. She should be still young, but her face is full of wrinkles, and her hair is of a pure white, letting her appear very old.

Prologues: Extras taken from the DC GDRM and the GC bonus booklet.

[I corrected a text part that was already written in English in the "PROLOGUE.TXT" data on the DC GD ROM. I did so to keep in flow with my translation. The original data says : "the Sword of Fudoumyouuh"]

Prologue 1: Hourai

Hourai. Historically, it was a small country at the outskirts of Honshuu. But now, claiming to be a vessel who received the powers of the Gods, it has conquered military every other country under the name of "peaceful unification", for they believe they are the "Chosen Ones". It all started when Hourai Tenrou, the leader of this country, started to display "miraculous" skills and powers. It happened after she encountered "the Golden-Glowing Rock of the Stone-Like God", which was discovered several years before deep below the surface of the earth. Amidst this, there was a group called "Tenkaku", who battled against Hourai, for they wanted to free the people. They used battleships they called "Hitekkai", but they gradually suffered more and more losses, until they were wiped out. However, a young man among them miraculously survived. His name was Shinra.

Prologue 2 : The Village of the Grosbeak

A few days after Tenkaku was defeated... Shinra could be seen working on building a new Hitekkai, made from spare parts and other salvaged remnants of fallen battleships.

He wasn't trying to run to a certain death... but he hadn't been thinking about surviving, either. Energy burned inside him like hot ashes, and he looked like some kind of demon.

"Freedom"... The longing for this vague form of "peace", a forbidden thing in our time and age, had now turned into a simple excuse to justify his course of action.

Eventually, as the night was about to end, Shinra sat down in the cockpit of the Hitekkai he'd just finished preparing, the "Shirasagi" ("white heron").

(Why am I rushing things?... No, I'm not in a rush... well, I shouldn't be... but still...)

He soundlessly started the engine, and slowly flew off... When the altitude reached 800m (about 2400ft), as it entered the range of the defense radars, the Shirasagi was attacked by Hourai's Hitekkais.

Displaying his uncommon skills, Shinra destroyed the enemy ships one after the other, despite the low qualities of his own Shirasagi.

(Why am I fighting?... I'm supposed to live in freedom, right?... but where am I heading to?...)

Suddenly appeared in front of him the Butsutekkai "Eboshidori" piloted by the Hourai General "Asami Kagehisa".

Asami: "A survivor of Tenkaku... I'm impressed you've come so far all alone..."

Shinra: "So what's it to you? I'm putting my life on the line here, but I mean it a lot more seriously than you lowly bastards do..."

Asami: "...Mph. How green you are..."

Shinra evaded all of Asami's attacks, and seemed to be in a superior position in the fight, but...

Asami: "Oh ho, you're quite skilled. Well then, how about THIS?"

The "Eboshidori" fired 5 balls of light, all of which made a wide arc towards the "Shirasagi".

Shinra: "Homing bullets!?"

The "Shirasagi" was hit by the homing attack of the "Eboshidori" and suffered great damage. It fell off in black clouds of smoke.

Shinra: "Shit!"

Asami: "Young One, it's a brave thing to face your enemies alone... but your life isn't here for you to bet on it."

Shinra: "What's the retarded talk for? I'm not done with you!"

Asami: "Mph. Should you survive this, then let us meet again."

Asami flew away without paying further attention to the crashing "Shirasagi".

Shinra's Hitekkai was belching black clouds of smoke, and crashed into a village deep into the mountains. This village was called the Village of the Grosbeak, and only elderly people lived there, being rejected away here during the process of "peaceful unification" - to say it bluntly, it was a dump for old-timers.

As the ship crashed on the ground, Shinra was thrown out of the cockpit, and saved by some villagers.

In the house of the Elder Kazamori. Shinra was still sleeping, the Elder watching over him. The rays of the sun seeped through the shouji, and outside the room lit by the sunset, the crickets could be heard chirping.

Inside of Shinra's conscience, two human shapes vaguely took form.

Man: "Don't worry... sometime the day will come when we understand each other."

Woman: "And then, we'll walk towards the far future, for Life is given from one generation to the next..."

Shinra: "... the future..."

As Shinra gradually retrieved consciousness, the Elder Kazamori appeared in his foggy sight.

Shinra: "Hm? ...Where am I?..."

Kazamori: "This place is called the Village of the Grosbeak. You've come here when your Hitekkai crashed... do you remember anything?"

Shinra: "The Village of the Grosbeak... you mean that dump- err, no, I mean..."

Kazamori let a smile grow on his face...

Kazamori: "It's ok. It seems everybody thinks so."

Shinra: "Wait! What about my Shirasagi?"

Kazamori: "Your white heron? Oh, you mean your Hitekkai... it's not going to be of any use anymore. You should already thank the gods you're still alive."

Shinra: "That was the last Shirasagi... !!... Shit!... God dammit!"

Kazamori: "... ..."

2 Months later...

Shinra watched the sunset from some cliff near the village. The Elder Kazamori walked slowly up to him.

Kazamori: "You're going, right?"

Shinra: "Thanks for taking care of me. I am forever indebted to you."

Kazamori: "Yes, well... .. But please tell me, why do you fight? In some twisted way, you should be able to have an easy life if you obey Hourai."

Shinra: "Now that I'm alone, my duty as a Tenkaku member is as good as null and void. But, even if for only one brief moment in my life... even if my body is to turn to ashes, I don't want to have any regrets regarding my life. I've decided I would defeat Hourai and regain Freedom."

Kazamori: "Well, it sounds like the right thing to do... But couldn't one say it's a pretty egotistical view on things?"

Shinra: "But, if I fight for those who believe in me, and if the result happens to bring peace and freedom to everyone, wouldn't it make it a good thing to do?"

Kazamori: "There always are those who do not wish so. And there are also those who want other forms of peace and freedom. They all yearn for their own freedom, but end up fighting, for they don't understand what freedom is... And in the end... they end up killing each others, without an afterthought, in the name of freedom. In our longing for peace, we mustn't turn into mass-murderers. That is, at least, my take on it."

Shinra: "... ..."

Shinra was hesitant, confused. Elder Kazamori smiled... then nodded.

Kazamori: "Freedom and Peace have as many forms as the number of people in this world. When you fight, never forget this... By the way, did you plan on fighting bare handed?"

Shinra: "Well, I..."

Kazamori: "Ha ha ha, just follow me."

Shinra: "Where to?"

Kazamori: "Follow me, and you'll see."

A slight smile on his lips, Kazamori lead the way.

Shinra was brought in the depths of a cave at the edge of the village. There was a huge, artificial cavity underground, made entirely of metal, and within it, among all kinds of weapons and mechanical parts, a single Hitekkai was lying.

Shinra: "This is... a Hitekkai."

Kazamori: "Yes. We named it Ikaruga ("Grosbeak")."

Shinra: "What does it do in such a place? ... But..."

Kazamori: "Well, our village is a dump for old-timers, you see... the people of this world don't seem to need us... but every life, every will, every presence, everything has a reason to be. There is nothing you don't need. The Ikaruga is the shape and form of our freedom, the evidence that we exist. We believe it is something that will revive mankind."

Shinra: "Revive mankind...?"

Kazamori: "You don't need to understand that now. Each one will notice what it means soon enough."

The two people preparing the ship (Shinkai and Amanai) took notice of Shinra.

Shinkai: "Hm? There's a stylish face over there. Elder Kazamori, is he the...?"

Kazamori: "Yes. This is Shinra."

Shinra slightly bowed his head in their direction.

Shinkai: "The name's Shinkai. I'm helping around. This old man there is called Amanai, and he's the genius former engineer that designed and built the Ikaruga."

All the while still checking and working on the ship, Amanai glanced sideways at Shinra, and then...

Amanai: "Mph!... he's radiating bloodlust, he looks like a demon."

Shinkai: "Aw, c'mon, you still want to pilot this yourself? You should stop now."

Amanai: "Pff, that's none of your business! ... Hey, loverboy!! Don't. Break. This. Ship!"

Kazamori: "You see, the Ikaruga is a little different than your average Hitekkai. You're going to need training, but... will you pilot it?"

Shinra didn't answer the Elder's words. He nodded...

[A few days have passed]

The flying tests were in their middle phase when Amanai noticed a flying object approaching the Village on the radars.

Amanai: "Huh? What is... Hey! Loverboy! Hourai is attacking us!"

Shinra: "I can see that as well. Judging from the size, it's probably a Butsutekkai... I'm off to stop it!"

As he let the Ikaruga hover higher, he clearly saw the ennemy. The Butsutekkai fired homing bullets, but Shinra instantly changed to the appropriate polarity and absorbed all shots. The Butsutekkai stopped dead in its track, having not expected that reaction out of the Ikaruga. But then he attacked anew, this time with the opposite polarity. But Shinra only had to change polarity to absorb those shots as well. Shinra noticed that the pilot was clearly getting nervous, so he used the "Power Release". The lasers all hit the Butsutekkai... that fell off towards the Village. Shinra dropped with the Ikaruga as fast as he could to

follow the ennemy ship.

It was pure luck that the Butsutekkai didn't hit the normal houses. Instead it fell at some distance of the village. Shinra landed roughly with the Ikaruga in the immediate surroundings, and looked around.

That's when he saw a human shape.

Shinra: "There's someone! Could that be the pilot?"

When Shinra had walked up to the shape, he noticed it was a woman lying there.

Shinra: "What the??? A woman?"

As he tried to lift her up, he noticed that she was about his age.

?: "ugh..."

She was still breathing, and let out a hiss of pain. Shinra took her by the shoulders and shook her awake.

Shinra: "Hey! Hang in there!"

Did she react to Shinra's voice? In any case, the woman opened her eyes. However, she immediately pushed Shinra away, and still breathing heavily, she started to shout.

?: "Kill me! I'm not that eager to live, that I'd accept becoming your toy!"

Shinra: "... fucking dimwit! What are you blabbing about?"

?: "If you don't want to kill me, I'm committing suicide, here and now!"

The woman took a knife from her equipment, and shoved it directly towards her thin neck. But just as it was about to rip her jugular and turn it into a blood fountain, Shinra hit her wrists hard, and the knife fell on the ground. She tried to get the knife back, but Shinra kicked it away.

?: "Why? Why do you save me, your ennemy? Why?"

Right after she said this, she passed out on the ground. Shinra took her in his arms, and went back to the Ikaruga.

Shinra: "What a woman... she's like me... Like I was not so long ago."

Two weeks later, as he finished the training, Shinra went back to Kazamori's home.

Shinra: "Mister Kazamori, what happened to the woman?"

Kazamori: "She's sitting in the backroom down the aisle... Now, don't worry. She had indeed quite some temper when you first brought her here, but... she's a lot calmer now. She doesn't look suicidal anymore. Take it easy."

Shinra: "I really brought you and the villagers a lot of trouble... I'm sorry."

Kazamori: "Don't sweat it! It was quite interesting to take care of a young woman for a change, it had been a while. You don't need to make excuses."

Shinra: "You said she was in the back room down the aisle? ... I'm going there to meet her."

When Shinra got to that part of Kazamori's mansion, that woman wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary. She was sitting there, still, apparently listening intently to the chirping of the crickets.

Shinra: "... Can I sit next to you?"

When Shinra addressed her, she turned her face to look at him, then nodded. Shinra sat on the wooden aisle, and looking at the forest in front of him, he started asking questions.

Shinra: "... I didn't get to know your name yet. Who are you? I think I've told you before, but my name is Shinra."

?: "Kagari... my name is Kagari."

That had only been a whisper. She was now looking at the same spot Shinra was looking at.

Shinra: "Kagari, uh? Cool name."

Kagari: "You're a strange one. The villagers too... Why did you save one of Hourai such as me?"

Shinra: "I couldn't harden myself enough to let a wounded person die. I guess it's the same for Mr Kazamori."

Kagari: "Kazamori... the old man, right? He and you seem to talk about "Freedom"... but does that really exist?"

Shinra: "... to be honest, I don't really know. But the Elder said that "Freedom takes as many forms as there are people". If that's the case, then... the "freedom" I'm aiming at surely exists... somewhere."

Kagari: "As many as people... somewhere..."

Kagari seemingly whispered again Shinra's words. Both sat in silence on the wooden floor for some time, but then Kagari stood up.

Kagari: "Shinra, could you take me at my Butsutekkai? ... Don't worry. I'm not going to run away or anything."

Shinra: "Well. it's fine by me, but... I don't think you could use that piece of junk anymore, so.. what are you going to do with it?"

Kagari: "Don't ask... just, please, take me there."

Shinra: "... OK."

As they both came to the place they first met, which means in other words, where the Butsutekkai crashed, it was impossible not to see the huge remnants of the ship.

Kagari: "You were right, it looks pretty bad. But I guess if it's still intact, then it's okay..."

Shinra: "It? What do you mean by "it"?"

Kagari didn't answer Shinra. She opened halfway a hatch on the belly side of the Butsutekkai. Shinra tried to get a peek... there was a Hitekkai inside.

Shinra: "A Hitekkai?? How in the world?"

Kagari: "It's mine. I had to coerce the maintenance chief to get this one. It looks like it didn't suffer that much damage... I'm glad."

Shinra: "You used extortion? The poor guy must have been scared shitless..."

Kagari: "Most certainly."

Kagari smiled broadly. It was the first time Shinra saw her smile.

Shinra: "And how is that ship named?"

Kagari: "Ginkei ("Silver Bird"). It's called Ginkei."

Amanai: "Hmm. That's quite some ship. Probably cost a lot of money."

That's what Amanai about spat after his first glance at the Ginkei.

Kagari: "Indeed. Actually, it cost so much that it was deemed useless for mass production, and only few of those exist."

Amanai: "And? What did you have in mind, girl?"

Kagari: "I'd want you to... equip this Ginkei with the same parts as the Ikaruga."

Shinra: "What did you say???"

Shinra shrieked when he heard Kagari. But Amanai only crossed his arms, then glared at Kagari, at her ship, and finally replied in his usual demeanor:

Amanai: "You want me to equip it? And what then? You wouldn't dare bring out the know-how from the Ikaruga to Hourai, would you?"

Kagari: "I don't plan on fleeing. Moreover, I have no place to go back to in Hourai. I just... I just want to see that "Freedom" you all talk about. That's the only thing I'm trying to achieve here."

Amanai: "So now you want to see the "Freedom"? Mph! Coming from a Hourai member to boot, this is really unheard of."

Kagari: "I... used to believe that Hourai was right in her actions. But after coming here, and hearing so much from Shinra and you villagers about "Freedom", the idea kind of grew on me, and I want to see it for myself."

Amanai: "Hmm. Say, Loverboy, that girl surely got all nice. Kazamori and Shinkai told me she had quite the temper at first. She wanted to commit suicide or something, right?"

Shinkai: "Now, now, good old Amanai. Her Hitekkai seems to be a very good ship, and it would be better to have her help, since Shinra's Ikaruga is kind of all alone in there. I guess we could use the same kind of parts as the Ikaruga's, so why not do her the favor?"

Mayor Shinkai offered a helping hand into convincing Amanai. Said Amanai was still making a face, clearly not thrilled at the idea, but eventually he turned around and went to where his stock of spare parts was.

Amanai: "I swear, they just give you loads of work and think nothing of it... Hey, girl! You're in for some training when I'm done! I hope you already know that the Ikaruga isn't just your ordinary ship!"

Kagari: "... Thank you very much."

Kagari bowed her head deeply towards Amanai and Mayor Shinkai. Shinra had been watching the exchange the whole time in silence.

Shinra: "Are you sure about this? You're going to be considered a traitor of Hourai, you know?"

Kagari: "I don't care... If... if the "Freedom" surpasses Hourai's ideals, and if it exists, then... I'd really want to see it. That's all."

Shinra and Kagari exchanged such few words as they went from Amanai's lair underground back to Kazamori's mansion.

Shinra: "... I don't really have a thing against having more allies. On the contrary, you're welcome. Once again, I hope we'll work great together."

Kagari: "So do I, Shinra."

[originally continues at the alternate version of the Chapter 1. I cut it here to be in tune with the flow of the story. The rest comes later, please read on]

Prologue 3: Meeting again

The flight tests on the actual machine were almost completed. At Shinra's request, the tests had been conducted with real bullets, fact that didn't go

unnoticed by Hourai, who dispatched reconnaissance patrols.

Amanai: "OK, the ennemy planes are dummies, but the bullets are real, do you follow me? If you let your guard down, this ship will instantly transform into... your coffin! Ha ha ha!"

Shinkai: "... this isn't supposed to be funny..."

Amanai: "Hey, loverboy here lives, or he dies, am I supposed to care? But I can't have my precious Ikaruga turned into scrap..."

Shinkai: *sigh*

Kazamori: "So... are you all set?"

Shinra: "Whenever you want."

Kazamori: "... then please start"

Shinra, piloting the Ikaruga, destroyed the dummy ships one after the other.

Shinkai: "Wow, he's pretty good."

Amanai: "Mph! That's the Ikaruga here, what do you... huh?"

Shinra: "That is..."

Kazamori: *frowns*

Amanai: "... what's that?... Loverboy! Ennemy, incoming!"

Shinra: "I know."

Asami's Butsutekkai, the Eboshidori, appeared in the sky.

Asami: (that's the young man I saw last time... so he survived...) "Oh ho, I see you're training, fine, fine. Did you get any better?"

Shinra: "Who knows? Try me and see for yourself?"

Asami's eyes got serious...

Asami: "Mmm... well, then... here I go!"

Once again Shinra engaged combat with the Eboshidori... Asami was overwhelmed by the possibilities of the Ikaruga, and was having a hard time.

Asami: "Damn, what's that?" (I've never heard of any Hitekkai that could change polarity instantly... what's more, that one seems to absorb the bullets...)

Shinra: "What's up, General?"

Asami: "... well, then!"

Asami fired a shower of homing bullets. The Ikaruga absorbed all the bullets... then used the "Power Release".

Shinra: "Gotcha!"

Asami: "!!!"

Shinkai: "did he take him down?"

Just as the Power Release was about to hit the Eboshidori, Asami used a dummy decoy and cleared the place.

Shinra: "He... just swapped place?"

Asami: *grins* "Well, it looks like you've gotten a very interesting Hitekkai here... Shinra! Let us meet again..."

Shinra: "..."

Shinkai: "He's crazy..."

Kazamori: "But he's also extremely skilled..."

The old folks just stared at the Ikaruga...

First Chapter : Ideal

[Version 1]

Hourai first heard of the Ikaruga when Asami reported to her that he had encountered the Ikaruga during it's flying tests, and had fought it with his own Butsutekkai, the "Eboshidori". But the Ikaruga had hold its own. Hourai decided to surround their teleport station, the "Sword of Acala". Shinra and his companions decided to start a rebel attack.

Ikaruga - boot sequence - starting...

Ikaruga : "System Boot... Final Check. Placing protective wards Rin - Pyou - Tou - Sha - Kai - Jin - Retsu - Zai - Zen... 20 min. after ejecting from the Sword of Acala, the main engine ignites. Are you ready?"

Kazamori: "I am not alive, thus I can't die. I won't give up even if my Ideal isn't fulfilled. My will, just as my regrets, won't ever end. My comrades... it is time."

Amanai: "I did all I could. The rest is up to his skills."

Shinkai: "Take care."

Shinra: "... start."

The locks restraining the Ikaruga were opened, and the ship started to fall down. It entered the teleport device placed on the floor. And then, as the flying "Sword of Acala" started to glow, the Ikaruga was propelled into distant skies...

Alas, the Ikaruga departs. What could make those people move, who were secluded against their will? This is probably none other than the very basic will to live.

Kazamori: "Until the day water droplets bore the stone... our path will be fraught with perils..."

[alternate, with Kagari]

Soon after the Ginkei was prepared, and Kagari had started to train, Shinra encountered one of Hourai's henchmen, "Asami Kagehisa", piloting his Butsutekkai "Eboshidori". Shinra had fought him once in the past with a ship he had built on his own, the Shirasagi, but he had lost then. This time the Ikaruga clearly overpowered the Eboshidori. Asami barely escaped, but the Eboshidori was destroyed. Not only Shinra, but the villagers as well, thought that the time was ripe - and they made their minds.

Amanai: "Loverboy, and you, girl. The Ikaruga and the Ginkei are now your hands and feet. You surely know best how well you can master them?"

Amanai confronted Shinra and Kagari, who had both started their ships, but he was talking to them in a tone that was somewhat smoother than usual. Shinra and Kagari both nodded in answer to his question.

Amanai: "I did everything I could. The rest is up to your skills."

Ending the conversation, Amanai made his way to the teleportation gate leading to the "Sword of Acala".

Elder Kazamori and Mayor Shinkai stood out of the crowd of villagers that had gathered in front of the ships, and talked to both pilots.

Kazamori: "I am not alive, thus I can't die. I won't give up even if my Ideal isn't fulfilled. My will, just as my regrets, won't ever end. My comrades... it is time."

Shinkai: "Take care."

And then... the Ginkei and the Ikaruga were both warped to distant skies. Watching them from afar, Kazamori whispered...

Kazamori: "Until the day water droplets bore the stone... our path will be fraught with perils..."

Shinra: "Kagari, you're sure you don't regret this?"

Kagari: "I've told you countless times now, Shinra. I'm no Hourai citizen anymore. I want to see the "Freedom", with you."

Shinra: "I see... Kagari... Don't you dare die in there..."

Kagari: "That applies to yourself too, Shinra."

During this brief exchange of words, both Hitekkai started the attack on the enemy ships that were surrounding the "Sword of Acala". This was the first step towards getting closer to the concept known as "the Freedom"...

Sound Test

Cyrrus: Hourai. Historically, it was a small country at the outskirts of Honshuu. But now, claiming to be a vessel who received the powers of the Gods, it has conquered military every other country under the name of "peaceful unification", for they believe they are the "Chosen Ones". It all started when Hourai Tenrou, the leader of this country, started to display "miraculous" skills and powers. It happened after she encountered "the Golden-Glowing Rock of the Stone-Like God", which was discovered several years before deep below the surface of the earth. Amidst this, there was a group called "Tenkaku", who battled against Hourai, for they wanted to free the people. They used battleships they called "Hitekkai", but they gradually suffered more and more losses, until they were wiped out. However, a young man among them survived the crashing of his ship. His name was Shinra.

Shinra tried once again to oppose Hourai, but he was again shot down. His ship crashed near a village far from all civilization. It was called "the Village of the Grosbeak" (Ikaruga no Sato), for it was made of elderly people that had been banned from the society of the "Chosen Ones". Shinra was saved by their "Elder", Old Man Kazamori. After fully recovering from his near fatal wounds, Shinra announced he wanted to fight once more against Hourai. The old folks worried when they saw that Shinra was unarmed. They put all their rage and passions and knowledge into the creation of a new Hitekkai, the "Ikaruga".

Ideal: Hourai first heard of the Ikaruga when Asami reported to her.

He had encountered the Ikaruga during it's flying tests, and had fought it with his own Butsutekkai, the "Eboshidori". But the Ikaruga had hold its own. Hourai decided to surround their teleport station, the "Sword of Acala".

Kazamori then knew that the time was ripe, and gave the order to attack. The Ikaruga was prepared. The tension was clear on all faces. Kazamori whispered an old poem: "I am not alive, thus I can't die. I won't give up even if my Ideal isn't fulfilled. My will, just as my regrets, won't

ever end." "My comrades... it is time."

Alas, the Ikaruga departs. What could make those people move, who were secluded against their will? This is probably none other than the very basic will to live.

Butsutekkai: Once again, Asami stood against Shinra, armed with his own Butsutekkai, the "Eboshidori".

"What good could possibly come out of all this useless murdering? I'm sure you realize this as well."

"She may be flawed, but I'm following Hourai. I do understand your point of view, but I can't let you pass."

(This Track "Boss 1: Butsutekkai" is also used as the Boss Track of Chapter 3 and Chapter 4)

Trial: "Look at this, at all this devastation! That mistake only brought us a whole mountain of corpses. My duty is to warrant the life of my people. Please, stop fighting them. Just get out of here..."

Agi. The humiliation they had felt there had never been forgotten. Shinra and Kagari had fought to their limits in the hope of defending this country. But when the Hourai army came here, the Butsutekkai called "Buppousou" started to attack the civilians. Seeing the cruelty of its pilot Houkaku, the country leader surrendered. The retreat had been immediate, and bitter tears had been cried.

Shinra and the others decided to try a surprise attack on this country. They aim at recapturing the land, as well as destroying the military base that Hourai started to build underground.

Recapture: "My, my. I came to see what the fuss was about, and what do I see? You morons again? What do you think it will change if you ever get Agi back? It's only made of ruins and desolation..."

"You wouldn't possibly understand anyway... not you"

Shinra remembered several things at once. The civilians fleeing in terror within the fire. The mountain of bodies. The tears of the country leader as he raised the white flag over the burning rests of the buildings...

And then he once again faced Houkaku.

Faith: The war wasn't progressing anymore, as both parts started to hold on their respective positions. It was now all a question of endurance. Shinra and Co had to avoid this at all cost because it would mean their certain loss, so they planned their intrusion in the land of Hourai. The ravine was said to be close to unviolable. Judging from the lack of concrete knowledge about the terrain, Amanai was reluctant to agree to the plans, but as he saw that Shinra had utter faith in himself, he just made his way silently to the docks to prepare the Ikaruga. On the next morning, as Shinra was walking to the seat of the Ikaruga, he tripped on nothing and fell to the ground. The old folks laughed at him for his eagerness to fight, but Kagari looked intently at Shinra, unmistakably mad at him.

Reality: As Shinra and Co cleared the ravine, they were greeted by the huge troops lead by Kira. To oppose the formidable size of the giant Butsutekkai Misago, Amanai opted for the systematic attack of each and every weak spots at very close range.

Eventually, Shinra succeeded into destroying Misago, but the continuous fighting had its toll on him and brought his Fate closer.

(Every Hitekkai pilot dies faster than other humans because the neural connections between their muscles and their machines accelerate the death process of their nerves cells)

Kagari knew. She knew all too well what would be the outcome if the war were to drag on. But Shinra immediately flew into the underground headquarters of Hourai without saying a single word.

Metempsychosis: (Not yet... I can't... let it end now. I have to hold on... just a little bit more)

Shinra was slowly losing consciousness, his only support being his mental strength.

Shinra and Co faced Hourai deep into the basement of the headquarters. One more chance was given, a futile attempt to convince with words. During this, Shinra heard the voices of spirit beings, which he had seen before in his dreams. And then, as Shinra went beyond his last limits to defeat Hourai, the golden glowing rock of the Stone-like God revealed himself for every eye to see.

"Chief... engineer. Could you... drop the restrain devices?"

The Stone-like: Amanai, having noticed Shinra's physical state, ordered him to retreat, since anything more would be useless. However, Shinra didn't change his mind. Kagari, who was the only one to understand this attitude, replied to the disapproving elders: (to Shinra) "And so... walk that path until the End, so you don't regret anything. (addressing the elders) 'I am not alive, thus I can't die. I won't give up even if my Ideal isn't fulfilled. My will, just as my regrets, won't ever die... ' We should all have known this."

Then, turning again to Shinra: "Do you think we will ever see the Freedom?"

He replied softly : "Yeah... very soon."

After a long silence, Old Man Kazamori whispered: "I see. Indeed, we should have known." He ordered Amanai to deactivate the restrain devices. "But... but then he only has one shot! Only one! Do you understand what it means?"

"Chief engineer... I believe in you."

When Amanai heard Shinra's words, he lost his composure and started to weep.

Spirit Being: The Ikaruga, freed from its restraining devices, unleashed all at once the entire energy stored into its systems, and disappeared from the surface of the world.

As Shinra and Kagari achieved their transformation into spiritual beings, two ethereal bodies appeared to them. The same that Shinra had met in his dreams.

Shinra: "Do you think... we did the right thing?"

Man body: "It's alright... I'm sure that sometime, the day will come where we understand each other."

Woman body: "And then we'll walk together into the far future... Because Life is given from one generation to the next one"

XI) Credits

The text parts are translated from what I could recognize out of the DC Version. The texts of the voice are taken (and in one occasion, a spelling error was corrected) from the "VOICE.TXT" file on the DC GDROM.

The maximum scores are taken from the magazine Arcadia, except the one for the Extra Inning (the battle Vs Ubusunagami ouki no kai) For this last one I'm just guessing. It all depends on your ability to absorb shots.

I would like to thank TF for showing me a few things, as well as the fellow gamers of his message board. I didn't think that so many people could achieve over 34,000,000. FMI, Mkr, SIN, TF, I hope someday I'll be as good as you are.

TF's Ikaruga FAQ is seemingly down. Did he move on? That's hard to believe.

Finally I would like to thank the community of the GameFaq's Boards. The players there helped me get better at the game, and in some cases inspired or corrected some of the chaining patterns I could think of. I sometimes shamelessly used a pattern they created, but in those instances, I mentioned the player before explaining the method.

It should be noted that there is a new Ikaruga site at www.ikaruga.co.uk. The site hosts videos in which you can see my and even more advanced strategies.

You can email me at saffran@yahoo.co.jp

You can chat about Ikaruga on irc.gamesurge.net in the #ikaruga channel.

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GAME OVER

We'll meet again someday soon.

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