

Hokuto no Ken II (Import) FAQ/Walkthrough

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Fist of the North Star (US)/Hokuto no Ken II (Japan)

Walkthrough for the (non-exploding) Nintendo Entertainment System game by TOEI (Japan; Copyright 1987)/TOEI animation and Taxan USA corp. (U.S.; Copyright 1989)

Version 1.7

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Version history :

1.0 (03/14/02) - First version

1.666 (04/18/02) - Major changes here folks as I fix up some mistakes (like Hakuto/Hokuto) and elaborate on the differences between the American release and the original Japanese version of the game. Also, for the first time we have some names for the mini-bosses and some background on the bosses as well! We're digging up some dirt here folks!

1.7 (02/08/05) - After almost 3 years without a single change, a tool assisted speed run attempt pushed me to uncover some mistakes I made in my initial FAQ. More info on power ups and a new section detailing boss techniques, including their dreaded weak spots. I also added and modified some portions of text here and there.

Stuff to do for the next update :

-The Jakou's army stage features a boss who isn't Jakou and seems to be conspicuously missing from most character lists. The mini bosses for stage 6 are also shrouded in mystery and is that of stage 3's (The concentration camp) own mini-boss. Info on these characters would be greatly appreciated.

-A FAQ section where I detail the differences between the two versions (American and Japanese) instead of a long introduction.

| Content |

- Introduction

- Reasons for this walkthrough

- The Story

-According to the manual

-According to the anime/manga

- Controls
- Power-ups
 - Gold necklace
 - Stars and hitting skills
 - Aura and silver necklace
 - Speed power up
 - Flags and your life bar
- Boss techniques
- The walkthrough
 - Stage 1 (Bask's area/Bask's county area)
 - Stage 2 (Gayler's area/Gayler's city area)
 - Stage 3 (Concentration camp/Traitor Concentration Camp)
 - Stage 4 (Solia's district/Solia's Army)
 - Stage 5 (Imperial capital's gate/The Imperial Capital Gate)
 - Stage 6 (Jakko district/Jakko's army)
 - Stage 7 (Kenshirou vs. Falco)
 - Stage 8 (Kenshirou vs. Shula)
 - Ending

-Ways to make this more fun

-Copyright information

 | Introduction to Hokuto no Ken and its games |

Greetings, I am your host Asplagis and today, we are exploring an often maligned title that suffers from double identity.

At some point in 1986, Toei released a game for the NES based on the cult anime and manga Hokuto no Ken. Filled with exploding heads and gut popping fun, the anime reached out to the martial arts he-man in all of us. American audiences, however, would have to wait some time before Streamline Pictures and Manga Corps. decided to release the movie and TV series respectively under the title "Fist of the North Star". And as for the manga, it has been available to French crowds for a few years now and an infamous west coast anime & manga distributing company, Viz, took on the task of translating and releasing Hokuto no Ken in North America. Sadly for HnK fans, their efforts of bringing translated Hokuto no Ken manga to English speaking fans were cut short recently. Still Fist of the North Star remains a household name and many anime fans of all ages have at least some idea of what this is all about.

Now the game in question was nothing short of terrible, yet, compared to other games of the time it wasn't so bad, just very gaudy and hard on the eyes. Point in case, your hero, Ken, wore a set of neon blue sweat pants that have been known to cause seizures and temporary blindness in small children.

This was the first in a series of many that would span both the NES (Famicom) and SNES (Super Famicom) as well as the Master System (Sega Mark III) and Genesis (Megadrive) touching various genres - from scrolling action to RPG and eventually (if not naturally in this case) head to head fighting games. For the record, the Master System and Genesis game were both far superior to their

Nintendo counterparts.

For the sake of leaving no stones unturned, the Master System game was known as Black Belt in North America. As for the Genesis, one of the early titles for the fledgling system in North America was Last Battle, in truth, it was really another Hokuto no Ken game whose title had been changed. I suspect copyright issues are at work here, probably a case of not wanting to pay for a licence that meant little to North American fans in general.

Now then, following the terrible mistake that was the original Hokuto no Ken for the NES, TOEI felt obligated to do justice to the infamous anime or deal with incensed otaku sending them mean threatening letters...

So, in 1987 they produced a sequel based on the continuing adventures of Kenshirou after the Shin, Souther and Raoh saga - Hokuto no Ken II. Not a very inspiring title to say the least, but at least the game had grown quite a bit from its predecessor. The backgrounds were no longer neon coloured eyesores that had a striking resemblance to glitchy graphics inspired by some wild acid trip. And let us not forget to mention how our dear hero looked a bit more like his anime/manga self by donning the usual black outfit and knee high white boots instead of the garish blue sweatpants.

Graphics and sound had improved by leaps and bounds, but the gameplay itself had not been severely tweaked. Still, Hokuto no Ken was now a true to life scrolling fighting game worth playing and no longer a side-show attraction to entertain drunken friends or scare the faint of heart.

This is also the only game that made it to North America as "Fist of the North Star." Though some rumours state that a "II" was added to the box in some places, it has yet to be proven. Whatever the case is, some younger people online have found a ROM image file named "Fist of the North Star" and to this day believe that the game some folks refer to as the original in the series is the first Japanese HnK game for the NES and not the sequel.

Consider this a problem similar to the one that plagued Final Fantasy in pre-Final Fantasy VII days. However, seeing as this game is rather unpopular or simply overlooked, it has yet to cause as much chaos as the FF NA/Japan sequels confusion.

The Hokuto no Ken game that made it to the NES in America was altered slightly from the original - whereas the Japanese version had a sober looking Kenshirou draped in black, the American version saw our powerful martial artist reverting to his old neon blue outfit. In fact, his whole sprite had a neon blue hue to it! Kenshirou with blue hair? The nerve of them! Then again, even the title screen went from black to blue... odd indeed..

The cosmetic changes were made primarily to the background scenery by giving it more detail and softening up the rough edges. Also, they made the colours more striking, thus giving the game a bit more class and, dare I say, some much needed life. The original version seemed rushed graphics wise, but this one looked better overall.

Cosmetic changes aside, this version also featured a lower difficulty level - a standard practice in the video game industry, seeing as Japanese gamers are used to tougher, more unforgiving games than the American audiences. Again, this was the case with Final Fantasy II/IV, where certain monsters were toned down. So gone were the random flying projectiles and the bosses did less damage while Ken did (slightly) more. Even the previously difficult first two mini-bosses were made into pussycats compared to their Japanese versions.

In the strange department, the end of level visitors were removed from the game entirely in the U.S. version, probably due to the fact that no one would notice their absence. Hokuto no Ken had yet to establish itself in America and seeing these odd people after each level would probably do nothing but confuse players and force those who wrote the manual to actually watch the anime or read the manga.

| Reasons for this walkthrough |

So why a walkthrough ?

Simple, because the game traumatised me.

I was once young and nubile; innocent days they were indeed, as I stood before the addictive light of the television set, living grandiose adventures through video games such as Castlevania... Sadly, this game took my innocence and ran away with it into the night, leaving me bitter and disgruntled...

It looked simple enough - you're a buff martial artist who punches people and they explode. That's the sort of concept that appeals to a pre-teen boy you know...

So I rent this game and find, much to my dismay, that it was quite difficult... much too difficult for me in fact...

Today though, with advanced technology and the world of emulation, I control the game bwahahahahahaha !!!

Thus, I set out to defeat this game which has haunted me for so long with its cheap computer tactics and show it a thing or two ! Which didn't exactly excite me in practice as much as in theory...

Nevertheless, for all you frustrated FotNS players out there who wonder what secrets this game holds in its shiny belly, I offer to you the answer to all your questions... well, almost...

| The story |

According to the manual

"Ken must battle his way through eight scenes to rescue his people from the tyranny of the Emporer(sic) Heaven. Using his bear(sic... well...) fist, shooting power, and Gento Karate, Ken must confront and defeat eight vicious enemies who will attack him with Smokeballs, Fireballs, Clenching Claws, White Light Bombs, and the Deadly Sliding Kick."

Uh huh... you don't say... wow... *applauds* great story...

But that's all the story you're going to get...

No cut scenes, no cinema, not even a few words of coloured text...

I feel ripped off somehow...

The game might have a certain naïve charm, but I must say that this is completely ludicrous ! "Save his people" - how corny can you get ? We have little to no information on the characters themselves, which, I assume, are well known by fans of the manga/anime series. For non-fans, this is a frustrating story which leaves us confused and empty... *sighs and shakes his fist at the manual*

According to the anime/manga

For the sake of giving non-fans at home a chance to understand what this is all about, I suggest you start off by reading about the first season of the TV series. You see, as I previously mentioned, this is actually a continuation of the first game where you had to beat Souther (Souzaa), Shin and Raoh. Now, I won't spoil the fun, so let's just go with a quick recap :

Lynn (Rin) and Bart (Baat) are now both grown up and leading a rebellion against the tyranny of Jakou and the Gento warriors. Ken, ever the hero, helps out by going around tenderising the four Gento generals and Jakou before facing off against the demons of Shura. The Emperor in question here is actually an Empress, and furthermore, she is not in the game at all! The Empress, Rui, appears only much later in the anime and manga as a captive of Jakou. Oddly enough, Jakou himself does not appear in the game despite being a major figure in the story (when compared to Gayler or Bask).

In short, while the game remains mostly faithful to the anime and manga, it does diverge near the end and purists might find it more enjoyable to try the Master System version for a more accurate story (right down to each boss having his own weakness as in the anime and manga).

| Game mechanics |

The controls

I don't feel like repeating the manual, but for the sake of clarity...

B is for kicking
A is for punching
A+B is for launching fireballs when you're fully powered up

Holding down the attack buttons will make Kenshirou attack continuously.

A+B + RIGHT on the control pad will make you enter through a doorway

UP makes you jump, you can control the height/distance of the jump by pressing the UP key more or less lightly DOWN makes you crouch

Now then, walking into doorways might make you waste a fireball or two unless you follow my guide and pick the right doors. Gameplay in this game can be a bit problematic at times...

| Power-ups |

You only get power-ups by punching foes or, in the case of gold necklaces, by passing under them.

Gold necklaces

When you pass underneath it, it'll appear at the top of the screen and shall give you temporary invincibility in the form of a mirror image that cannot hurt opponents, but protects you from damage. However, you cannot climb or drop down flights of stairs, nor can you enter a door while in this mode.

Stars and hitting skill

Gaining more power (gauged by the number of lit stars above your aura meter and life bar) means you also gain faster, more powerful punching and kicking. This said, the more stars you get, the faster the punches and kicks to a point where just hitting an attack button launches a small flurry of strikes, 3 to be precise: one straight forward, one at an upwards angle and a final a downward strike.

You gain stars by punching enemies and touching the power-ups they sometime leave behind. In this case, if you're playing the Japanese version, a brown "abeshi" (the hiragana is condensed but...) will float into the air and give you a single star.

In the American version, things are a bit weirder. You get two types of stars: a full one and hollow one. The full one gives you a full star if and only IF your current star level is up to four as well as increased speed (again, only if your current level is four). The hollow one, however, will give you a full star up until your gauge reaches 4 stars, after this point, no amount of hollow stars will increase your gauge and you must find full stars or never transform into your ultra MANLY mode.

Once you've gained two or three stars, your punches and kicks can be put on auto-fire by keeping the button pressed. Having but one star requires you to tap the button rapidly to gain the same effect. The American version gives you auto-fire starting at three stars.

Hit detection is a major problem in the game though, so don't count on your powered up fists and feet to save you from trouble all the time. The hit boxes are quite floaty and kicks often require quite a bit of space in order to hit.

Once you've lit every star, Kenshirou grows into a hulking beast and rips his somewhat fashionable shirt and shoulder pads while stars pour out of his body. At that point, Kenshirou can start launching fireballs and becomes that much more powerful. In the Japanese version, this requires 10 stars, the American one only asks that you light 7.

In making a speed run of this game, I noticed that the hulking Kenshirou isn't all that much different from regular Kenshirou. Sure, he gets to use fireballs, but they don't do all that much damage all in all. And you get rapid fire punching/kicking after a few stars, not that you really need it if your controller has a turbo function seeing as it's the same thing. Hits do as much damage and you don't hit any harder. Of course, in a normal game you might as well take the time to do it seeing as you're going to kill a lot fist fodder foes anyway, but don't expect much of a difference.

Aura and the silver necklace

The "aura" bar shows how many fireballs you can launch. It will grow by one square for every twenty foe you defeat, no matter how you do it.

Very rarely, you might find a floating necklace after defeating a fist fodder foe. This necklace allows you to gain 3 full blocks, which means the equivalent of 60 defeated opponents. Granted you can gain this quickly without the necklace, it isn't anything to sneeze at either.

Speed power-up

If you recall, this section once claimed that stars had no effect on walking speed in the Japanese version. That is both true and false. See, the speed does not come automatically with stars, rather it comes from a separate power-up - a white "hidebu" (I think - the hiragana is really squished up...). However, and this is what I didn't notice the first time around, you do need to have at least four stars lit up before the power-up will have any effect.

The American version gives the speed boost as soon as you snatch a full white star, but only if you already have four stars lit up (see the stars and power up section above).

Flags and your life bar

Your life bar can be boosted in two ways :

- beat a mid level boss
- capture a flag hidden in a room

Flags appear ONLY in rooms, so if a stage has no rooms, you get no flags. The number of flags per stage is limited, usually around one or two only. And again, you need to defeat a fist fodder foe to release it so make sure the foe in question is fully in view before punching him or you risk losing your flag.

| Boss techniques |

At many points in the walkthrough, I mention a technique for defeating bosses, especially the tougher ones found later in the game. In my attempts at doing a speed run of this game, I noticed that there's a reason for this technique. It appears as if the game refuses to allow two characters to hit each other if their sprites occupy the same space. Your hits won't register and your foes won't even try anything except put some distance between the two of you.

Early bosses like Gayler and Bask can even be cornered so to speak. You can, with some practice, force them into a corner where the computer's AI will go a little crazy as it won't know whether to go forward or back in order to distance itself from you. This requires very precise timing and a bit of practice, but you'll know you've achieved it if the boss goes back and forth within a very restricted area on the left side of the screen and your hits still register. Later bosses are a tad too fast for this and tend to avoid being cornered, but you can still do a hit and run tactic that's similar in nature to this one in nature. You need to get close to the boss - so close that your sprites will almost occupy the same space - until he recoils (because of

your hit box) which is your chance to land a hit and then walk one step forward to keep up with the recoiling boss (and preventing him from attacking), then hit again, always staying very close to the boss. In some cases, the boss might try to kick you, but his kicks will go right through you thanks to the hit box.

Also, each boss has a weak point which can be exploited once and only once, knocking off a fair bit of health (say about 4 blows' worth or something along the lines of a 1/5th of their health bar). Understand that this must be the first blow you land, otherwise the weak point will not work. As you can see, each weak point is pretty simple, and yet it took me some time to figure them out - I suck!

Bask: Shoulder (you'll need to jump so that Kenshirou's chest is in Bask's face and the blow must be deep enough to hit the back of the shoulder cleanly. The second most difficult weak spot to hit, right after Bronze's, strangely enough)

Gayler: Crouching punch to the gut.

Tiger: Straight kick to the midsection (just walk up to him and hit a straight kick)

Solia: Punch to the face (Ha! Oh, and you'll need to jump since he's taller than you)

Bolts: Sweep kick

Bronze: Same as Bask, only with a jump kick. (Be careful, his double makes it tricky to hit him and kicks don't have the same hit box as punches.)

Falco: Punch him in the back of the head as he slides.

Shula demon: Kick him in the back as he slides.

| The walkthrough |

(Note : the stage names are listed in this format : "My English translation" ("Japanese name")/"Name in American version" oh and remember that any mention of flying projectiles are only valid for the Japanese version, the American version is toned down in that regard)

Stage 1 - Bask's area (Basuku no Eria)/Bask's county area

Let us see now, this is the first stage of course and if you can't complete it, then you might as well give up right away.

Wait! Don't go! It's easy, I swear!

Ahem... Our enemies for today are a collection of handsome yet badly drawn punky sprites which bear the colour of pinkish flesh and, it seems, have no shirts or pants - rest assured, my puritan friends, they are wearing their undies unlike certain Gully dwarves found in a certain game bursting with AWESOMNESS~~~~. These cheeky fellows are rather easy to defeat for you need but one of your mighty punches to have them explode into tiny pieces. All they can do is punch (slowly) and look cool in their undies.

As with every self-respecting wasteland, you find an assortment of kni... errr bottles flying through the air and at your head. If you're asking me why there

are kni... bottles flying around, then obviously you're new to Nintendo Logic... As stated in the intro, the kniv... argh bottles appear only in the Japanese version.

This stage is rather simple and straightforward as you march along killing people for fun. Yes, for fun since you're not given any real reason to do all this...

Now I'm sure when Ken(shirou) had a number of good reasons outlined for him before accepting this mission:

- Someone stole his girlfriend...
- Some schmoie killed someone dear to him...
- Revenge for something or another...
- Makes him feel like a big man...
- Just likes beating up people...

The games gives you no real clue, therefore, I am certain he's doing it for fun...

What? Saving people? Bah, that's just Nintendo covering up "inappropriate" ideas... Like how they replaced the word kill with destroy in the KOEI manual for Bandit Kings of Ancient China... true story!

In any case, by now you've arrived at the mini-boss who will probably do a number on you. Serves you right you big bully! Think you're so big with those exploding punches and stuff...

Since you might want to beat him (bully), here's how you do it :

Barona, the Big Guy with a Yellow Mohawk Mini Boss aka Mr. T

I pity the fool who tries to beat this sucka' in the Japanese version.

First, he's immune to your hits if they strike anywhere but his head. And even if you hit his head, you have to hit him at a very precise spot. Thus, this makes him one of the more powerful foes in the game. No, I'm serious ! He's the only one, except that other mini boss in the next stage, who has such superb armour/resilience. Compared to him, the stage boss is a wimp!

However, if you have the amazing powered up fists of choppy frame rate (say around 3 stars or just use the turbo button), three hits should be enough to defeat him. I suggest punches, seeing as kicks have an odd hit box which often leads to you missing... Hit detection is, as I've said before, a troublesome thing in this game.

Jump in close with a semi-short hop (let yourself fall freely though) to punch his head. You'll need very good timing for this, but it gets you a quick first hit. Then jump over him and retreat, only to repeat until you get your three required hits. You'll know you've hit him when the strikes cause a blue mark to appear on his head. Alternatively, you can try to jump in place and wiggle in the air, but I don't suggest it. It seems free falling works better here.

The American version isn't as tough, but I'm sure he can throw busses while telling kids to stay off drugs. In any case, to stop his jibby jabba, just hit him three times anywhere and you'll beat this fool in no time! My suggestion is to come in with a jump kick, do a standing blow and finish with a crouching one. If done with proper timing, Barona should be confused and try to hit in

the air.

After the mohawk sporting, jaw jacking Mr. T impersonator is defeated, take a few steps back until the screen scrolls again. Then, go right again. You should see some fist fodder rushing to the occasion. Their defeat allows you to capture some power up stars/hiragana which come in handy.

A few pit jumps later and you're face to face with a large gate and that Bask (Basuku) guy they mentioned earlier in the stage... But wait! before you go fight the stage boss, try going backwards over the pits. Defeat the guys that appear for some more power-ups, including a speed boost (if you have the required stars) and aura boosting necklace from the foes near the arena.

Ballet Dancing Boss Bask (Basuku) aka The Baskter

Bask comes in with a red and yellow bandana, his muscles ripped and his hairline receding. "Mean Gene" comes in with a mic to interview him...

Mean Gene : Hulk... I mean Bask... you gotta tell me something... This Kenshirou, I hear he's a tough cookie, how do you plan on beating him ?

Bask : Well you know Mean Gene, I know that Kenshirou has been flapping his mouth about being the biggest and the baddest. Well let me tell you something brotha', I'm gonna go and flip in the air like a sausage! And let me ask you - whatcha gonna do when the 24 inch pythons run wild on you!!! *does a muscle pose*

Urrr yeah... well seeing as this isn't wrestling, our Hulk Hogan look-alike won't be lasting long. Although, I don't recall Hogan ever being quite this agile...

No really, the guy keeps spinning in the air like he's dancing ballet or something... Makes sense since this is an arena we're fighting in...

Only in those post-apocalyptic settings I tells ya'.

For your information, Bask and sidekick Barona were merely fodder for Ken and didn't have much of a presence in either the anime or manga.

The trick here is to use his love of useless spinning in the air to your advantage by running under him (you should be powered up with 6 or so stars by now and have the speed boost) and then it's time to kick some back baby!

You could just go face to face with him, but what's the fun in that? Besides, he's invincible while spinning (ONLY when spinning) But if you choose to go toe to toe, then my suggestion is to try and corner him as I said in the boss technique section.

Careful though as he can kill you even if you have most of your power left by way of some strange touch of death technique that he employs from time to time. Is it a bug in the game? Who knows. Other bosses have this mysterious power as well, although none have ever managed to do it to me as easily as Bask.

Once you beat him, he'll do a little jig and explode into a million of pieces... violence, glorious, glorious violence!

His defeat means that some girl (Rin) and a guy (Baat) in matching white

outfits (ooohh what a fashion statement) cross the screen and disappear.

What does this all mean ? Is this some obscure metaphor for Kenshirou's lost childhood?

It might just be... it might just be...

Stage 2 - Gayler's area (Gailaa no Eria)/Gayler's city area

Our foes du jour are still the cheeky guys in their orange undies. Showing that the post-apocalyptic world has little need for clothing. Not to mention how cloning has certainly taken off... Ever noticed how all the fist fodder foes look the same? Scary wouldn't you say?

Of course, they add to their arsenal the dreaded throwing bottles of increased annoyance!

You can punch them back if you so desire, killing the thrower in the process, but you're not going to receive any power-ups that way bucko.

Added novelty item : doors.

To give this game some much-needed depth, depth that one can only find in such masterpieces as Heroes of the Lance, you can enter some doorways here. Of course, seeing as most doorways lead nowhere or serve as mere decorations, the idea sounds better in theory than in practice.

In fact, the first door you can enter is in the far right of the stage and it holds a flag if you beat up an enemy. But this is very early into the stage, and a mini boss is waiting for you, so it doesn't serve much of a purpose.

Go up the stairs as soon as you see them instead. If you need to regain your energy, you can always go back to the room you find early on which holds an Hokuto flag. Just make sure the sucker you decide to punch is near the centre of the room or you'll miss the flag.

Once more, go up the stairs and fend off the cheeky foes that leave power ups galore. Try to get yourself into the super manly, clothes ripping mode - it's not just cool looking, it's fun for the whole family!

You find yourself faced with some large dolt now who looks like a Frankenstein Monster...

Buzoli, Bounty Hunter aka the Frankenstein's Monster Mini Boss

Since he's a mini boss he gets more colour, but little personality...

What's with the green stuff all over him? Is he rotting or something? Ewww...

This gross fellow had a limited life span, worst of all, he was defeated by a sidekick of Kenshirou, Ein. Buzoli was hired by our blubbery friend Gailaa (Gayler) to take care of Ein and Kenshirou, but he was easily beaten by the American looking boxing bounty hunter Ein.

Anyhow, he hits you with some rather simple blows that do a fair amount of damage to our manly Kenshirou. This doesn't make much sense however since in

the anime and manga Kenshirou would never receive so much as a bruise from such lowly creatures! Already they're screwing with the original storyline, alert all Hokuto no Ken fans!

In all seriousness, the mini boss is pretty rough once again - rougher than the boss in fact. He too has great armour and can resist the mighty blows of the Big Dipper/North Star (Blasphemy I say!) Again, methinks the designers of the game never watched the anime...

Three hit and he's out using the same tactic you used on the last mini-boss i.e. jump in close with a short hop, strike his head, jump over him, retreat, repeat. Use a fireball (if you're fully powered up) to make this battle easier, it counts as a single hit. You might even want to defeat him using the fireballs if you caught the aura necklace in the last stage...

In case you've skipped the intro, the American version is a wuss who can be hit anywhere on his disgusting body and still requires around 3-5 clean hits to kill.

Moving on, you'll find a red doorway at some point. Be careful and stick close to the entrance as mysterious bottles start flying out from nowhere. First, jump over the initial bottle, take a step forward and duck under the next. Take a step, don't move or jump over the bottle then take a step or two (again carefully) to avoid further bottles. This doesn't always happen though...

Enjoy it, this one of the rare occasions where you can actually avoid the bottles with such ease due to the fact that no one will get in your way this time and you can dodge them easily. Later on, the screen gets filled with foes at the same time as the bottles and knives fly making it nigh impossible to avoid damage.

Downstairs, you're attacked by two bottles again, but don't despair, just move on to the next stairs down and reach for the bottom floor my friend!

Right you go and up the stairs to Gayler, magician and yellow blob...

Yellow Blob Boss Gaylord... I mean Gayler (Gailaa)

Now, I'm sure Gayler turned evil because of people kept making fun of his name... I mean, come ON! As if Gaylor wasn't the first thing that popped into your mind. That and the fact that he's a yellow blob...

Strange but true, he has EYES ! Huge ones to boot which means he's one up over Hart from the original instalment of the game. Take that you fat slob!

In the anime and manga, Gailaa was a rich merchant/reptilian creature who used hypnotic gas (that sounds sort of gross actually) to beat his opponent, though he preferred to just hire goons to do his job when he could.

Gayler throws smoke bombs at you, but he's the only one in the game who has both the smoke bombs AND the fireballs. Come to think of it, his smoke balls are rather unique seeing as no one else has them. Not that they do anything special.

Once again, he's a better boss than Hart. So Gayler wins the battle of the fat bosses hands down... Plus, his feet aren't the same colour as the floor. HNK II

1, HNK 0.

But he's still just a yellow blob so you can easily jump over his fireballs and kick him in his flabby guts. Sadly, you can't start a whirlpool in his fat belly like Ken did with Hart in the anime *sighs* can't win em' all I guess...

This boss is by far the easiest of the bunch seeing as you can just stand toe to toe and punch/kick his lights out. Start off with a crouching punch to the gut/gonads and see a nice chunk of his life vanish. His projectiles (along with those of every other boss in the game) rarely do a lot of damage - around one or two life bar increments a hit - it's the physical blows that really hurt. Trust me, the worst is yet to come...

Some guy in black and yellow comes in (Ein), but you can't do anything to him... This is getting on my nerves... I have bloodlust, satisfy it you darn game programmers! Kill! Maim! Explode!!!

Stage 3 - Concentration Camp (Hangyakusha Shuuyoujo)/Traitors Concentration Camp

This would be the more imaginative title for a stage and the hardest to translate for yours truly (until I realised I made a mistake, oh well) Now our friendly fodder enemies have a new trick up their sleeves by jumping. Also, they have progressed clothing wise by wearing outfits that are a lovely shade of green combined with a long pigtail. Something of a cross between a knight and a ninja - mixing up eras, a bold move indeed! This is all due to an increased awareness to fashion no doubt. All they need now is Sturm's moustache and they're all set to take over the world with style!

In any case, they have bottles and aren't afraid to use them! But the important thing is, the annoying freaky midgets who jump all around you with a dagger in their hands. It's just like in my nightmares! Only the midgets there are nude and wear mighty afros.

Try and use your kicks if you're just looking to gather more fireballs. Seeing as your usual power-ups are probably useless by this time (once you're in super manly clothes ripping mode that is) it's a fair trade. Besides, you won't really need the fireballs until much later and you'll be fighting a lot of fodder foes before then.

The second door is the right one, but you can't enter it while invincible so it might be wise to avoid the gold necklace you find early on, it's far from necessary.

Just go right in the red room and face off with the whipping fiend...

The BDSM lovin' fool and his whip of pain and love Mini Boss (anime/manga uncertain, possibly Ren, traitor to Ein)

"Single grey sprite looking for love in all the wrong places. I have cool hair and would like to meet partners to engage in games of pain in a post-apocalyptic setting, but I'm a little shy.

What I lack in style and definition I make up with my tools of the trade i.e. a whip with only few frames of animation. Non-smoker only please... I have a special place in my heart for huge muscular men who scream "atatatatatatata" all the time. I am both nimble and agile, capable of leaping without moving a

single part of my body."

Like that prancin' fool Bask he's quickly defeated. In fact, he can't whip you once you're in close and will jump away giving you a wonderful opportunity to kick him. As a side note, like every mini-boss from now on he's vulnerable to any and all attacks on any part of his body.

After the usual jig, he explodes.

Enter the next door for more mayhem! More surprises! And more violent freakin' fun!

Beware of jumpers, you should try to kick the little buggers, but the game tends to have picky hit detection...

This is a rather interesting stage compared to the others - they are certainly showing some effort here, even the music is nice! Although, for the most part it's useless eye candy and temporary release from boredom, at least it's fun.

The stage starts off with the bleak sky and ominous wall that gives it a certain je ne sais quoi only to lead you into an equally bizarre industrial chains and blocks look which fits in perfectly with our whip totting friend from earlier on. The industrial look gets the prize for best background in the game and as an added bonus you can start breaking down blocks to progress through the stage!

The jumpers get more and more annoying as you move on and try to break the blocks though. Because of an odd glitch, they actually come from under the floor at times! They can't break through the blocks, but have no problems jumping from the floor... weird... Always a dark cloud looming on the horizon in this game...

All good things come to an end and the boss makes his appearance when you reach a large group of blocks...

Boss Tiger (Taigaa)

He's no Tiger, though he does bear some resemblance to Raoh... But Raoh's like a God or something and he dies in the movie.

In fact, this is the first of the four Gento warriors and he is represented by the green light (any relations to the Green Lantern?). He ends up kidnapping Rin on orders from Jakou and dies at the hands of the Shura.

He's another dumb jumper who uses weak white fireballs. No big deal - just break open some space and you can go mano a mano with him. A standing kick to the midsection will do nice damage as a first hit. Just remember, when faced with superior opposition, duck and hit him in the family jewels! He could be cornered but tends to slip by easily and throws fireballs when he panics. The best strategy then is to tail and deck him.

Seriously folks, ducking under his fireballs and hitting him low does work well at first, but you really should get up and do more serious damage with your fists (of choppy frames of animation) It's bare knuckle bashing time !

If you're at full power, nothing should prevent you from beating him since his

kicks don't seem to connect when you're in close. More on the fearsome power of kicks later on... you'll see when you get there...

Red guy with a black face comes in to annoy you by being invincible... hey... it's Kane!!! Now I really, really want to beat him up! Lousy lazy worker! Oh, it's actually Shouki, of the red light district... err I mean, red light warrior. He's probably the nicest of the Gento warriors and dies in heroic fashion at the hands of Falco after rebelling against Jakou - AWESOMNESS!

Stage 4 - Solia's District (Soria no Gun)/Solia's army

A very very short, but absolutely crazy stage...

You get three knives coming at you as soon as the stage starts! Taking it slow won't change anything, so try to keep moving as much as possible. There's a gold (invincibility) necklace early on, try to get it if at all possible. If you do, make some tracks and avoid battling as much as possible by jumping. Fist fodder guys get scarce near the end and you just need to worry about dodging the knives so the invincibility really helps out a lot here. You should be able to get very close to the boss this way.

If you prefer to follow a more difficult route, know that there's a limit to the number of projectiles on screen at one time, so the fist fodder crew can't hit you with knives as often as they'd like (though they try throwing stuff, nothing happens) Use this to your advantage but be careful of your jumps - those knives can fly high and hit you upside the head at the top of the screen ! While you're at it, try wiggling left and right when you're in the air in order to confuse our friend the computer A.I. which decides where the guys will slide/throw knives based on your latest course of action. Indecision clouds my vision...

But seriously, you can receive a lot of damage as the screen is often filled with knives, sliding soldiers, arrows and everything but the kitchen sink! Plus, no mini boss to beat in order to recover some energy, not that the stage is long enough for that.

Try using a save state if you're on an emulator to practice your timing. Keeping more than half your power is very good on a first try if you miss the gold necklace, so don't get too ambitious... But if you do get the gold necklace, things should be a lot easier.

The boss awaits before his large gate...

Burnin' Hunka Love Boss Solia (Soria)

This lavender loving boss is one of the more dangerous fireball and karate using bosses...

His kung fu is deadly and he throws a large amount of fireballs at you (3 or so), but he's nothing more than your average boss from this point on.

This is where TECHNIQUE comes in and really becomes useful.

Jump in close and punch him straight in the face and then make sure your sprites mingle, do some damage, jump over him quickly, repeat...

If lucky, you'll mess up the A.I. so that it tries to kick when in close (which doesn't work) and you can punch his lights out.

Nothing funny to say here - this is deadly serious folks. The bosses are now capable of knocking off almost a full fifth of your energy in a one short burst of punches or a single kick! Solia, for example, tends to launch three punches at different heights thus ensuring that one will hit. And his kicks will cause serious damage!

They may have more fashion sense, but that simply means that they are fashionably dangerous!

Lavender light Gento warrior Soria, he of the lovely eye patch (lost his eye while fighting Falco), bears a resemblance to our friendly, but violent, friend Jubei from Ninja Scroll/Ninja Armageddon/Ninja Resurrection. His motto is: everything is circle, his defence is circle, his power is circle, his fist is circle. Yeah, sure... just keep telling yourself that... My theory of Soria being a relative of Jubei finds itself challenged by the fact that he loses quickly to Ken, getting one of his arms ripped off in the process. Jubei is much tougher than that pfft...

Stage 5 - The Imperial Capital's Gate (Teito no Mon)/The Imperial Capital Gate

3 simple stages of very tough foes who don't always go down in one hit! Must be the because they don't have the flashy ponytails...

You just go right from the get go and never stop, facing one swarm of fist fodder after another...

The boys in green are very annoying here and tend to use a certain pattern: one guy ducks then shoots while his buddy slides towards you. The computer will cheat and throw some knives while you jump to make sure you get some damage.

You have to go quickly but carefully otherwise you'll be too weak to do anything to the boss... try catching the gold necklace in the third and final level of the stage. Once you do, just go, go, go! The faster the better. You should be able to make it to the boss if you jump along the way.

Blue Boy Boss Bolts (Borutsu)

In one version of the story, he kills Shouki - meanie - however, one way or another, the blue light warrior doesn't stand much of a chance before Ken and dies at his hands easily.

This boss is quite tough - are we sensing a pattern yet? He'll appear on the opposite side of the screen no matter where you stand, which isn't a bad thing due to his tendency to launch lots of fireballs at once. Use the technique outlined before - seeing as that's the basic story for all bosses from here to Shula, you might as well master it as soon as you can. But remember to launch a quick sweep kick as your first blow as to take advantage of his weak spot. He's more or less easily cornered compared to other bosses. I think that standing just a few steps right of the left side of the doorway helps.

I recall swearing a lot when first facing this boss. Having a lot of power helps, obviously.

He can shoot a lot of fireballs and he tends to punch you out with ease. Sticking close to him is dangerous because of his punch, so try jumping over his fireballs and then using the technique. If using an emulator or just feeling lucky, try to corner him. Be careful, he likes to do the same to you and wear you down with fireball flurries in the corner.

By far the toughest boss until Falco - seriously!

Stage 6 - Jakou District (Jakou no Gun)/Jakko's army

Simple enough at first: a cross between the 3rd stage and the second one. The only problem is that the foes are just as tough as in the previous stage, if not more.

When two rows of breakable blocks appear hanging from the ceiling, two guys slide towards one another and pass each other at the centre of the screen. Careful not to hit your head on the blocks to mess up your timing! They do this twice, so watch out...

Use the upper levels as much as you can, those platforms are there for your protection. But remember that knives can be thrown at diagonal angles too.

The whole stage lacks imagination as it just repeats itself three times.

The mid level boss should come to greet you soon enough.

Shirtless Mohawk Sporting Mini Boss

This fellow looks an awful lot like the red and black Kane look-alike that appears after the boss is defeated in the 3rd stage...

Showing more power than the any other mini boss to date, this guy can deal a lot of damage if you're not careful. The best way to deal with him is to jump in with kicks to keep him at a distance then jump backwards to retreat soon after. His punches are rather strong and can hit you at many levels so a couple of flurries (3-4 hits or so) are all you should get in before retreating. Once more, he is vulnerable everywhere so he isn't THAT tough, treat him like a weaker end level boss.

In a show of utter coolness, he begins moshing in place when you defeat him...

Run upstairs and if you're in need of some power, check the lower door with no padlock for a flag. By the way you can't enter the padlocked doors... why? Who knows. It's not like a guy who can make people explode couldn't open the doors with his bare knuckles or anything.

Morality most foul...

This said, a second mini boss just like the first should arrive soon enough...

Shirtless Ponytail Sporting Mini Boss

Now this is probably the first guy's twin... or a cheap way to avoid drawing a new pixelated foe for you to trounce.

He seems to have face paint, but seeing as he has no face it's hard to tell.

He kicks and headbutts, showing more unique offence than his brother, but little else...

You know the drill by now, but, for the record, he too moshes in place when beaten and has a star on his face to boot... Hey, I know! It's StarMan from Pro Wrestling... wait... he has Kin Corn Karn's braid! Mmm... could it be some manner of twisted creature born of the fused DNA of Karn and StarMan???

Did you know StarMan was a hit kids' TV show in the early days of post war Japanese television? Remember that creepy green guy in Pro Wrestling called Amazon? He was really one of StarMan's alien foes. Strange but true!

Then comes the fun part : the block bridges...

Upstairs, the blocks break on BOTH the first bridge AND the platform above it, so jump, run or fall to your doom!

In fact, this happens on many platforms and bridges, so you have to make haste or fall down a pit.

When you reach the breakable blocks surrounding a door, go up and use that platform since the blocks of the bridge break. Nothing on the other side of the doors, so don't bother with them.

The dagger mini boss awaits you!

Fashionable Tiger Suited Mini Boss

Even if he hits once with his crazy triple daggers, this colourful fellow dies quickly with some well placed kicks. His daggers are rather dull and thus will not cause any great damage so use him as a chance to boost your life bar. In fact, you can easily run to him and kick him down to size in no time since he seems to do nothing but shoot daggers which are impossible to launch at close range! The most fashionable foes always die first. Dig his crazy triple bun hairstyle... karaazy... like Tatyana from Romancing SaGa 3... almost...

Moving on, the 4th block on the next bridge will die out and so will the before last block of the last bridge...

Nothing else to say, just be careful of the foes and their previously established patterns (duck/shoot and slide)...

The boss accepts your challenge oh manly Kenshirou!

Double Trouble Boss Bronze (Buronza)

He might be Bronze but he sure looks lavender to me...

Even the all knowing Master R. seemed stumped on identifying this one in the manga/anime... same goes for the mini-bosses.

The tough guy here has an illusionary double! But he's not invincible like Ken so don't worry, you can still damage him, just not his double. So how does that work exactly? Well, it means that some of your blows will simply miss unless they are timed at the proper interval. I estimate about a frame between blows to hit everytime, but considering how difficult the later bosses are and how crappy the hit detection can be, this is mostly a non-issue. To give you a better chance at knocking him down to size, hit his weak spot, which is the same as Bask (the shoulder) only it requires a jump kick instead of a jumping punch.

Jump over the fireballs and use a hit and run tactic seeing as the technique works only relatively well on him due to his double. Use your own fireballs if you're low on power, though it's obviously preferable to keep some distance between the two of you in that case. Besides, you have only two bosses left, one of which is fairly easy to defeat. Watch out for fireball fights - this isn't SF II and fireballs don't stop each other.

Blue guy/girls comes in seeing as it had been a while since you had visitors... Master R. once more steps in to state that it must be Rin, seeing as the Empress isn't freed yet. Though why she'd come is a mystery to him.

Stage 7 - Kenshirou vs. Falco (Faruko)

Go on the upper ledge as the lower half is a dead end, but grab the necklace just before you jump and go up the stairs at the end. The necklace helps in keeping your energy up for the next two sections.

What is this? Fresh air? You're outside now and nothing has changed - your fist fodder foes are still quite dangerous and slide left and right. No necklaces this time around, even though it might have been a good idea at this point or, better yet, in the last segment. Go against traditional logic and jump in the pit at the end of this portion of the stage.

Back to the desolate wasteland we go!

The foes here are extremely tough! They can take up to three hits before exploding or two full kicks before leaving the screen!

They have all the techniques of previous stages, as well as kicks and use unpredictable patterns, by far your greatest challenge to date!

I like using exclamation points!!!

Another horrible stage really...

Near the end, two sets of guys do double slides, one in the air, one on the ground. Only with excellent timing can you avoid both. I for one had to use save states to find the proper jumping rhythm and even if you do find it, it's still tough to get it right every time.

Damn those green knights and their flying feet!

If you make it through this stage alive, don't expect to have much more than half your health. I made it to Falco with more or less 3/5 of my life bar on my

best try. The last two sections get quite crazy at times and ask you possess both nerves of steel and quick reflexes. Sadly, the infamous floaty hit boxes and shoddy controls will surely hamper your efforts.

The boss Falco will challenge you once you reach the end of the stage...

Boss Falco (Faruko)

Falco will come out with a bunch of bikers to do a rousing rendition of "Rock me Amadeus"

Heh, his picture reminds me of Duke from G.I. Joe...

In truth, Falco, much like most of the later bosses, isn't a bad guy at all. He's simply forced to obey the evil Jakou/Jakko. He lost a leg which was subsequently replaced with a wooden one, thus explaining his formidable kicking powers. He is the Gento warrior of the yellow light and dies fighting a Shura demon (Sura), whom he also kills...

Ugh... fireballs, slides and speed...

First he shoots white fireballs, up to 5-6 at a time with variable heights so you can't duck them all and have to jump in very close to him (not to mention that your timing has to be very good to do all this in the first place) Then he slides! The slide is almost as bad as his most fearsome skill, the kicks of DOOM!

When in close, he kicks and does a LOT of damage (around 1/4 of your life bar...) In short, use the Technique Ken!

The guy can only be beaten using the technique described before for the other tough bosses. His weak spot is the back of his head when he slides and, as with all weak spots before this, it must be the first hit. Just jump over him or try to trick him into sliding when you're close enough so that he won't hit and go right past you. It is very much worth your time. Actually, I suggest you try keeping yourself close to him at all times so he doesn't slide away too often or force you into a corner.

Even if you use the technique, timing is crucial as any slip up could kill you outright. His kicks and slide can quickly turn the tide in his favour and his multiple fireballs can turn you into a human pinball where one sends you into the other.

His defeat brings you to the last stage...

Kenshirou versus Big Shirtless Shula (Shura)

No fodder here as you stand blocky pixelated face to blocky pixelated face against the big shirtless guy in white sweatpants - Shula, Heaven Emperor. Or so the manual states. In reality, you're facing some demon from Shura whose name is not really known (Sura again?). Needless to say, the game has ceased to follow the story's thread as set by the manga/anime.

Now then, he has more or less the same moves and tactics as Falco, only he does more damage with them. His slide is slow and predictable, but if it hits... Bam! almost half your life bar goes down within mere moments of being hit. Try

jumping over it and kicking him in the back as your first hit for some very nice damage.

He's easier than Falco though since you have full power coming in and he's not quite as speedy as the aforementioned boss. Come to think of it, Bolts was also tougher than him. I feel cheated now!

His defeat leads you to the abrupt ending which I shall now spoil for your pleasure...

Ending

The credits are shown and a portrait of Kenshirou's face is drawn in orange outlines.

That's it - nothing more, nothing less...

No "Thank you for playing", not even a "Gotcha sucker! You actually PAID for this stinker??? Bahahahahaha! Hey, guys! This nimrod paid for this game! can you believe it?? Bwahahahahaha! Idiot..."

What a jip... even a little "A Winner is You!" sounds good right about now...

| Ways to make this more fun |

Now that you've finished this awful, awful game, you're probably asking yourself "what the hell was I thinking?"

Ho, ho, ho... my poor friend. If you bought that game, then I pity you and your poor soul... and I also have some property in Florida I could sell you...

In any case, here are a few suggestions :

- Whenever you punch someone, yell out "Atatatatatatata" in a high pitched voice, just like Kenshirou!
- Have members of your family or friends do the same!
- When faced with a boss you're about to beat, say "You're already dead!"
- Try "exploding" someone near you...
- Play another game! Live a Live is pretty good...
- Go wash your car...
- Go play outside...
- Try out Heroes of the Lance, I hear Sturm's moustache is really AWESOME!
- Yell "A Winner is You!" every time you beat a boss.

If you have any other ideas, feel free to tell me...

Copyright information :

This thing is mine and mine alone, you hear me!
I did all the work so don't steal it from me or
I'll go over to your place and make you explode!

cough

Sorry, I'm still pumped up from playing the game. Now that my bloodlust has settled, I'll give it to you straight : just put up a little mention that I (Asplagis) created this thing and everything will be fine. And it would be nice if you told me in advance via e-mail.

You can post it on your website if you want to, but I refuse to see anyone making money from the use of this precious information regarding an old NES game that no one really liked. Unless I'm in on the deal... *cough cough* Seriously though, so long as no money is involved and I am contacted, I see no wrong in you (the reader) using this information on your own website.

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Other sources used include the French Hokuto no Ken (Ken le Survivant) website <http://hokuto.free.fr/> - perhaps the most complete HnK website in French or English. Also, you can check out the Hokuto Renkitouza at <http://www.geocities.com/denshousha> for English information about this series.

For more links, try the Anipike at <http://www.anipike.com>

Creator : Asplagis

Designer : Asplagis

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