

Inindo: Way of the Ninja FAQ/Walkthrough

by CondorMan

Updated to v2.51 on Jul 7, 2006

Inindo: Way of the Ninja FAQ

by CondorMan (email: FrGrnDrgns@aol.com)

Version 2.51 (07/06/06)

Copyright 2003-2006 by Jorge Sierra, all rights reserved.

This is a FAQ/walkthrough for the Super NES game, Inindo: Way of the Ninja. It's an RPG set in Japan, circa 1580. As one of the few survivors of the warlord Oda Nobunaga's brutal massacre of the Iga Ninja clan, your mission is revenge. You will need to fight monsters, defeat rivals and assassins, earn the trust of powerful warlords and fellow adventurers alike, and take part in military battles against Nobunaga's armies before you can confront him directly.

I love this game. The combats in this game easily rank among the most challenging of any RPG I've ever played, requiring you to really understand the game and at times devise unconventional strategies in order to succeed. Another great thing about this game is that at almost any time you can take a break from the combat and spend hours earning money through spy missions, meeting different people, engaging in all kinds of nonessential actions that can still be a nice help to your gameplay. Anyway, I hope people find this guide useful. I've tried to make this a spoiler-guarded (not spoiler-free) FAQ in most respects.

Please read Contact Info. at the end of this FAQ if you wish to email me about this FAQ or this game.

Version History

02/20/03: Version 0.40. Walkthrough and all lists are incomplete. The Walkthrough includes up to just before Mt. Ontake (sixth training ground). Other sections, mainly covering gameplay, are mostly complete.

03/22/03: Version 0.60. Coverage ends just after the seventh training ground. Also some editing, updating, and corrections throughout the FAQ. The General Strategies section is now largely complete, and I also filled in most of the blanks on the Magic and Monster lists.

03/29/03: Version 0.61. Corrected some major mistakes. Additions to the People section, Equipment list, beginning of next Walkthrough section. Other draft editing/updating.

08/07/03: Version 1.00. It took a while, but I finally completed the walkthrough! Although there is still much I have to learn. I've done a lot of revamping (main reason I waited until my walkthrough was complete before releasing another version), so here's a partial list of changes:

- * Completed the Walkthrough and most lists
- * New Bingo subsection is included in the remodeled Part III of this FAQ
- * Additions to pre-walkthrough sections; some corrections throughout the FAQ

- * A lot of corrections to the spell list (most notably Gust and Revive)
- * Minor reformatting of the Item/Equipment lists
- * Major reformatting of the Character list, and added three additional subsections

08/09/03: Version 1.01 corrects some formatting errors in Version 1.00.

09/05/03: Version 1.10. A lot of small but significant additions. Examples include: Updates to class/subclass descriptions; many updates on the lists, esp. spell lists for some of the bosses; added some notes on Compatibility.

01/06/04: Version 1.11. I needed to add the names of some of the Endgame bosses and work on other maintenance. Sorry I took so long.

08/02/05: Version 2.00. It has been a long time, but I am back with this game one more time, and have made a major revision. Unfortunately I discovered myself to be major-league wrong about an important aspect of this game, as I explain in detail in the Endgame section of the Walkthrough and correct a few other sections. Suffice it to say that everyone who e-mailed me was right and I was wrong. Mea Culpa... and thanks anyway to all the people who expressed their interest. I still think there's a bug in the game that's deceptive, though. On the plus side I will be adding a few new monsters, and this update details a few new odds and ends, including the Hydra cheat several people contributed.

07/01/06: Version 2.50. Information on every enemy and every character in the game is available, and more accurate than ever. Also included a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section under section III-D, and some corrections made to most recently updated sections of the Walkthrough.

Future Updates

There are a few details missing, but by and large Version 2.50 completes all mandatory elements of this FAQ to my satisfaction, leaving only speculative, tactical, and mathematical questions unanswered. I am proud of this FAQ, my only FAQ on Gamefaqs, yet something filled with memories of great wonder and exploration, and something I know was a worthwhile contribution. I appreciate the interest and support people expressed in this FAQ.

There is still much in this game worth exploring and writing about. I just don't know that I'll be the one doing it. There is a remote chance I will return to this game to try to conquer all of Japan, but if so that will be covered in a different FAQ.

Table of Contents

[No oddball find-codes for you, but plugging in subheadings (e.g., "D. Game Over" to jump to Section I-D works for me).]

0. [Introduction, Version History, Table/Contents]

I. GENERAL/GAMEPLAY INFORMATION

- A. Story and Steps to Complete the game
- B. Let's Talk About Stats! Status Screen Stats
- C. Combat Notes

- D. Game Over
- E. Notes on Magic and Items
- F. The Other Characters
- G. Flow of Time
- H. Daimyo Battles

II. PEOPLE

- A. Meeting People
- B. Compatibility
- C. Classes
- D. The Great Reincarnation

III. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Pulling the Daimyos' Strings
- B. General Strategies
- C. Bingo Gambling
- D. FAQ

IV. WALKTHROUGH

- A. From the Iga Secret Village to Mt. Fuji
- B. Mt. Fuji
- C. Mt. Tsukuba--Oh Wait We Need Companions First
- D. Mt. Haguro
- E. The Legend of Yoshitsune
- F. Interlude I: Espionage and Sabotage (Featuring Geography Review I)
- G. Mt. Osore
- H. Oshima Island and the Tengu Forest
- I. Interlude II: WAR!
- J. Beyond the Checkpoints--Officially, Anyway
- K. Turning Point (Featuring Geography Review II and the Iron Ore Mine)
- L. Mt. Ken
- M. Kusanagi
- N. Island of Kyushu (Featuring Interlude III: Beginning of the Revenge)
- O. Mt. Hiei
- P. Endgame

V. LISTS

- A. Magic
- B. Characters--*UPDATED 6/15/06*
 - Characters Who Appear From the Beginning of the Game
 - Characters Who Appear When Other Characters Are Killed
 - Characters With Special Skills
 - Characters Who Appear Later in the Game
- C. Equipment
- D. Items
- E. Monsters--*UPDATED 6/15/06*
 - Underground (Dungeon) Monsters
 - Japan Field Map Monsters
 - Appear w/ Character Challenges
 - Bosses

CONTACT INFO

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/THANKS

I. GENERAL/GAMEPLAY INFORMATION

A. Story and Steps to Complete the Game

"In 1581, Oda Nobunaga's army waged a brutal battle against the Iga ninja. Through the fighting, the Iga people were practically wiped out.... Through the order of the high-ranking Iga Ninja Momochi Tanba, you flee Iga to avoid the violence" (game manual, p.4). That's all I really need to say; I've already told you most of the rest in my intro. You're trying to get revenge. Remember, this game was made in a time when RPGs didn't have great stories.

The manual is so nice to provide us with the necessary steps toward completing the game. I've given a brief summary below:

1. After you leave the Secret Iga Village, you must explore the Secret Iga Cave just north of the village and locate the "Password."
2. You must then travel to the various training grounds in Japan to learn your ninja magics. Each training ground has a dungeon you must complete, and you must conquer all of them to become a full ninja. The first training ground is Mt. Fuji, which you will find if you ask directions from the castle towns of Ise, then Mikawa, and then Totomi.
 - 2a. You can recruit allies in towns once you reach experience level 7. Up to two characters can join your party at a time. You will usually have to befriend them and build up their trust before they join.
 - 2b. Starting at level 15, you can hire yourself out to the various daimyos (the warlords of Japan) to perform spy missions on their rivals. It's not as exciting as it sounds, but this is a major way to earn money and gain trust from daimyos opposed to Nobunaga.
 - 2c. As the daimyos of various states make war against one another, they may recruit the skills of warriors, ninjas and wizards against their enemies. When you're strong enough (about level 18+), you can offer your services for particular battles, bringing powerful magic to the battlefield. You'll especially want to take part in any battles against Oda Nobunaga's troops to contain his aggressive expansion, as this will make the endgame easier.
3. Once you have gained all the ninja magics, you need to build enough trust with Nobunaga's rivals to convince them to attack his territories (with your assistance). Access to his final refuge, Azuchi Castle in Omi province, can only be gained when a friendly daimyo has conquered one of its neighboring provinces: Yamashiro, Echizen, Mino, or Ise. Daimyos will not agree to attack any of these four key provinces until you have completed your ninja training.
4. Finally, break into Azuchi Castle for your final confrontation!

B. Let's Talk About Stats! Status Screen Stats

1. Forget HP and MP, in this game it's **Health** and **Energy** that affect your performance. When you are attacked by the enemy, you take damage and your current Health decreases. When Health reaches 0, you are defeated. Energy is used to perform magic. No Energy, no magic. Recover Health and Energy by sleeping at the Inn. Healing items and magic will of course be a big help.
2. **Power** is how strong you are, your raw power. Grr! Higher Power gives you stronger attacks with both close-range weapons (sidearms) and long-range weapons (projectiles). Your Power stat and the strength of your equipped weapon combine to give you your **Attack** stat, the final measure of how strong

your physical attacks are. Listen, the status screen only tells you the total Attack for your close-range (Near) attack. You'll have to figure out how strong your Far attacks are for yourself by looking at your projectile weapon, but be aware that Far attacks will inflict less damage than Near attacks.

3. *Defense* (Defend) lessens the damage you take from the enemy's physical attack. First take off all your armor to find out your natural Defense (it doesn't appear separately). Your armor and other equipment contribute to your total Defense stat. You receive less damage from physical attacks if you have a higher Defense.

4. *Resistance* (Resist) is how likely you are to completely shrug off the effects of enemy magic like Sleep and Fog. Some equipment will boost your total Resistance; you'll need to take these off if you want to remember your natural Resistance again. (Most items that raise your Resistance let you take less damage from magic attacks, but your natural Resistance is so low and rises so slowly that it's hard to tell if Resistance = "Magic Defense." I'll say probably.)

5. *Speed* seems to affect the following: battle order (and perhaps turn frequency), success rate when fleeing combat, the chance of completely dodging an enemy attack (including some attack spells?), and the chance of completely missing when you attack (inverse relation). This is entirely a natural stat; no equipment will affect it.

6. *Intelligence* (Intel) affects the chance of performing magic successfully, as some spells have a chance of just fizzling when you cast them. This is entirely a natural stat.

7. *Luck* in most RPGs decreases the chances of bad things happening in combat. I don't rightly know everything this stat governs in this game, but the manual cites fleeing, performing magic successfully, and avoiding poison. I personally believe it also makes it easier for you to win at Bingo and affect enemies with spells like Sleep and Fog, but that's just a wild guess on my part. This is also entirely a natural stat.

8. *Level* is your experience level, a marker of your character's overall strength. *Exp Needed* tells you how many experience points you need to attain the next experience level. The game awards you experience points (and gold) when you are victorious in combat. Basically, when Exp Needed reaches 0, your character gains a Level, all your stats increase, AND your Health and Energy are restored to their maximum.* Your experience level is also an important stat in itself, especially for the hero. It determines how likely you are to be hired as a spy or army officer, how much you get paid, and your chances of succeeding at spy missions.

[Upon level-up, Health and Energy increase by a set amount that depends on the particular character and experience level. Power, natural Defense, natural Resistance, Intelligence, Speed, and Luck increase by random amounts; the range depends on the particular character and the stat in question--expect warriors to get a lot of Power and wizards to get a lot of Intelligence--but does depend on experience level.]

C. Combat Notes

1. Combat takes place on a small grid, which allows for limited movement strategy and long range attacks (you don't actually see the grid, of course). Movement is in one of up to six directions.

[_] [_] [_] *: Allies always face this <<< way; you can't turn around!

[_] [E] [_] [H] *: This >>> is the way enemies always face

[_] [_] [_] *: The three leftmost/rightmost are enemy/ally-only spaces

In the diagram above, the hero (H) cannot perform Attack-Near against Evil Monster (E) because they are not standing next to each other. Attack-Far is a viable option. Or you could Move next to the enemy. You can perform a Near attack on the same turn as a Move, but it will inflict less damage.

You can't use either Near or Far attacks if you're standing behind the enemy. Why can't I turn around??? But you can perform Far attacks if you're standing right next to the enemy. Hmm.

2. Allied characters may begin combat on any of the six rightmost spaces. Use the "Lineup" command outside of combat to change your formation.

3. When a character's Health reaches 0, he is defeated and removed from the combat grid for the rest of combat. After the battle, there is a small chance he will perish. Otherwise he will recover minimal Health and become "Injured." Now, if a character who is *already* Injured is reduced to zero Health again, the chance of him dying becomes much greater. Death is permanent, and if the hero dies the game ends. If you're not Injured, you *probably* won't die, even if the party is wiped out.

4. Did you catch that? Even if all allies are defeated by the monsters, it's not game over. Usually the battle just ends and everyone becomes Injured, which is weird, weird, weird! But see, it means the monsters can be that much tougher. If you lose to a boss, however, the party always dies.

5. Combat isn't divided into rounds per se, though it is turn-based. I think it's something like the Final Fantasy system without the Active Time element. Also, sometimes the monster will lose a turn because it tries to flee and fails. The game doesn't tell you this, but you'll notice it all the same.

6. The Defend action cuts damage from all attacks by half. Slightly less than half for magic and other special attacks, and actually it's usually better than half for physical attacks. (Especially relatively weak attacks.)

7. If your Health should drop to 0 while you're on the field (from traps or poison), you will die immediately regardless of whether you are Injured.

D. Game Over

As mentioned above, the game ends when the hero dies. It also ends if you don't kill Nobunaga by January 1, 1601 (if anyone has ever seen this condition I would love to hear about it). The manual is INCORRECT when it states that the game ends if all your characters become "Frozen" during battle. Instead the battle ends in defeat, which is not the same thing. Although you can survive defeat in most battles, you will always die if you lose in combat against a boss or a bounty hunter.

[A clarification: I'm not talking about the overworld monster called "Bounty Hunter." I'm talking about when "You have a price on your head, ninja."]

E. Character Status and Condition

The following are the status conditions that can befall a party member:

Injured (Fist Icon): Characters who are defeated and recovered after battle become Injured. During combat, Injured characters suffer from reduced Attack and a dangerously high chance of dying if they are defeated again. Staying at the Inn does not recover Injury. You need to either get treated at the Medic or use an Elixir. The special skill Renew will also treat Injury.

Blindness (Face w/ star eyes Icon): Causes characters to miss their attacks often. The Unfog and Awaken spells will treat this condition, no matter what the cause. Otherwise Blindness only goes away after combat.

Dizzy (Face w/ spiral eyes Icon): Any character who is Dizzy will be confused and may even attack his own allies (you'll notice a pattern). It wears off on its own during combat, or you can treat it with the Awaken spell.

Jinx (X over scroll Icon): Magic cannot be cast. Jinx wears off at the end of combat, or you can use Awaken to cure it.

Poison (Toxic Bottle Icon): Poisoned characters will gradually lose Health outside of combat as they walk around (not in towns, and not during combat). Casting Purge, using an Antidote, visiting the Medic, and having an ally perform the special skill Renew will all cure Poison.

Frozen (Blue Face Icon): Frozen in ice. Frozen characters are helpless and cannot do anything. It can be treated with Awaken and Antifreeze but otherwise only goes away after combat. If all characters become Frozen during combat, the party will be immediately wiped out.

Asleep (Sleepy Face Icon): Sleeping characters are helpless and cannot do anything, but the condition wears off on its own during combat. Or you can cure it with (surprise!) the all-powerful Awaken magic.

Powerful (Rack Icon?): A beneficial effect caused by the spells Super and Guard. The caster gains fantastic power, his Attack and Defense drastically increased. However, he cannot use magic.

[Leif Powers tells me the icon's supposed to represent a gateway to a Shinto religious temple. Come to think of it, it looks kinda like those archways in Dragon Warrior III's town of Jipang, although they're a different shape.]

Critical: The name of a character or monster will appear in red when its Health is at a very low percentage.

You can check the enemies' condition by pressing the B button during combat.

E. Notes on Magic and Items

1. Many spells have a chance of failure. If a spell fails, its Energy cost is still consumed. Spell failure depends on the particular spell and your experience level, Intelligence, and Luck.

2. Most combat magic affects enemies or allies regardless of their position on the combat grid. Torch is the exception.

3. There are a lot of items you can buy or find that closely mirror the

effects of certain spells. Most of these can only be used once each. Some items, like Dizzy Gas, can be used several times before running out. There are a few items that can be used to cast spells an infinite number of times.

3a. Items are usually more effective than magic. Healing items never fail, of course, and items that mimic indirect magics such as Sleep will have a very high accuracy, even if the actual spell often misses.

4. The hero learns new spells by completing the dungeons at the training grounds. But every other magic user (including other ninjas) learns new spells by reaching new experience levels.

5. If you want to Part with an ally (this is done at the Inn), be sure to take all his unequipped items or else you'll lose them, even if you invite him back the next minute. I lost a lot of good items before I figured this out.

6. Probably for this reason, most of the important quest items may be carried only by the hero. The game won't let you receive quest items if the hero's bags are full, even if other party members have room to carry more items.

7. In addition to spells, there are four Special Skills, innate abilities which only certain potential allies (most of them are the healers) possess. These abilities can all be performed limitlessly:

Renew immediately cures Injury and Poison.

Flight warps you out of dungeons or teleports you to other castles.

Cure1 changes the item Health Food into Body Healer (which is stronger).

Cure2 changes Energy Pill into Energy Up.

F. The Other Characters

1. You meet other characters such as Hermits and Samurai at Inns, Tea Houses, and castle Towers. There are a lot of them wandering around. More detail is provided in Section II of this FAQ, but here's an overview.

2. To get a character to join you, you need to be at least level 7, and the character's Trust in you (indicated by the smiley face) must be at least 40 or 60, depending on the character. If a character is actively looking for you, he will join regardless of Trust.

3. To raise Trust, you can Talk with the character (each parley will last for an entire day), or Attack and defeat him in combat.

4. Winning a fight raises trust by more than Talking, but afterward the character will avoid you for a while, sometimes for several weeks at a time, so it doesn't always work out right. Not only that, but in addition to the risk of yourself being Injured or killed if you lose, there is also a chance you'll kill your opponent if you win. You don't want that.

5. Trust builds up faster in some characters than in others. Go to the fortune teller (Seer) in town and ask about Compat to find out which characters you get along with the best.

6. For most characters, Trust decreases with time. But it slowly increases while they're in your party.

7. Sometimes characters at the Inn (Tea House, Castle) will seek to rob or challenge you and immediately attack when you select Meet (Talk, Chat). If you lose, they may take some of your gold. So Save often. You can Flee from

these fights, but they will still try to track you down for a while. If they flee from you, however, they will stop attacking.

8. At the beginning, you only have to worry about people robbing you or kicking your butt just for the fun of it. Once Nobunaga starts freaking out, you'll have to fight off bounty hunters as well. Start Saving often again.

G. Flow of Time

1. Time passes from day to night to the next day as you walk around on the overland field map of Japan, but not in towns and dungeons.

2. The following actions inside towns will cause one day to pass: Lodge at the Inn, Wait at the castle Tower, Talk when you wish to build Trust with another character, and the *Spy-Damage* spy mission (castle towns only).

3. A day will pass whenever you leave a town or dungeon.

4. If you travel for three full days on the field map, you will have to stop and rest. Be prepared: during this time you may be attacked by characters wishing to rob or challenge you (sometimes you'll run into people who wish to join your party instead). It does not actually waste any time, however.

5. At the beginning of every month you will see a brief report of any wars between the different provinces of Japan, as this is when they take place.

5a. If you're hired for a war, you need to Wait in the appropriate castle Tower on the 30th of the month. Oh, and if you're hired for a spy mission, you need to complete the mission (travel to the destination castle and successfully perform Spy-Snoop or Spy-Damage) and report back to the castle that hired you by the 30th of the month to get paid. And then the daimyo's Trust in you rises. But if you don't return by the 30th, you get no money, and I think the daimyo's Trust in you drops.

6. Daimyos only hire spies and army officers from the 1st to 15th of every month.

[7. As of this version, I can't say definitively whether the passage of time has any effect on the game, aside from the game over condition as mentioned above.]

H. Daimyo Battles

1. The daimyos, the warlords of Japan, each control small territorial states, and they covet each others' land. When they make war, they may hire skilled warriors and other characters as war officers. Oda Nobunaga is the most aggressive of the daimyos, and from the beginning he controls the most land.

2. Don't even bother trying to participate until the hero is at least level 18 or higher and has learned the Blaze spell. If you are hired, you will most likely be allowed to select an ally to lead a unit as well (it should be someone with his own battlefield magic). Now just report to the castle Tower on the 30th of the month and select Wait to begin the battle.

3. The battle proceeds in Turns, with all the units of each side acting at once. If the battle is not decided within 36 Turns, the defending army wins.

4. Each side has several units of soldiers. You only control the units led by

yourself and possibly an ally character. Units led by characters (including those not currently in your party) look different than the other infantry units, which are usually led by the daimyo's loyal generals. The shogun-like units are the two commanders and their troops. If a commander unit is eliminated, his army loses, which is why they have the most troops. Use the Info command to learn how many soldiers a unit has, or press B to see the numbers for all units at once.

5. It's your magic that's going to make the difference, and dramatically, so you'd best use it well. Most of your spells will be expensive and have an excellent chance of failure, and there is no way to regain Energy during the battle. Use the Lineup command during battle to change the unit leader's position to the Rear of his troops (instead of the Front). This will make his spells more likely to work. The Front position is for when you want to make the strongest direct attacks.

6. Info is a free action, so use it. The important Army stats are Arms and Training, both of which come into play in direct attacks. The important Unit stats are Power, Intelligence, "Health" (which is really Energy mistranslated) and the number of soldiers remaining. You'll notice that your characters take a drastic hit in Power and Intelligence in daimyo battles, and they simply will not compare with the experienced generals until you reach a very high level. Infantry units that are not led by generals will not have Power and Intelligence stats; only their Arms and Training stats will come into play during direct attacks (that's not a good thing for them; they're very weak).

7. The battlefield map is very wide and features colorful terrain. Movement is in up to six directions and up to three spaces. Movement range depends on the particular unit (yours will usually be rather slow) and the terrain you're trying to cover.

8. FINE, I'll talk about the Attack command. Sorry, only Near attacks allowed, but you get to choose between Normal and Full attack. When you perform an attack, both the attacking and defending unit will sustain some casualties. That's why you should rely more on magic. The Normal attack is less powerful, but you will lose fewer soldiers. Normal attack works best on very weak units. The damage you inflict (and receive!) depends on the stats of both units, including the number of troops each unit has. There is a chance that the Power stat of either unit will decrease after an Attack--the leader got wounded?

9. Infantry units are eliminated when their number of troops reach 0. But units led by characters, generals, and commanders are eliminated on the first hit they take *after* their troop strength reaches 0, at which point they are captured. This essentially means you can still use magic, but make sure you don't get hit by anything, and don't you dare try to Attack. If it's the enemy, it's just another hit you have to land on it. Most units with 0 soldiers can't do much to hurt you.

10. The battle ends in victory when the enemy commander unit flees or is eliminated. The battle ends in defeat when your side's commander unit flees or is eliminated, or when both you and your ally's units flee or are eliminated. You will get paid a lot and earn the daimyo's Trust if your side wins, paid a little and earn a little Trust if your side loses, and paid nothing and lose trust from the daimyo if both the player's units flee or are eliminated. Even if you're captured by the enemy, you will be released after the battle, regardless of the outcome (to the best of my knowledge, anyway).

II. PEOPLE

A. Meeting People

As mentioned above, you meet other characters at Inns, Tea Houses, and castle Towers. Once you have greeted someone, you will have the following options:

Ask: The five sub-choices are Name, Goal, Info, Jobs, and Oda. Name gives the character's name and subclass. Ask Goal, and the character will tell you what he's doing or where he's going. Info lets you learn about the strength of the various provinces of Japan, and the ambitions of their rulers. Jobs tells you which castles are hiring. Finally, you can ask what the person thinks of Oda Nobunaga, your sworn enemy. The answer to this last is a fair though not perfect indicator of how well you'll get along with the character. Sometimes characters will be very rude to you when you Ask them questions ("None of your business!"); but you can just leave them and select Meet again until they change their attitude.

View: This lets you view part of the character's status screen.

Enlist: Ask the character to join. Again, you need to be at least level 7, Trust must be at least 40 or 60, and you must have room in your party. It might take several tries even if you fulfill all these requirements (keep selecting Enlist). The Iga Ninja Hanzo is also very difficult to get when he's four levels higher than the hero, and should you meet characters who are many levels lower than you are (this usually only happens after you've leveled up in very little game time), they will also be extremely reluctant to join you.

Talk: Spend all night in friendly conversation with the character. This will raise his Trust in you.

Attack: Enter combat against the character. He will usually be willing to fight. There is a chance a character might refuse if there is a big level difference, his trust in you is very high, or he has a pacifistic nature. Characters will always refuse to do battle if their Health is low from previous fights. In any case, if you win, you will earn their respect and Trust will rise by quite a bit. However, if you don't (or can't) take the option to Enlist them immediately, they will start to avoid you and you won't be able to speak to them until they stop fleeing. Sometimes the character you defeated will die. If you don't see the "I surrender screen," that means you've killed him.

Defeating Hanzo in battle and Enlisting him immediately afterward is the only way I know of to recruit him while he has the level advantage. It takes several tries to get him to accept a challenge, though. Make sure you have the hero level up a bit before you drop Hanzo from your party or you'll have to fight him all over again to get him back.

B. Compatibility

Go to the Seer in certain towns and pay for Compat to find out how well you will get along with certain characters. This tells you how quickly a character's Trust will rise when you Talk to or Attack him, and overall how easy or difficult the character is to Enlist as an ally. The Seer will tell you one of four things:

"You two would really hit it off!" I call this excellent compatibility. Trust rises very rapidly, especially when you win fights, making most of these

characters very easy to Enlist. Trust will also never decrease; for all other characters, Trust decreases with time unless they're in your party. You can Enlist these characters when their Trust in you reaches 40 or 60, depending on the character's class. Look how fast Trust rises (these are approximations):

Talk.....+6-11
Attack...+25-30

"You two would get along fine." I call this good compatibility. These characters also join when Trust reaches 40 or 60, depending on their class, but Trust doesn't rise so fast and it will decline over time. Some of them are very much worth getting, but even at this level, it's a little difficult to Enlist characters who either travel a lot or who require that Trust level of 60 to join:

Talk.....+4-9 (sometimes less if Trust also declines over the same day)
Attack...+15-20

"You two would get along fairly well." I call this fair compatibility. This isn't too good. These characters join when Trust reaches 60, regardless of their class, and you may have a difficult time getting it there before they leave for some other town. In addition, some of these characters will try to rob you every now and then. I don't think you'll like that. Most of these characters are not worth the trouble it takes to recruit them:

Talk.....+4-7
Attack...+11-13

"You two would never get along." I call this poor compatibility. Some of these guys will attack you so often it's not even funny, but you can still get them to join if you raise their Trust to 60. That's a big if. Trust will rise so slowly and fall so fast that it's almost impossible to Enlist some of these characters. Only in very rare circumstances is recruiting such a character worth the time and trouble that it takes:

Talk.....+3-7
Attack...+5-6

Even while they're in your party, they won't be very happy, and Trust will slowly decline. Eventually they may desert you.

There are plenty of characters with good or excellent compatibility who would make worthy allies, you know. It's just that not every character who looks great will readily join you.

C. Classes

1. There are four broad character classes: Ninjas, Sages, Wizards, and Warriors. It's basically about what spells and equipment they can use.

Ninjas are skilled fighters, able to use many weapons and armor, including throwing star-type projectiles. Their Ninjutsu magic includes mostly attack magic for combat and the battlefield. Ninjas usually have high Speed, and starting from a little before the middle of their game their maximum Health accelerates rapidly. The hero is a ninja, of course, but compared to most of

the other ninjas in the game he has a much higher Power (and below average Health). Other ninjas can still make a contribution as they will learn most of their spells earlier than the hero will.

Sages have powerful healing and support magic. They don't learn any battlefield or attack magic. They have a fair selection of equipment and usually have a good natural Defense, but their Attack tends to be low and they can't use any projectile weapons. The four sage subclasses vary greatly in their stats.

Wizards learn some powerful combat and battlefield spells, and have the highest maximum Energy and Intelligence of all the classes. They have the worst selection of armor and close-range weapons, but they can use some good projectiles. Wizards level-up weird. They require a phenomenal amount of experience to reach one level up, then sometimes gain two or three levels in very quick succession. It works out to measure about evenly with ninjas. Wizards actually have a strong natural Defense.

Warriors have no magic, but they have higher Power than most ninjas, and use stronger and cheaper equipment. Their weaknesses are Speed and Intelligence (maybe Luck, too). A warrior's Health starts out as high or higher than a ninja's, but he will not gain as much with each level-up until well into the game. Warriors also have a slow level-up rate and will tend to remain two to three levels behind ninjas. This hurts their Health more than anything else, but it also means that few warriors will rival the hero in Power. Ultimately their better weapon selection is their best asset.

2. These broad classes are subdivided into 16 subclasses. Within a broad class (like wizards), characters of different subclasses (like Mystics and Magicians) may have somewhat different stats and tend to behave differently as they travel around Japan. Even though you can only recruit two additional characters into the party, the effect is to give the aspect of meeting and perhaps recruiting all kinds of different characters a lot of color and variety. I'll go through the peculiarities of each subclass in turn.

Iga Ninja: The remaining Iga Ninjas all hate Nobunaga with a passion. Igas have better Power and Speed than the other ninja clans, but they still aren't a match for the hero. Tateoka and Otowano are good allies at first and will actively seek to join you every so often, but I think Hanzo is the best you can Enlist. He'll be four levels higher than your character when he first joins, he has very good Health, Energy, and Intelligence even when you catch up to his levels, plus his Flight skill lets you travel limitlessly from place to place. He's very hard to get, though.

Koga Ninja: These are ninja from Totomi, which is fairly close to Iga. Like all other rival ninja clans, Koga Ninjas will occasionally attack and seek to rob you. How often they attack depends on compatibility. In contrast to Igas, Kogas have good Intelligence and Speed, but I'd really much rather have Power. There are quite a few of them, too, but Mochizuki is the only one you'll even get along fine with. He's fairly useful if you recruit him early, but you need to raise his Trust up to 60 in order to Enlist him.

Fuma Ninja: These ninja often assisted the Hojo clan, which in this game controls a healthy grouping of provinces and seems to be mostly neutral toward Nobunaga. The hero has only a fair compatibility with both Tofumaru and Fuma Koji. They don't attack very often, but they sometimes have help when they do. Fuma Koji is the stronger of the two. They're not particularly powerful.

Negoro Ninja: Ninja from Kii. The game manual says they frequently sided with

Nobunaga. Kagetoku sings Nobunaga's praises and will definitely get your attention in a bad way. Hiryu is less aggressive, and he's not a bad magician, but he's pretty hard to get, so I don't think he's worth it. Negoros seem to have the most mediocre stats of the ninja clans.

Female (Iga or Koga) Ninja: These ninja have lower Power, but higher Energy, Intelligence, (and Speed), than their male counterparts. Their strong magical abilities are useful in certain parts of the game. The Igas want to kill Oda while the Kogas support him (though they won't attack you). Guess which ones you'll get along best with? Actually, Oniyuri will readily join your cause, but she's hard to find.

Hermit: The first sage subclass you're likely to recruit, as several of them start stalking you once you reach level 7. Taken at face value, Hermits are pretty well-balanced. There are a lot of them, too, and almost all of them are easy to recruit. When you compare them to the other sage subclasses, though, Hermits aren't too good. The only stat they excel at is Speed.

Mendicant: "These were the people who protected Honnoji temple from territory-hungry daimyos" (game manual, p.65). Uhhhh, so what did they do, ask them very nicely to leave? These old monks have next to no physical offense, but in return you get very high Energy and Intelligence and a Resistance that actually increases in noticeable increments. Kenko Hosi has an amazing insurance policy in the form of the Renew skill, while Tenkai has all the remaining special skills, including Flight. Kyonnyo has the most balanced stats, but he has no special skills. Mendicants make very useful allies, especially in parts of the game where the other sage subclasses can't put a dent in the enemy either.

Sohei: Sohei are the most warrior-like of the sage subclasses. Power and Health are quite strong, but Energy is very low, especially at the early experience levels. Sometimes this is quite useful. Sometimes it's a horrible combination because even with a high Power, Sohei are limited to the same mediocre weapons as other sages, so your Attack is still weak.

Sohei are the only sages that ever join daimyo battles, but only if it's against Oda Nobunaga ("I'm fighting against Nobunaga.")

Sage: The namesake of the broad sage class is probably the best subclass among them. For the most part, Sages are just as balanced as Hermits, but their stats are considerably higher. Their Energy isn't quite as high as a Mendicant's, but their Power approaches (actually, it exceeds) a Sohei's. Only real weakness is a sometimes borderline intelligence. All of them have useful Special Skills and make excellent allies. Sages are hard to get. Although you'll have excellent compatibility with them, you'll need to raise their Trust to 60 before they'll join. In addition, most Sages live in central and western Japan, which are inaccessible to you at first.

[Did these guys *have* to give the same name to this subclass and the broad class of healers? So confusing. Well, whenever I'm talking about this specific hard-to-get subclass, I'm calling it "Sages" (capitalized), and when I'm talking about the broad class of healers, I'm using lowercase--"sages"--whenever possible, and otherwise I'll try to make the context really clear.]

Sorcerer: Sorcerers have high Energy and Intelligence, low Power. You can't count on them for physical attacks, but they're wizards so what can you expect? Hyakureiko is the only Sorcerer you'll find easy to recruit. Requiring only 40 Trust to Enlist and having an excellent compatibility with the hero, he's usually the easiest wizard character to get on your team (which isn't saying much).

Magician: I can't take these guys seriously because they look too much like American cowboys. And then I learned that wizards can use Pistols, so now we have a gunslinging magic cowboy in ninjaland. Magicians have the highest Power of all wizards, while Energy and Intelligence are about the same as a Sorcerer's. Their high Power is an asset early on, mainly because it helps their projectile attacks. Magicians are very hard to recruit because they're always traveling around Japan. Ryohei, the one Magician you'll have a good compatibility with, requires only a Trust of 40 to join, but he lives beyond the blocked checkpoints and almost never travels east of Ise.

Mystic: Mystics have the highest Energy and Intelligence of all wizards, a good Resistance, and are only slightly more frail than Sorcerers. As a most excellent wizard subclass, Mystics are very much like Sages, requiring 60 Trust to recruit regardless of compatibility and generally living in parts of Japan you can't access at first. Mystics seem to be the only wizard subclass that never seeks employment from daimyos.

Samurai: Samurai are warriors who swear loyalty to a particular daimyo. They're pretty balanced, for warriors, although their Power isn't as high as a Ronin's or Swordsman's. The Samurai's sole purpose in life seems to be waiting around his home castle until a war erupts so he can fight for his lord. Since they almost never travel, Samurai are the easiest warriors to recruit, though they all require a Trust of 60 or above to Enlist.

Ronin: These are Samurai without a daimyo to serve who travel from castle to castle to seek work. That means they don't stay in one place for long. Sometimes they will try to rob you. Ronin have the highest Health of all the warriors, but their secondary stats, especially Speed, aren't so good. Ronin only require 40 Trust to join if they're compatible with you, but most aren't.

Swordsman: Among warriors, Swordsmen tend to have the highest Power (Speed, too), but they seem to suffer from low Defense and Resistance, and some of them have relatively low Health. Sometimes they'll seek to fight you just to test their skills. None of them have an excellent compatibility with the hero, but some of them will have good enough stats for you to find a use for, and they sometimes "hang around." They require a Trust of 60 to Enlist.

D. The Great Reincarnation

Now that all that mechanical discussion on people and classes is out of the way, here's an interesting thing you might like to know. Despite what I've written earlier, death isn't so permanent as the game would have you believe. It seems that whenever a character (besides the hero) dies, a new character with the exact same class and statistics gets generated somewhere in the game world. The only thing that changes is his name and hometown.

[Shocker! Over 400 years before renegade scientists, human cloning runs rampant across ninjaland. So *that's* Nobunaga's secret!]

I discovered this phenomenon when on two separate occasions I accidentally killed two different Iga Ninjas, Otowano and Ichizo, and later (before I reset) found the character Mao Kirizo, an Iga Ninja who starts out being unknown to the hero, at Dewa Castle. This is suspicious because all the other Igas know and are known to the hero from the start, you see. On each occasion, MK had radically different stats, matching Oto and then Ichy in every stat, including compatibility. Final confirmation came when I later killed the high-level Hanzo (oops). I go to Dewa and sure enough, there's a 14th-level Mao Kirizo copying Hanzo in every detail BUUUUUUT he doesn't have

Hanzo's special Flight ability. RESET!

Hmm, the reincarnated Iga Ninja has no Special Skills. But the reincarnations of other classes might possess some of the Special Skills. For example, if you kill the one Mendicant who doesn't have any Special Skills (Kyonnyo), his reincarnation will not share this liability. That character (Dokan Sojo) will have the Renew and Cure2 Special Skills, and he'll have those exact skills regardless of which Mendicant he spawned from. I'm sure that enterprising players can use this little system to their advantage.

(Additionally, on very rare occasions characters not in your party manage to get themselves killed without your help. This can be very annoying to enterprising FAQ writers, especially if they demand precision and exactness.)

Of course, this reincarnation thing means you can never permanently kill those guys who attack you every other week. They'll just respawn with a different name but the same antagonism every time you kill them. But you also have some hope if your favorite warrior dies in a very important fight. My primary character list only has those characters who appear from the very start of the game, but I'm currently working on including some of the "clones" and a few others who appear later in the game.

III. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Pulling the Daimyos' Strings

1. In the latter parts of the game, you can Meet with daimyos to try to convince them to invade other provinces or sanction sabotage against them. You have to win their Trust first, however. Trust is the number displayed next to this really odd icon that looks like someone wearing a graduation cap.

2. You can only Meet with the daimyos of castles not controlled by Nobunaga and his generals, of course. Daimyos will refuse to Meet with you until you raise Trust to about 10 or above (not difficult at all). At a certain point in the game, you will be able to Meet with daimyos regardless of Trust because you have become notorious.

3. First of all, daimyos will not even consider invading other territories unless their army is relatively strong (see Interlude III in Part N of the Walkthrough for an explanation). Remember also that invasion forces necessarily cannot include all of a state's defending troops. If, however, you propose War and get *any* rejection message except "The army is not yet strong enough," that means the army is strong enough, and can probably win with your magical assistance.

4. Daimyos won't take your suggestions seriously unless Trust is very high, no matter what. About 60 or more is required to make them stop waving you away.

4a. Raise daimyo Trust by completing spy missions, fighting in wars, or giving them great Gifts. Whether a Gift is worthy for the daimyo to receive depends on its price. Among items daimyos will accept, they will be more impressed the more valuable the item.

5. With Trust at around 60 or more, daimyos will flatly reject your Advice until you reach certain points in the game, no matter how high you raise it. I believe this is based on how many training grounds you have completed in all cases.

5a. At a certain point in the game, slightly before the first set of checkpoints becomes open to you, daimyos will be willing to accept your Advice about sabotaging and invading other castles. But not those controlled by Oda Nobunaga. The farther ahead you are in the game, the more easily you will convince them.

5b. As you proceed farther into the game, you can succeed at convincing daimyos to sanction sabotage missions against any territories (including Nobunaga's), and finally to attack Nobunaga's minor territories.

5c. Daimyos will refuse to attack Nobunaga's provinces Yamashiro, Echizen, Mino, or Ise until the very end of the game, no matter what. Helping a daimyo to conquer any of these provinces gives you access to the final dungeon, you know.

5d. As far as I know, they will never, ever agree to make war against Omi, Nobunaga's home province. You'll have to confront Oda Nobunaga yourself.

6. If the army is still not strong enough, make sure you're dealing with a strong province. Ask other characters for Info about which provinces are strong, and perhaps which rulers are motivated to build up their armies again after losing some troops (though this last is speculation on my part). Find out the strength of the troops and amount of resources each province has by performing Spy-Snoop (the number of Generals is important, too). Also, perform some sabotage (Spy-Damage) missions against the province you want to invade to reduce its troops, either on your own or with Advice-Damage against the territory (slower, but you'll get paid for it), and make sure none of your potential sponsor's *other* enemies are forcing it to remain on the defensive. When fighting for a particular territory, try to limit casualties on your side as much as possible.

7. Any daimyo can be induced to support sabotage missions against territories controlled by any other daimyo. Same goes for invasion, assuming the army is strong enough, whatever that means.

B. General Strategies

1. Monster AI in combat is very predictable. They never Move when they can perform Near attacks, even if they can attack a weaker target by moving. This makes it easier to protect weaker characters with your formation than you might think.

2. Flee from combat often. Each character can perform an escape attempt for the entire party on his turn, so overall your chances of escape are high. Running lets you avoid very dangerous or very boring combats, especially when you're trying to explore. The encounter rate is high enough as it is and you will have no problems leveling up in dungeons when you need to; just park yourself by the stairs. You have a strong incentive to run when you're on the field map, when characters are close to a level-up but don't need the Health/Energy restoration, when all your characters are very far from a level-up, and when you're fighting enemies that are difficult to damage.

2a. Note, however, that you usually can't go to dungeons you've already cleared to level-up by fighting weak enemies. The encounter rate will be zero. I don't really understand exactly how this works. Maybe there's a level limit?

3. The relative usefulness of the various classes (in combat) changes several times over the course of the game. Depending on the particular monsters you

face and the availability of spells, items, and weapons, you will find it useful to switch in (or switch out) certain allies. For example, wizards have a very strong peak around level 14-ish, when they learn Fiero and Remedy, then plunge sharply in essentialness once the Fire Staff becomes available. Ninjas are almost always somewhat useful, but (for ally ninjas especially) their defining strength will change fairly often.

4. Don't you hate how every single monster in the game can inflict critical hits? You think you're safe with your super defense, taking only 1-2 damage per attack, when suddenly that little animal monster takes a huge bite out of you and you're KOed because you held off your healing until the last minute. It'll happen.

5. Different characters will take more or less damage when they are attacked by offensive magic. Some monsters, too, though that's much more obvious.

5a. It seems to be about the subclasses. Mendicants take the least damage from magic, followed closely by Mystics. But Hermits and Sorcerers take only slightly less damage than the hero. Warriors take slightly more severe damage than the hero; you'll notice this more when they're attacked by bigger spells such as Burn and Gale. But maybe it's because they have better Resistance.

[In the Magic list, I've listed my best estimate of the base damage for each spell. Some enemies may take more damage, others will take far less; you'll have to learn which monsters are strong (and weak) against attack magic for yourself. Also see my note on the Resistance stat in Section I-B.]

6. If you want a shot at recruiting some of the more powerful but inaccessible characters like Sages and [virtually every recruitable wizard], try swinging around Kii, Shinagawa, and Ise, as they do occasionally enter this region. The Sorcerer Hyakureiko can sometimes be found training at the earlier (accessible) training grounds as well. For wizards, sometimes it's worth recruiting an incompatible character, time-consuming as it is, rather than waiting for a more compatible companion to appear. Just don't give them anything important. Or you could just kill Ryohei and hope his clone lives somewhere closer to home (I can confirm that he does).

7. If you have advance warning that a ninja or another very strong character is going to be hired by the enemy daimyo in the next war, try to prevent him from joining the battle. Just attack him as soon as he says he's joining the war. It's probably what you'd do in real life.

8. Later in the game, if the enemy summons Dragons or Ogres against you, you better attack the summoned creatures as aggressively as you can before they do some serious damage. With magic. In battles against [anyone except Nobunaga], you're better advised to go to the enemy castle and chase the enemy ninjas and wizards out before the war begins.

9. The Save-and-Reset trick for level-ups will work for this game. This is when you save the game just before a character attains a new experience level. Evaluate his stat gains for Power, Intel, etc. If you don't like them, reset. And keep resetting until you get an excellent level-up, as these gains are random.

[This isn't really necessary, and it doesn't help as much as you might think. You won't be able to affect Health or Energy at all, the hero already has a phenomenally high Power, most characters are going to have very low Resistance and natural Defense no matter what, and the other stats are too obscure for the difference to be significant. Also, you know how characters not in your party gain levels about as fast as you do? Their stat gains are random, so if

you pick and switch allies often, or obtain allies late in the game, you'll be dealing with a lot chance and averageness.]

10. A failsafe way to Enlist characters you are incompatible with, although it takes weeks. You must be in the person's home town. We already know that if a character you're fighting flees in combat, he will stop attacking you and immediately decide to head home. Actually, this applies to characters you attack as well. Suppose you're trying to recruit someone by Talking to him over several days, and you find out he's about to leave town. Attack him and force him to flee (not always easy). Go to him again and now his Goal is "I'm on my way home." But he already is home. This gives you a few days to keep Talking to him until he decides to leave town again. Repeat until Trust is 60 (or go for 55 and Attack-Enlist him). Save first.

11. Don't forget to look into the item shops (Guilds). Seriously, items are very powerful in this game. A full backpack, more than any other factor (although magic comes close), can single-handedly win almost any combat or dungeon. I'm not exaggerating, though you might consider it cheating.

C. Bingo Gambling

1. The Castles Mikawa, Sagami and Echizen feature the Bingo casinos. Each town has both a Commoner and a High-Class casino. They won't let you into the High-Class casino until you have become somewhat famous. Both the special playing Chips and the prizes are more expensive there.

2. The Chips you have bought and earned at one town's Bingo parlor will be recognized in casinos of the same type in other towns--that's right folks, credit was invented long before the advent of corporate banking. Win a lot of Chips, and you can Barter them for prizes. Most of the expensive prizes are rather grand and make good Gifts to Daimyos. . . some of them might actually be useful. But spending all your money on Chips just to afford them isn't really an option, especially at the High-Class Bingo; you'll have to earn them the hard way.

3. The playing board looks like a Bingo board: 5-by-5, filled with numbers, yes? A wheel of numbers spins and stops after you press the A-button (think Roulette and you won't be too far off). The goal is to fill in 1 Row, 2 Rows. . . you also win chips for completing patterns such as the X and + on the playing board. You get 10 Turns per game, more than enough to complete one row and earn a measly x2 payout (10 Chips if you bet the maximum 5).

With a little practice, you should be able to get the + pattern without too much trouble just by landing on the correct numbers. That gives you a x44 payout (x4 for 2 rows, x40 for + pattern, earn 220 Chips if you bet 5).

4. In addition to the 1-25 count of numbers, there are six special spaces on the wheel that do extra things when you land on them:

Blue 1: This lets you fill in any number on the board you want.

Blue 3: Similar to the Blue 1, but you select three numbers.

Skull: Immediately ends the game, no matter how many Turns you have left.

[Between 12 and 13]: The four squares close together symbol fills in the "Inner Square," numbers 12, 8, 18, and 14.

[Between 20 and 21]: The symbol with four spread apart squares fills in

the Four Corners, numbers 11, 3, 23, and 15.

[Between 4 and 5]: "Super plus" (actually looks more like a division symbol) fills in 17, 13, 9, 7, and 19.

5. Since you only get 10 Turns, use of these special squares is the only way you can complete the advanced patterns or fill in the entire board but, but, BUUUUUUUUT, the game doesn't let you land on them! Your timing is correct, but the wheel will jerk a little too far, or stop short, quite blatantly, too. Or if it's in a good mood it'll purposely make you land on them. I used to be very good at this; by consistently landing on the Blue 3 you can fill the entire square and get the maximum payoff, but I can't do it anymore, so now I suspect your chances of hitting the special spaces depends on how strong you are in terms of levels, training grounds, that sort of stuff, as well as a certain measure of chance. I also suspect that the date may also affect your chances here.

5a. Or maybe it's a matter of the number of times you've played in a row or how many chips you've won already. Suffice it to say that the game is being nice to me again and landing me on all the good squares repeatedly (which is why I have a full list of High Class Bingo items now; I'm L26 just after Mt. Ochi with a Luck stat of 57 if it makes a difference?). Take advantage of whatever the game gives you. Eventually, the game will decide that you're going to land on them, and that will be that. When that happens, FREE MONEY! Buy the most worthwhile items and sell them. Yeah, I still don't really know how this thing works.

6. I think you are most likely to land on the Blue 1, then the Four Corners, the Inner Square, Blue 3, and the Super Plus. Not sure where the Skull fits in because I try not to land on it (it'll happen, though).

7. The + pattern isn't too bad if you have a lot of time on your hands. It'll only take about 70 successful games to win the absolute best prize...wahhhh!

8. Most of the prizes at the commoner Bingo parlor are not very useful. Idol is the exception. If you're really good, both Idols and Heavy Cloaks make excellent Gifts for their value (or you could sell them). Face Guard and Kabuto are decent warrior-only helmets during the first half of the game, but they're not any more expensive or impressive as Gifts, so they're a waste.

9. Most of the High-Class Bingo prizes are absolutely useless, but you probably figured that just by looking at them. They're great Gifts, true, but not for their value in Chips! Save your game and buy them just for fun, but I should think you'd rather save up for the two armor prizes (which are quite good for most of the game). Then Barter for Bubble Gum, as it gives you the most Sell and Gift value for the cost in Chips.

D. FAQ

These questions are generally taken from those who have e-mailed me, or from questions I've seen on Gamefaqs.com's message board.

Q1. What's the best party/classes to use; who should I recruit?

A1. Like I can give a final answer for that. It really depends on your playing style and what part of the game you're at. Generally you want one "warrior" and one "magician," and if you keep the first guys you find, you will be able to proceed quickly through most of the game. You just won't have the strongest allies for difficult encounters. After that it's usually a

matter of whether you like ninjas vs. warriors, or healers vs. wizards. Wizard parties and ninja parties are trickier to use.

Some of the most recommended characters are Hanzo, who has the very convenient Flight skill and a high enough level (at first) and Health to fill many party roles decently well, a Sage or Mendicant (they excel as healers for different reasons), and a Swordsman or possibly a Ronin for high Attack power. Harutomo is usually the best wizard. Late in the game the choice comes down to one or two very special qualities that can't be duplicated.

Some sub-classes I would not recommend are Negoro and Fuma Ninjas, who don't fill any role well, and Koga Ninjas and Sohei unless you're very early in the game. Hermits, Sorcerers, and Samurai can hold their own but aren't outstanding at anything. I'm the only person on earth who likes Magicians.

Q2. How come I can't encounter anymore monsters in X dungeon?

A2. Well, I don't know how it works, but you stop encountering monsters after you clear a dungeon and certain conditions are met. No more Giant Rats for you. I think they did that to prevent players from overleveling.

Q3. [So-and-so] monsters are too hard! Am I using the wrong characters?

Q4. If you just got to a new area or dungeon, you can expect that. Try to level up a bit if you're in a dungeon or make some money to get new equipment. Take a backpack full of recovery items--they're not that expensive--and don't be afraid to return to town for safety. Don't worry too much about being obliterated in combat at this stage, so long as you have teleportation and an inn nearby.

Usually the latest weapon or armor given to the right character or the right spell will make things about 50% easier for random encounters.

Q4. [So-and-so] boss is much too hard!

Unless you lost with all of your characters carrying a full backpack of the most useful recovery items, you weren't using all of your possible resources. In a sense you need to out-think, not out-power, the majority of the bosses in the game.

Q5. What level are you supposed to beat the game at?

Probably the level you're at right now, since it'll take eons for you to get much higher. I listed the levels I was at in my Walkthrough. See the question above.

IV. WALKTHROUGH

A. From the Iga Secret Village to Mt. Fuji (L1-3)

You start in the Secret Iga Village, the place where your clan sent you to hide and train in secret. You can talk to the people of the village by

walking into them. The plot opens once you talk to the elder. At this point, Nobunaga's spies discover the village and everyone starts to flee, but you'll be intercepted by three of Nobunaga's expert ninjas and enter a fight against them. You're only level one; they'll beat you easily. Before they finish you off, however, a messenger arrives and tells the leader that one of Nobunaga's generals has rebelled and attacked him at Honnoji Temple; this forces the ninjas to pull out immediately to rush to Nobunaga's aid. The elder uses the last of his strength to recover you. At this point you are on your own. Exit the deserted village to begin your journey. Enter the Secret Iga Cave, which is just to the north.

There are monsters in this cave, and it is a little maze-like, but this is a very easy dungeon. Just use Far attacks until the enemy closes in, then use your sword. That way you'll get some free hits, the enemy's first attack is weak, and only one enemy can engage you at a time (unless you change your formation). You should be fine; you start out with two Medicines, and there are two more Medicines in chests (they look like little gingerbread houses). Not to mention that you're healed with each level-up. Your goal is to find the "Password," which is in a chest somewhere to the south and west of where you start, but you should also seek to reach level 3 before leaving this cave. After finding the Password and leaving the cave, you'll see a cutscene.

[There are two possible cutscenes you may see at this point. I believe the scene you get depends on how you complete this dungeon (which monsters you fight, how much experience/medicine you get), but it could be random.]

Now to reach Mt. Fuji. Once you leave the cave, continue onward and enter Ise Castle. It has a big, bustling town, with many people wandering around who will give you directions and advice, an Inn where you can Save your game and meet other characters who might join you ("Maybe when you're more experienced"), various shops, and a magnificent castle. Enter the castle and you will be immediately kicked out by this obnoxious guard. This is Nobunaga's land, and he's not a very good host. Okay, anyway, you have your directions now. But you have a pretty long journey ahead of you, so be sure to Save and buy anything you might need. You probably don't have much money, but you should buy either a Hard Hat from the Arms shop to improve your Defense, or a good supply of Medicines and an Elixir or two in case you lose a battle.

You're seeking Mikawa Castle. Lots of distance to cover: east and then north between the mountains and coast, east across the bridge, then a spell to the southeast. You'll probably get a little lost on your way there and collapse from too much traveling, during which time you might be attacked (and most likely defeated unless you can escape) by a Ninja or Ronin character who takes some of your hard-earned Gold and leaves you in need of the Elixir-Medicine self-treatment (better yet, RESET). You may also run into random encounters on the way there. These overland "monsters" (most of them are human bandits) are tougher than the Giant Rats and Centipedes of the Iga cave, but they give *less* experience and gold. You should run from these guys, too.

Mikawa Castle. An even more beautiful town than Ise, and a much more friendly atmosphere. You have two Iga Ninja camped out at the Inn, there's the assurance of one guard that "The day will come when Nobunaga bows down to Tokugawa [Mikawa's Daimyo]," and this time you can enter the castle. Let's say wassup to the d-man!

(Select the *Meet* command and press A!)

"The daimyo is a very busy man and cannot be bothered."

(Humph! These daimyos are such pompous snobs.)

Totomi Castle is just to the east of Mikawa; you'll get directions to Mt. Fuji there. Just go north from Totomi through the mountainpass, head east at the sign, and you're there! [Reminder that you should Save before selecting Meet at the Inns because sometimes a Ninja or Ronin will attack you, kick your butt, and take half your gold.]

B. Mt. Fuji (L3-7)

The Mt. Fuji training ground offers only the barest amenities of civilization: Inn, Medic, and Tea House (Tea House?). There are very few people, both on the map and within the Inn and Tea House. Expect more of the same at the other training grounds. Talk to everyone, especially the "Dungeon Elder" [not to be confused with the Dungeon Master ;)], heal up if you need to, make sure you have some Medicines and an Elixir or two, and Save before entering the dungeon.

The fiery dungeon at Mt. Fuji has both easy and difficult fights from the very start, but since you were smart enough to save before entering you are not going to worry about that. Concentrate on gaining experience and a few levels at first, perhaps cautiously mapping out the first floor, perhaps hanging near the stairs so that the Inn is just a few steps away. The most dangerous encounter is the Fire Rat, who takes a long time to take down if you're lucky; if you're unlucky he'll start spitting fireballs at you from long range. The enemies you do want to fight from the start are the Giant Serpents. Their Attack is pretty low but they give good gold and experience. Since you just saved, why not try for some excitement by doing something you'd never do in real life by sending your level 3 hero off exploring? The stairway to the north of where you start will lead to a chest with a Mace, a better weapon that will make your fight a little easier. Now to make it back alive.

The level-ups will come quickly, so you'll soon be in good shape to explore the rest of the dungeon. The "correct" stairway to the second floor is on the northeast part of the first floor. There's a chest to the south and west in B2 with an Elixir. Then gradually go counterclockwise around walls and molten lava to the next stairway. The encounters get harder from the third floor, so what I did the first time I played was run around the first floor until I reached level 7, leave Mt. Fuji, run around Japan until I got two allies to join me, and return to kick some monster tail! You don't have to, though; at this point any additional help you get will make the dungeon ridiculously easy. With enough Medicine, you can take this dungeon alone at level 6.

[Sagami Castle, just south and east of Mt. Fuji on the coast, is probably a good place to visit if you're going to do this, since a lot of characters seem to converge there. A word of caution, though: avoid the Tengu Forest to the north of Sagami. It's a L18 dungeon. You're not ready for that.]

On the third floor, there are three paths to take. East leads to a wide area with Medicine and an Amulet. West leads to the next stairway! Wait, it's the "wrong" stairway. That means we visit here first to get some more treasure: this time we get the powerful Ninjato. Anyway, that leaves the south path. Well, there's another "wrong" stairway here, too, this one a deadend, but continue down to the end of the passage and you'll find the "good" stairway, leading you straight to the chest with the Fire Gem! Da-da-da-daaaa! Got it!

Now to get out of here. Take the eastern path on this floor and you'll be led to a portal that teleports you just steps away from the dungeon entrance. That's mighty convenient! And the Flame spell you get after presenting the

gem to the old man is pretty nifty, too. You will then be told the name and destination of your next training ground. Let us hurry to Mt. Tsukuba in the northeast!

C. Mt. Tsukuba--Oh Wait, We Need Companions First (L7-10)

If you have allies already, you can head straight to Mt. Tsukuba. You'll get lost, though. I don't remember the way from Mt. Fuji--it's somewhat east and north, but it's tricky to get out of the mountains. It's much simpler from Sagami Castle, which you should visit anyway for supplies: just go north. In either case, you'll eventually be blocked by a wide river. Follow it west to reach Kosuke Castle; or follow it east and cross the bridge and you're right at the gates to Hitachi Castle. They both give you directions to Mt. Tsukuba, which is more or less in between the two.

If you didn't recruit allies to help you conquer Mt. Fuji, now is the time to start searching for some. It's not quite so bad because as soon as you reach level 7, some characters will start looking for you. They're good allies, they can do a lot of things you can't, and they're more than capable for now. Can you do better? Absolutely. And if you get a chance to Enlist a really good ally, do so. Of course, at this point of the game, you don't know which characters will be easy to Enlist. Well, the absolute best ally for this dungeon is Kenko Hosi the Mendicant, who I've found alternately at Sagami and Kosuke. His Renew skill will completely eliminate your fear of poison, the main threat in Mt. Tsukuba, making the dungeon ridiculously easy, and also very boring. Besides a healer, your other character should be someone who can fight.

Okay, so you're at Mt. Tsukuba, you talked to the old man, you need to get the Earth Gem, they told you there are many poisonous monsters so you're stocking up on Antidote (buy several, because the monsters can poison several allies at once), and you entered the dungeon itself. Now you're traveling down this long, looooooong hall that seems designed to have you encounter so many monsters that your entire party will be poisoned three times over. Which is all right, because they sometimes drop Antidotes and your healers regain all their Energy when they level up. Don't neglect your own magic, either. Your new Flame spell is just the thing to squash those Toxic Worms with, given their high Defense/low Health constitution, before they poison you.

Eventually you'll reach the second and third floors, each of which has many paths and branches. You may have to make several map-and-come-back trips if you run low on Antidotes. On the second floor, seek out a Steel Helm in a chest to the north and a Body Healer in the southwest. If you give the Steel Helm to the hero, you should transfer his Hard Hat to one of your allies. The third floor features new monsters and is a little confusing if only because there are so many branches to remember. From the stairs, the two eastern branches lead to two chests, while the two paths immediately south lead to two sets of stairs. Everything else is a dead end or a loop. It doesn't really matter which set of stairs you take as they both lead to the Earth Gem, but you should pretend you didn't read this so you get confused and run into even more monsters as you try to figure it out.

B4 has difficult encounters and can be confusing, since the player's instinct is to explore every corner of it. If you took the western B3 stairs, you'll go through a single winding, twisting, long corridor, at the end of which you'll come to a really big room where you'll have to choose between two sets of stairs to B5. But see, you might not happen to see both sets of stairs since it's such a big room; you can't see all four walls at the same time, so it's hard to tell if you've explored all of it. The "wrong" set of stairs

leads to some chests (Medicine, Elixir, Antidote); the "correct" set of stairs down leads to an even bigger room. This is the Earth Gem room--it's *somewhere* in this big room (go north), and you'll also find a Light Mail and a Tengu Wing in this room.

If you took the eastern stairs to B4, you'll have to navigate through a mazelike set of halls that can be fairly confusing. Your goal is the set of stairs in the glowed-off area, which also leads to the Earth Gem room. Once you've gotten everything, you can use the Tengu Wing to teleport out of the dungeon immediately.

You get the Repair and Purge spells now! And you're told to go to Mt. Haguro, which is north of Dewa castle. "Dewa is north of here. You can ask for directions at Rikuchu."

Okay! Ready to get lost again? You should return to Hitachi, where they'll give you directions to Rikuchu Castle, but like as not you'll get sidetracked and wind up at Rikuzen Castle, which is okay because they give you better directions anyway. You'll be at Rikuchu in no time. Actually, the overland encounters are getting harder, and you'll be susceptible to them for a good part of the trip. These enemies are going to hit hard, and their Defense is high enough to resist weaker attacks, like your long-range attacks, very easily. As usual, they drop only pennies for loot. You'll probably be pulling out your magic often. If you don't want to use magic the other choice is to run from these fights. I recommend running.

But you're smart enough to make it to Rikuchu with all your friends alive, and you are rewarded with a real city. More weapons, more items, a fortuneteller, and a really big Inn. Now would be a good time to get new equipment. And perhaps you should get new allies for a stronger or more balanced party. Now would be one of the better times to return to Mikawa and try to Enlist the powerful Iga Ninja, Hanzo (of course, you'd probably want to do that before heading to Rikuchu); he'll be a big help at Mt. Haguro. These days I usually switch in a warrior and a wizard if I can, as they're very strong at this particular stage of the game.

Once you're prepared, depart Rikuchu and go west. Move clockwise around the mountains until you find the river and the bridge. Both Dewa Castle and the training ground should be visible from here. (Beware: the encounters here are tougher than tough, so show these guys no mercy.) Dewa is pretty boring, so just stick your head in to say hello and trudge off to Mt. Haguro.

D. Mt. Haguro (L10-14)

This dungeon is like a series of huge plateaus and cliffs and is easy to navigate. The floors are more vast than complex, so you won't get lost easily. There's a fairly direct route all the way up to the fifth floor. It's just that every wrong path you take the first time leads to a few more encounters, and you won't like that. That's the nature of this dungeon: short and brutal. The speed with which the enemies can ruin your day will surprise you; there are several encounters that can really mess your party up. You're fighting enemies that heal themselves, immobilize the party, tear you to ribbons, and burn you to a crisp. In short, they cheat.

For this reason, you want a balanced party and a decent supply of Elixirs and healing to survive. And don't forget to use your magic (Sleep and Dizzy and work wonders against both fighting and magic-using enemies). Even as you're getting clobbered by the monsters, assess their abilities carefully so that you can bring better tactics against them in the future. You should be

relying more on magic, but you'll still need strong fighters more than ever, so work on your equipment, formation, and strategy so that you take the least damage and eliminate enemies quickly and efficiently. That's called teamwork.

Anyway, once you reach the fifth floor, you'll find an area with several pits and a teleport. The teleport leads to a secluded area featuring two chests with a Blowpipe and 8 pt. Star, both good items, but otherwise it's a dead end. And since it's a one-way teleport, you'll be forced to drop back to the third floor through the exit pit. The "correct" path is rather subtle. You need to reach the small "island" floating in the sky that you can see from the fifth floor, the one with ladders going both up and down. Instead of taking the one-way teleport, you need to drop down one of the pits (the one nearest to the teleport) to land on a platform on the fourth floor. This leads directly to the fifth floor "island" and then to the Sky Gem. And that's it.

That's it, you ask? Well, there are dead ends and other tricks, but the exploration is good for you. Okay, so maybe it isn't [Windmidge used Fiero! Windmidge used Fiero!], but the game expects you to be strong and smart enough to handle it anyway and besides, you need the opportunity to gain some levels. As you exterminate these monsters, not only will your characters become stronger, but you will try out more things, discover and exploit new oddities about the game, and become stronger and smarter as a player. You'll be amazed by the transformation.

E. The Legend of Yoshitsune (L14-15)

You may or may not be at level 15 right now. If you've reached level 15, you can start going on spy missions for money. If you're still a little short, there's a brief sidequest that can give you an extra push.

After you returned with the Sky Gem, you learned that your next training ground is Mt. Osore. Well, just north of Mt. Haguro is the village of Haraizumi, Mutsu Castle is a little more north, and Mt. Osore is even more north. And this is good to know, but once you enter Haraizumi village, all kinds of people will stop you on the street and tell you about the legendary Yoshitsune, the first true ninja. He made these amazing and inspirational adventures. The cave northeast of town is supposedly holds his treasure or something. It's a very interesting story. Anyway, you're going.

If you managed to conquer Mt. Haguro, Yoshi's cave will probably be a piece of cake. Although you will encounter Rocs, Windmidges, and the like, most of the new enemies aren't very strong. The cave is even more linear than Mt. Haguro, featuring only a few simple puzzles at certain intervals (although in between, it takes those long twisty hallways to an extreme).

The first puzzle room features several exits blocked off by pit traps. Fall in, and you'll need to run through a spike trap to get out. To close off the pits you need to step on the hidden switches. Ultimately you need to open up the north exit. The first switch is in the northwest alcove (actually if you move diagonally around the pit blocking the northeast alcove you can hit a later switch and save some time). From there, just enter the rooms that open up and walk around to trigger the rest of the switches (the room to the west has a booby trap that opens up the pit behind you again; don't fall for it twice).

Eventually you'll turn south into a hall that branches into three passageways that meet again, and a message will say, "Only one path is right." If you take the left path, you can reach a chest with an Elixir; the hidden switch on the right path closes a pit farther down and allows you to proceed. If you go

down the stairs or jump down one of the pits, you can pass a gauntlet of spikes to reach a chest with a Tengu Wing--but then you have to cross the spikes again to get out (ouch, ouch, ouch!). It's not usually worth it. Just ignore this set of stairs and continue on until you reach the good stairs.

The second floor is a long twisty hallway filled with really boring enemies. Actually, you'll start encountering Grim Reapers here; I don't think you encounter them on the first floor. They're not much of a threat alone, but they're incredible healers and have good endurance. You'll reach an empty fancy room and receive an eerie message, but there's nothing much to do except find the next stairway down to the third floor.

You'll appear in a room with three paths leading out and another set of stairs going down. The stairs lead to a dead end. The northern path lets you get a brief glimpse of the treasure room before two pits open up on either side of you and force you to backtrack through the fourth floor dead end. The western path twists and winds and you reach a dead end and another tantalizing glimpse--this time you actually see the treasure chests. So now that you finally know it's the east path (once again, I assume you're running back and forth a bit to compensate for the encounters you missed), you do some more twists and turns and find...another dead end!? But wait, there's an extra dead end path to the right. Travel down it a bit to hit a hidden switch, revealing a pit. Jump down the pit to reach the, um, fourth floor not dead end that leads to the treasure room. But wait, didn't they say something in town about a guardian spirit protecting Yoshitsune's treasure? You'd better heal up before going up those stairs, because you'll suddenly find yourself face to face with Hitachibo Kaison, the ghostly samurai guardian of Yoshitsune's treasure.

***Boss Fight: Hitachibo Kaison and two Grim Reapers

This isn't a very difficult fight if you have a strong, healthy party. Just don't lose! The Grim Reapers and even Kaison can be nullified by successful Sleep and Fog spells, and Dizzy is a sure thing. Jinx can also limit the Grim Reapers' healing, but I like Dizzy better. Kaison is the only major threat, and as long as anyone engaging him has a strong Defense or healing backup, your party should be fine. Hopefully the hero and any warriors have a strong enough Attack to inflict some serious harm. Sages can contribute by casting Guard and Speed, Ninjas by trying to use Fog or assisting the offensive, and any Wizards should have learned the wicked Fiero spell by now.

Try to concentrate on one enemy first and eliminate him quickly. One time I started the fight with a critical hit against Kaison and then put Dizzy on both Grim Reapers, allowing me to eliminate him first. Usually you'll want to concentrate on one of the Reapers, though. Once you defeat Kaison or one of his servants, victory is more or less assured.

Now you can take the treasure: the Yoshi Blade, Yoshi Suit (and a Tengu Wing)! Their power isn't earth-shattering, but they give you nice bonuses to Resistance and are probably stronger than what you have now. As an added bonus, the Yoshi Blade casts Speed when you use it in battle. Now that you have the treasure, you can return to Haraizumi and brag about your exploits. Better yet, brag about it to the Daimyos after you've done some spy missions for them. Look at me, I have the Yoshi Blade! Aren't I great?

1. Now that you're at L15*, you have reason to listen when people tell you about Jobs at the various castles, as this is when they will start accepting your petitions to conduct spy missions for them. Key word is start.

"Hmm, I don't think you have enough experience."

[Translation: We're not that desperate.]

Better is when the guard guy doesn't think he can trust you. That's at least the game admitting that you have the ability. Now, when people tell you "they need a good spy/I hear there's work in -----," then that castle may be looking for either a spy or a saboteur. You don't find out until you apply, although requests for spies are usually more common. See Section I-G, "Flow of Time," for a concise explanation.

[*: Actually I'm not sure on that, anymore. One time I got hired for a spy mission at L10.]

2. As a spy, you must travel to the appropriate castle you're told to infiltrate and perform Spy-Snoop until you succeed (interesting animation). As a saboteur, you are told, "I want you to sabotage ----- Castle!" So go to ----- and perform with Spy-Damage (lousy sound). You should save first because at L15 your chances of success are rather low, especially in stronger provinces/castles, and each attempt uses up a lot of your Energy. Remember that only the hero can perform these spy activities.

3. You can be hired for sabotage missions at L15, but I wouldn't recommend it yet. The failure rate and Energy cost are higher, time will pass whether you succeed or not (not good for a timed mission), and they don't pay a penny more than spy missions.

4. You can accept and perform missions for more than one castle at a time.

5. You may not accept the same exact mission from two different castles (e.g., "I want you to sabotage Sagami Castle!" and "I want you to sabotage Sagami Castle!"), perform it once, and get paid from both castles. Doesn't work that way; as soon as you accept a duplicate mission, your first employer will forget it even hired you. (Note that a snoop and a sabotage mission against the same castle are not duplicates.) So what you have to do is accept and complete the mission once, get paid, then accept and complete the duplicate mission.

[Update, Version 2.0: Some people mentioned being able to perform duplicate missions without the problem I mentioned. I've now found that you can accept a mission, perform it, and then accept a duplicate and complete a duplicate before you get paid for the first.]

6. The amount of money you're paid depends on your level. You may get paid more than you were offered if you level up in the interim. Anyway, it's easy cash and lets you afford a large selection of good equipment fairly quickly, at least in real time.

6. In *game time*, the days, months, even years will fly by very rapidly if you're too determined to buy everything through spy missions, especially at low levels when the spy missions don't pay as much. There is that 20-year time limit to this game, not to mention that Nobunaga is constantly attacking (and slowly conquering) his neighbors. Don't be an equipment perfectionist, especially not now. Even the best weapons you can get now will one day become obsolete. Go on ahead to the next training ground as needed for a boost in

your levels and gold.

7. Because you're traveling so much, spy missions let you cross paths with a lot of people, in many different parts of Japan, within a short time period. It's often a chance to find new and better allies.

7. Be careful about which castles you travel to perform or seek spy missions, because you haven't been to all of them yet and it might take you a few too many days to actually find them.

8. Kai, Boso, and Mutsu are easy to find if you haven't already: Kai is just north of Mikawa, Boso is south of Hitachi (east and south of Sagami works, too; you'll pass the village of Shinagawa on the way), and Mutsu is north of Haraizumi.

9. Echigo, Etchu, and especially Mino are very hard to reach because when you try to travel north from Kai or Kozuke, you won't be allowed to pass the checkpoints. Getting to Echigo requires you to circumvent the mountains and rivers west of Rikuzen. You might cross a bridge west on the way there, or you might wind up approaching from the north along the coast, in which case you will pass a small dock leading to the town of Sado and it's nearby gold mine (a dungeon you are not ready for). Beware of the strong enemies around Echigo: you are NOT supposed to be here at L15. But it is a large, friendly town where you'll often find interesting people, so I think it's worth it.

10. You can reach Etchu, Mino, and also Echizen from Echigo. They are all controlled by Nobunaga, and if you encounter any random enemies here, you will get your butt kicked. It's not worth exploring here yet.

11. Just to make the geography of the accessible parts of Japan complete, don't forget about Kii Castle and Shirahama village, both west of Ise Castle. And here's another reminder not to enter the Tengu Forest near Sagami because you're still not quite strong enough.

12. Let's review again all the castles that are accessible at this point of the game: Ise, Mikawa, Totomi, Sagami, Kozuke, Hitachi, Rikuchu, Rikuzen, Dewa (all covered in the walkthrough already), Kii, Kai, Boso, Mutsu (all a little out of the way, but easy to reach on foot), Echigo, Etchu, Echizen, and Mino (an area that's very difficult but not impossible to reach on foot until the checkpoints open later on, featuring high-level random encounters). All of the other castles in Japan are impossible to reach, as the way is completely blocked by checkpoints that won't let you pass until much later in the game.

G. Mt. Osore (L15-17)

Once you've had some fun spying, found all or most of the castles and towns in central-western Japan, and updated your allies and equipment, you go to Mutsu Castle, which is north of Hiraizumi, and then go even more north and just before you fall into the ocean you'll be at Mt. Osore.

[Okay, so you're at Mt. Osore now.]

As they all tell you, this dungeon is filled with creepy ghostly creatures. Early on in the dungeon you receive several messages about the Good Path, the Path of Gaki, and the Path of Shura. These will lead you in different directions. Then you'll come to a room with a chest in the north end, beyond a narrow path of braziers. You guessed it: pits open up on either side of you as you approach, and you'll be forced to plunge all the way down to the fourth (one more), fifth (nope), sixth level. Welcome to the Path of Gaki!

[GAKI!]

Actually the monsters here are easier than the ones on the higher floors, and they still give good experience (lousy gold, though), so it's not so bad. In fact, if you've bought a Fire Staff at Kai and have it with you, it will be painfully easy. Eventually you will come to a fairly large room with a locked door sealing off the exit. The switch to open it is in the southeast corner of the room. After this you'll see a room with two chests that you just can't access because you need a teleporter to reach it. Grr! Ah, but then you find a room with two teleporters--hah! Um, hey, they only teleport you to each other, what is this!? So you'll have to take the stairs up instead.

You're getting Windmidged yet again! But they're not much of a threat. There are two paths here: "Toward the Good Path," and "The Path of Hardship and Reward." Lets take this second path for now. In this narrow hall, you'll be forced to enter two teleporter that take you to small rooms each with a hidden switch to press. The rooms look identical, but trust me, it's two different switches. The first switch closes the pit blocking the room ahead, while the second switch opens up a different pit deeper inside the room. Jump down this pit and you'll drop down to the chests--YEAH! It's Energy Up and Metal Hat. Not half bad. The teleport takes us back to the end of the sixth floor Path of Gaki. We can go "toward the Good Path" now. This is a short hall that leads to another stairway up, to the fourth floor.

We've got the harder enemies again. I hope you've had some restorative level-ups by now and are ready to fight. Actually, you'll come to a room with a magical tile that restores your Health (not your Energy), so that's a big help. Later on your path appears to be blocked by a pit, but it closes as you approach. You'll eventually reach a crossroads receive a message: "Below is the Good Path." This is where the Good Path, the Path of Gaki, and the Path of Shura converge, so this time you'd better take the Good Path. Later on you can explore the other paths more fully. Just go south and take the stairs up.

3rd floor: Really short. Just monsters.

2nd floor: Also really short.

1st floor: You enter a really fancy hall but it's also pretty short. You'll find a chest with the Magic Torch. Wha? oh--ta-da! Wow, is the rest of the Good Path this boring? The teleport will take you straight to the entrance.

Want to know what the other Paths were like? If you avoid the chest trap that sends you to the Path of Gaki, you'll come to a room with a stairway and another hall out. Going after the stairs opens up a pit trap behind you, forcing you to go down, down, doooooowwnnnn again: welcome to the Path of Shura. This one is pretty fun. You have to navigate through a small maze of teleports on the fifth floor, run through a gauntlet of spikes on the fourth floor, and then you come to the Good Path on the crossroads. And, um, that's it. No treasure or anything.

To reach the Good Path, you need to ignore the chest and the stairs. You'll come to a room with two teleports. Take the south one and you'll be able to get the "trap" chest from before (but you better immediately take the teleport back out or you'll be trapped into the Path of Gaki again). It contains a Scarab, a powerful Charm. The north teleport takes you to the Good Path. The fourth floor of the Good Path features a simple maze, made more difficult by the stronger enemies, but that's all you have to pass before you reach the crossroads. Simple, right?

So actually, the path I'd recommend is go to the start of the Good Path so you can take the Scarab, then jump down to the path of Gaki for easier level-ups

and some extra treasures. You can do it all in one trip. I even completed the entire dungeon, exploring all three paths, in one trip (I ran a lot).

H. Oshima Island and the Tengu Forest (L17-20)

After learning the Torch spell from the elder at Mt. Osore, our next destination is the nameless training ground at Oshima Island. This is the tiny island you reach by taking the boat at the port just southwest of Sagami Castle. Depending on your levels, however, now may be the time when you finally feel confident enough to take on the Tengu Forest. The Tengu Forest is optional. It's slightly more difficult than Oshima Island's dungeon, but no matter which place you go to first, the second one will be a little too easy in comparison. The Tengu Forest is exciting and challenging, so I'd go there first to get the most out of the experience, even though it makes Oshima Island a snooze.

The people in Sagami make the Tengu Forest out to be some sort of proving ground for strong warriors such as yourself. It's a fairly simple maze of passageways with a few underground tunnels and buildings. Easy maze = combat-intensive! Go left at the very first branch to reach a "warehouse" with three chests (Energy Pill, Tengu Wing, and Health Food). About halfway to the warehouse you will probably turn around and limp back to town because you are getting your butt kicked. This is because most of the enemies have tough defenses and high Health, and even the wizards are strong combatants. Thus they will live long enough for you to take damage and you won't like it. Attack magic can be very useful if you can spare it (race for those level-ups!), and the Fire Staff is almost a necessity here, which is perhaps why the Small Tengus sometimes drop them. Also be on the lookout for the Wizard Gem, a powerful (but wizard-only) Charm sometimes dropped by Forest Shamans.

Now take the north branch ("Welcome to Tengu Forest") and head immediately to the west and north. You'll reach a tunnel that takes you to a new area. As you progress through the forest, you'll receive a number of mysterious and increasingly ominous messages. The path is very straightforward, but long enough so that the monsters will tax your resources. You should do reasonably well if you have a balanced party and time your healing and other magic in conjunction with your level-ups. Finally you'll reach a sign:

House of Sagamimusashibo, the Great Tengu.

No peddlers or salesmen.

Now would be a good time to heal up. You challenge "Sagamibo" and his band of Tengu. You are mad.

***Boss Fight: Sagamibo and two Small Tengus

This fight is like a higher-powered version of your fight against Kaison. Don't assume you're going to walk all over Sagamibo, though, because this is a team of strong fighter-healers that can match almost any single trick you pull. All three enemies can use Awaken to counter the high-level Freeze or still more reliable Dizzy, and Sagamibo uses Heal3 on his party to counter Hanzo's almost all-powerful Burn. He also uses Sleep, which can be surprisingly dangerous. Worst of all, Sagamibo will cast Revive if you eliminate one of the Small Tengu first.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't try any of these things. You just need to keep up the pressure, limit their attacks, and overpower their healing.

Definitely cast Fog on the boss because the enemies won't counter it. For attacking, it's basically about timing and targets. Seriously injuring a Small Tengu tends to make the sub-healers less likely to heal the boss. Sagamibo may still use Heal3, but that might be what you want. Dizzy or a successful Freeze or Sleep will force one of the enemies to perform Awaken. When you force the enemies' next action, you have more freedom for your own actions. Alternately, hold off on your all-out offensive against the boss until you've already done a fair bit of damage, so that you save Energy early in the first rounds and put Sagamibo in very dire straits. Overall, this is a very fun battle if you're prepared (try not to let the Great Tengu pulverize your wizard).

You defeat Sagamibo and his band of Tengu. You rock. He surrenders and leaves you to plunder his loot: Tengu Fan and Mandala. Well, I was expecting something better, but later on I came to really appreciate the Tengu Fan. In any case, it's time to return to Sagami and brag about your ninja skills yet again! Once you're done with that (or if you wish to skip the Tengu Forest for now), take the boat for a nice (and very short) ride to Oshima Island.

[Okay, so you're at Oshima Island]

They're running out of innovative names for quest items. We're looking for a Magic Rock? Anyway, this one is pretty easy. Just make sure you have at least one character with a good Attack and Defense and a fair amount of healing power. It's not so much that the monsters are difficult, but by this time their Defense is high enough for projectile attacks to be almost useless; you need to get up close and personal. The dungeon looks much like the fiery cave in Mt. Fuji, and in fact you'll run into some of the same enemies at first. Encounters with the new enemies are pretty infrequent on the first floor, which has nothing remarkable besides a few dead ends on the way to the stairs, but there's one monster you'll definitely want to keep an eye out for: the Fire Fox.

***Inindo's Metal Slime Clone: The Fire Fox

A lot of RPGs have monsters like this one. Fast, usually gets the first attack, very difficult to hit or inflict significant damage on but dies in one critical hit, runs away very often, and provides a lot of experience. I think the first RPG to throw this in your face was the NES Dragon Warrior with its Metal Slime monsters. Yes, the Fire Fox is a Metal Slime monster. A series of misses await even your best fighters. At best the Fire Fox will only take single-digit damage from an attack, and unlike the Toxic Worm it's immune to all magic (another Metal Slime tradition. . . actually I think Dizzy would most likely work). This is pretty bad, because Fire Foxes can appear in groups and actually pack quite a wallop. They're no Windmidges, but they're still nothing to laugh at.

You get some things against Fire Foxes that you don't get in the Dragon Warrior games, though. Break out your Blowguns and 8 pt. Stars because this is their time to shine. Their frequent critical hits ignore the Fire Fox's phenomenal Defense and can instantly slay these foes. And sometimes your enemy will just stand there doing nothing because they've tried to flee and failed, giving you a free turn. Metal Slimes never did that. In the end, the Fire Fox doesn't provide so much experience that you'll be hunting them down ten levels from now, but a few lucky encounters can leave you in good shape to start using the battlefield magics you'll get once you finish your training here.

You enter the second floor in a narrow hallway where you're forced to jump through a series of teleports and figure out which direction to go, left or right, once you exit them. To make matters worse for obsessive mappers, the teleports switch you between at least two different hallways (I suspect three) that look exactly alike, and the exit is actually in the middle of one of them. You'll find it by accident, but here's at least one failsafe route: go left and enter the first teleport and keep going left through more teleports. Eventually you'll emerge from a teleport next to a dead end on the left. Re-enter this one. It looks like you're back next to the stairs (you're not! it's a dead end in a different room), but just go left again and you'll find the exit to the north. This at last leads to the stairs down to the third floor, where you'll be warmly welcomed by the second wave of monsters. You should be fine.

From the third floor, there's another stairway that leads to a minor chest with an Idol, and an exit south. (This place should remind you of the forked hall in the Yoshi Cave. This time, however, make sure you check out the middle path.) At last the hall branches to the left and right. The right takes you through a long series of stairs and passageways eventually leading to two chests: Energy Pill and Metal Hat. The left branch has a set of stairs leading to the Magic Rock, and two stairways that don't. The middle stairway is the only one you want to take, but it's a simple maze anyway.

And that's it! There aren't any Tengu Wings or instant teleports to the beginning of this dungeon like there were in all the others, and (uh-oh) warp magic doesn't work in this dungeon anyway, so you'll have to walk all the way back to the entrance. Going through the teleport hall is much easier this time. Just go right and the first teleport will take you straight to the stairs. Anyway, return the Magic Rock, and you'll receive your first battlefield spells, Blaze and Geyser. Yeah! To reach your next destination, Mt. Ontake, you'll be told to ask directions at Kai Castle. The checkpoints north of Kai and Kosuke will finally be open now, allowing you to access the regions of Mino and Echigo more easily. "Watch out for the Tengu near Sagami." Right. If you haven't tangoed with the Tengu yet, now's the time to do so. But first. . .

I. Interlude II: WAR!

Kai is a very opportune destination. By now Nobunaga's probably started attacking his neighboring provinces, most particularly Kai, north of Totomi (actually, Mikawa is a more direct route). These two provinces are controlled by Takeda Katsuyori, a strong enemy of Nobunaga. Kai will repel Nobunaga's first few attacks, but it won't stand forever. Depending on how long in game time it took you to reach this point, Nobunaga may have already conquered it, but let's assume he hasn't. Now that you have battlefield magic, you can help defend Kai and turn the tide of his invasion. You want to help Takeda and other strong daimyos stop Nobunaga from expanding eastward so they can be in a good position to help you attack his territories in the endgame.

So go to Kai Castle (or wherever Nobunaga's next target is; if he's not attacking anybody, there's surely a war brewing somewhere in eastern Japan) between the 1st and the 15th of a month and seek a job as an officer in the army. You'll have a difficult time getting accepted (the lowest they'll accept you is at level 18), but keep trying and eventually you'll get the job. Usually you'll also be able to pick one of your allies as another officer. Hanzo's a good choice at this stage. A Female Ninja would be even better; the main stats you want here are Energy and Intelligence, and you want a ninja

because the wizards haven't learned their battlefield spells yet.

Then you Wait at least fifteen days until the war starts--bor-ing! Spend the time doing spy missions, I guess, but you could also go to the Tengu Forest now for a little leveling up. As the end of the month approaches, return to the castle that you're fighting for and make sure the Energy of you and your ally is restored to full. Wait at the castle on the 30th of the month and you will automatically join the troops when the battle begins. Read Section I, Part H, "Daimyo Battles," for general information. Other advice below:

1. Save well beforehand. You never know what might happen. Sometimes Nobunaga or other daimyos will cancel their invasion plans. So what I did was spend a few days sabotaging the castle I was fighting for so it'd be weak enough for Nobunaga to attack. Unethical? Absolutely, but the bottom line is I got paid.

2. Ninjas, warriors, and even Sohei will sometimes hire themselves out to warring daimyos. If such a character has already been hired as a general by the castle you're applying to, your allies won't be invited to assist you. That sucks. You'll get to watch the other character in action, though. You won't be impressed. However, beware of enemy ninjas. Try to prevent the enemy from hiring them if you can. Near the endgame you'll have to be on the lookout for enemy wizards as well; Nobunaga's not afraid to turn to magic to intimidate his enemies.

3. Once you've chosen an ally to assist you in a war, don't do ANYTHING to your party makeup until after it's over, not even if you dismiss and re-Enlist a party member, because it will probably seriously mess up your deployment for battle. You could wind up with no other allies, or worse, old man Tenkai leading your other war party. The game doesn't remember that it hired *Hanzo* to assist you. It's more along the lines of *Ally #1* or *Ally #2*. It's very difficult to figure out; save yourself the aggravation.

4. At this point of the game, your battlefield Power is horrible, so your strategy will consist almost entirely of approaching the enemy leader and casting Blaze when he's in range, or trying to hit multiple enemy units. You don't want to waste even a single spell, so definitely switch to the Rear lineup. You should also try to prevent the enemy units from engaging your side's commander unit. Most of the time, the computer-controlled units will concentrate on each others' commander units, so you'll usually be left alone. (Sometimes character-controlled units such as Samurai will attack, though.) Geyser can be used to trap the commander unit if there's a much stronger unit next to it or if you have enough Blaze spells to finish the job yourself, but it's usually a waste of Energy.

It's much too early to Meet with the daimyos and advise them to make war on or even sabotage each other, especially against Nobunaga. For now, your long-term goal is to defend the stronger daimyos from Nobunaga (and perhaps other antagonists) by using Blaze to kill a lot of enemy troops, so that their troops will suffer fewer casualties. Once you have easy access to Mino, however, never shy away from a chance to sabotage it (well, don't go overboard), since it's a big antagonist, and the province you're most likely to attack in the endgame.

Since I'm on the subject of the endgame, when you're finally trying to convince strong daimyos to attack Nobunaga's territories (loooooong way off), who are the strong daimyos? There are several powerful daimyos scattered throughout Japan who can stand up to Nobunaga with your help, so it's not so horrible if you mess up and Nobunaga destroys some of his rivals late in the

game. But we should still try to deal with what we have so that things run more smoothly later on. These are the guys you want to help (this is in reverse order):

1. Daimyos with multiple territories. Well, I'm thinking particularly of Hojo Ujimasa (spotted brown on the Map), who starts with three provinces, including Sagami. You can help him conquer Hitachi later on, giving him a total of four provinces. Most of these daimyos are neutral, but you shouldn't have too much trouble convincing them to attack Nobunaga in the endgame if they're strong enough.

2. Everyone opposed to Nobunaga. Almost all of these daimyos control strong provinces. Kai (solid blue) and Echigo (solid pink) border Nobunaga's territories and will be able to hold off his eastern expansion for quite a while even without your help, and you'll be able to help them early in the game. (Kii's daimyo, alas, will be kicking daisies within two months from the start of the game.) Because they border Nobunaga's territories (Kai even borders the key province of Mino), you'll be able to mount a fast attack on Nobunaga if they're still standing by the endgame.

[Actually, it's a little harder to go offense with Echigo. You'd better let Uesugi conquer Dewa and/or Rikuzen first.]

If Kai and Echigo fall, you still have two very strong daimyos at either end of Japan who both hate Nobunaga and will start conquering their neighbors, most likely building a very stable territory by the time Nobunaga is in any position to threaten them. If you help them in their invasions, they will suffer fewer casualties and be able to expand to more territories at a faster rate.

3. Mikawa. Very important province. This is your first, last, and best resort. Tokugawa Ieyasu (solid yellow) is, not incidentally, the daimyo who eventually became the Shogun of Japan in real history. In this game, he's strongly allied with Nobunaga, so you may be tempted to hate him, but he has a strong territory and is right next to Mino. By the time you reach the endgame you should have no trouble raising Tokugawa's trust to 100, convincing him to attack Mino, and winning. Mikawa has no serious enemies; Mino spends most of its time harassing Kai, Totomi isn't strong enough to threaten it, and Kai is constantly defending itself against Mino and Etchu. So Mikawa just sits there biding its time while war wages all around Japan, then with your instigation it moves in for the master stroke. Don't let anything happen to Mikawa.

I may have mentioned this already, but the amount of money you're paid at the end of battle depends on how well you and your side perform, as well as your experience level. Inflict lots of casualties to the enemy while keeping your side's losses to a minimum to receive maximum gold and make Nobunaga think twice about attacking his eastern neighbors. . . at least while he builds up his forces again. Let us hurry on to the next training ground before he attacks again.

J. Beyond the Checkpoints--Officially, Anyway (L20-26)

[This section covers Mt. Ontake, the Sado Gold Mine, and Mt. Ochi]

Well, first of all, it's pretty easy to get lost in this region, so make sure you stop by Kai or Kosuke to ask for directions to Echigo Castle, assuming you haven't been there already, and proceed carefully from there. As I've probably stated already, Echigo is a good place to visit. Very strong province, big town, lots of people and shops. Echigo is most easily reached

via the checkpoint north of Kosuke; the checkpoint north of Kai is the easiest way to reach Mt. Ontake; and there's also a checkpoint northwest of Mikawa (which for some odd reason is still closed). Etchu Castle is north of Mino/west of Echigo. You probably shouldn't go to Echizen Castle just yet, but it's west and then south of Etchu. Either Mino or Echizen are worth visiting because they have better weapons than the shops in Kai and Echigo. The two checkpoints north of Kii and south of Echizen will continue to be closed, blocking off access to the entire central-western half of Japan.

Anyway, if you've talked to the people in Kai, Echigo, and the other towns in and around this area, you should know something about at least two of the dungeons covered in this section. There's Mt. Ontake, the next training ground (Kai gives the best directions). There's also some kind of trouble at the Sado gold mine, which you have undoubtedly heard a LOT about by now. You may even have seen the port just north of Echigo, where you can take a boat to Sado island and its town and mine. But Mt. Ontake's the place we shall visit first. Make sure you have everything you need.

[Mt. Ontake]

You know the drill: talk to people, talk to the elder, etc. This one's pretty interesting. Our quest item, the Diary of Oda Nobunaga, is stored in a locked cell on the first floor. The key to the cell is what's deep inside the dungeon. I'm not sure I understand just what the old man wants with this item. Perhaps he's going to let you Burn it after you learn the spell, but such an act would surely mark you for death. Ah, I ramble. The second floor contains another large cell, but this one's open and empty. You have to watch out. This place hasn't had much maintenance in the past few years, and the guard dogs have gone mad from neglect. Some of them have been twisted by their close proximity to the Diary and will try to corrupt your mind by unleashing its dark power against you. You must destroy these wretched beasts and find a way into the mysterious labyrinth beneath the complex (in the meantime, easy experience and gold). There you'll fight some of the evil spirits that have been drawn to the evils of the Book. I spiced that up a bit, but you get the general idea.

The third floor is one of those teleport mazes. The teleports switch you between two identical mazes. Step on the first teleport, double back to where the stairs were to find a chest with a Mandala, then continue on without stepping on any of the others to reach the stairs down. If you do the teleport maze wrong, you'll reach a dead end and have to go back.

The fourth floor is a huge area with walls and halls in a graph paper pattern. You must choose the right teleport to make it to the stairs. It's the one all the way to the left; the others take you all over the place. There are a few chests scattered around that you may want to pick up first. There's a Dragon Hat you can sell for a fair amount. The fifth floor is a *really* big room. You may be stuck here for a while. Just zigzag a little to the north-northwest from where you enter to find the stairs down. The only other item of interest here is an Elixir.

The final floor contains three dummy rooms and one key room. They all look alike, then suddenly the game takes over as you'll enter an exchange with. . . uh oh. Looks like Oda doesn't want you leaving your messy prints all over his Diary, so he's sent a phantom of himself to eliminate you once and for all!

***Boss Fight: Oda Nobunaga (or at least a clever phantom of him)

Um, this fight is really tough. If you're not prepared for this fight (and

you're probably not), you will lose. It's that simple. It's three-on-one, but the big O-N can slice you to ribbons if you're not careful. To make matters worse, he's immune to all attack magic (!) and has a very strong Defense. You'll be kinda fine if you have a warrior with the Muramasa or you went to Mino and purchased a Fire Blade for the hero. Well, neither of these are very likely, so prepare for a loooooong fight, because what you have instead is the hero barely inflicting 15 damage a hit (if that), and other ninjas unable to scratch him. Then you either won't have enough healing power to outlast him, or else he'll get a critical hit against your healer and that will be the end. So say hello to the game over screen for me, okay?

If you don't have a good Attack, most of your damage is going to come from critical hits. I'm not kidding. The fight will last long enough for you to get them, and they'll hurt. Have your allied ninja use his 8 pt. Star or Shuriken to increase his chances, but I usually have the hero use his sword. Obviously a Mendicant is the magic-using ally of choice here, for Speed, Guard, and Heal2. If you have a wizard, you're out of luck. . . not! You'll still have Remedy, and for support you'll be casting Dizzy: it's the only spell that ever works on Nobunaga, and it works well. Dizzy can force him to hang way back away from the allies while you sting him with your stars and Blowgun. Even when he's close it will protect you from some attacks. Since your magic guy is going to be spending some Energy casting support spells, you should have everyone carry a few Body Healers for extra healing. If that doesn't work, buy a few more of them. At only 80 Gold, they're well worth the investment. And make sure Nobunaga doesn't skewer old man Tenkai!

You're not rethinking trying to kill the real Oda Nobunaga, are you? Anyway, one of those rooms had an Idol you could use against him, but like as not you didn't find it before you found Nobunaga. In case you didn't know, you can use an Idol repeatedly to heal yourself for about 100 Health in combat, with only a small chance that it will break. Hmm, guess I should modify my strategy section above. . . nah. By the way, I hope you brought a Tengu Wing with you so you can get out after all this. Reenter the dungeon, plunder the most evil book written in the southern hemisphere, and Burn it, BURN IT!!!

(Whoops, Japan's in the northern hemisphere. Um, ummm...I'm stumped. We all know what the most evil book written in the northern hemisphere was.)

[Sado Gold Mine]

If you're committed to investigating the trouble at Sado (you should), take the boat north of Echigo and enter the quaint little town to learn about the situation. A disaster has befallen the mine, and Sadakichi, one of miners, is missing. His fellows cannot rescue him, and production has stopped. The people are plagued with a certain despair and urgency, but at last you are here to help.

[And it sure took you long enough! Who knows how many months they've suffered since you first heard of their SOS from one of the many surrounding castle towns, and now at last you have taken time off from your important ninja training and vital networking to offer your skills to Sado's beleaguered populace from the bottom of your heart. It's only the right thing to do. This has nothing to do with all the GOLD in that there mine, right? No, never. True heroes know nothing about greed.]

Did I mention that there's a REWARD for finding Sadakichi? Make sure you see the head guy in the middle of town and pick up the key to the mine. Otherwise

you won't be able to get in! (The key is considered a quest item, so don't pick it up unless you're ready to take on this quest.) Once you're in the mine, you need to Search the locked door to open it. Now dash in, explore the mine, and prepare to kick some monster tail! The Ironpede is another of those fast-fleeing, high experience monsters, and this one I think you'll like. Most of the monsters here have a fair to strong resistance against attack magic, so your barrage of Fire Staffs won't give you near-invincibility here. Instead, rely on the Tengu Fan to even up the odds as needed. The first floor has four ladders down. . . three of them lead to dead ends. As a consolation, the second floor is very short once you find the right ladder. There's a Ninja Cure hidden somewhere there. Don't miss it.

The third floor has two stairways. The south one gives you a much-needed Energy Pill, the other is the path that leads to the goal. You'll receive one of those ominous messages that's kind of a hint to start healing up, and soon after you do that jerk-step walk: you know what that means! You'll come face-to-face with a suspicious ghost guarding a large pile of gold, and it'll immediately go on the warpath.

***Boss Fight: Avenging Spirit and two Frost Beasts

You know how Sagamibo and his friends had the super defensive going for them? Well these guys have the super offensive. The Avenging Spirit's pickaxe is a danger to your warriors even when he's blinded, and you already know that his allies are hell on four legs. There are several ways to fight, but don't make things too complicated. Bring Hanzo and a wizard with you and pummel them with Burn and Gale until they beg for mercy. But Heal3 is your insurance if the enemies go ballistic on you, and they might. A critical hit from a Frost Beast can spell doom very fast, and Avenging Spirit's Gale can really mess you up (be thankful that the boss uses it so rarely). Just try to eliminate at least one enemy as quickly as you can and keep your characters healthy.

When you win, you'll see a strange scene that still leaves me scratching my head. You'll hear Sadakichi's last words--so much for a happy ending--then all of a sudden the other miners arrive and are like Oh My God he's found the mother lode eeYAHOO!!! so they leave with the big chunk of gold and meanwhile Sadakichi's lying cold and dead on the ground and no one even thinks about carrying his body back to town for a proper burial or saying a few words on his behalf or anything. It's really messed up. Well, I guess we have to go into town, break the sad news to Sadakichi's wife, and collect our REWARD, which is barely more than what we picked up from the boss fight, but still significant.

[By the way, if you try to return to the mine to retrieve Sadakichi's body for a proper burial (noble man!), you'll find the mine sealed and locked, and the mayor of Sado refuses to give you the key or even acknowledge the dead man's existence. This strongly suggests some sort of cover up, but there's nothing you can do about it...rotten scoundrels! You can still fight the Ironpedes, though.]

Now it's high time to set off for the castle of Echizen, west of Etchu, get directions to Mt. Ochi, and spend some of that cash. There's a checkpoint just south of Echizen that you can't pass through. It'll open up once you conquer the next training ground. Mt. Ochi is on the path just to the east of the castle.

[Mt. Ochi]

This is another sky dungeon in which you go up, up, and up. It's very straightforward and less brutal in the monster department than Mt. Haguro, although it is more maze-like. It's just that the enemies will last long in combat and all the encounters will fatigue you over time. A wizard will do well in this dungeon: Gale and Burn together can make masses of dangerous enemies a little easier to handle. Anyway, once you reach the second floor, you'll have to choose between two ladders that are very close together but which split into different paths. Each path divides once further, for a total of four different upper-level sections. You should probably make multiple trips for this dungeon. Otherwise you'll have a real dreary time of it. Use your magic liberally, then start retreating when you get low; that's the best way to take on this place, and you'll probably get more experience, too. I will detail each area in turn:

The northwest section subdivides into three ladders, two of which loop with each other. It's not the right way, but you get two Energy Ups out of this digression, so it's worth it. On second thought, you'll do so much backtracking afterward that maybe you really are spending that much Energy.

The southwest section is the one that leads to the Cloud Stone. Eventually. It's pretty straightforward, and you'll get a Ninja Cure out of it, too, but keep your party strong throughout.

The northeast and southeast sections loop with each other. You'll find a Bomb. It's the briefest of the trips.

Return the Cloud Stone to the Elder to learn two powerful battlefield spells, Quake and Storm. Then you'll get a surprise visit from Rei, your former training partner in the Iga Secret Village, who asks to join your cause. How could you refuse? She's probably the strongest of the female ninjas (which isn't saying much), plus she comes with her very own Fire Blade. Of more immediate use, she has a very high maximum Energy. Ditch your more martial companion in favor of Rei, because you'll be using the Burn spell a lot in your next overworld trek, not to mention she's an excellent partner on the battlefield. If you turn her down (for example because you need a chance to grab vital items from the ally you want to drop), Rei will still appear in her hometown of Echizen, where you can Enlist her immediately.

H. Turning Point (L26-28; Featuring Geography Review II and the Iron Ore Mine)

With the completion of Mt. Ochi, the checkpoints south of Echizen, north of Kii, (and south of Mino) open, allowing you to finally access the heart of Nobunaga's domain, and indeed all of western Japan. The powerful Sages and Mystics become easily accessible, you can shop for incredible equipment, plus with your increasing influence and new battlefield magic the daimyos are confident enough in you to start waging wars at your instigation, and these will be dynamic, exciting battles. They'll at least help you to afford those awesome weapons and armors they're starting to sell. So it's victory road, right?

But this is when things really start heating up as well. Every new overworld area is going to be thick with encounters, and these encounters will be HARD. The game springs a nasty surprise on you if you try to depart the Echizen/Etchu area on foot: the rag-tag medley of assassins becomes replaced by Nobunaga's elite agents, and the trail becomes packed with them! Depending on how you reached this point [more on that in the Endgame section], you may be in for an even greater shock as you encounter fierce demons instead. They make travel around Nobunaga's domain very dangerous, and for a very long time

they can only be reasonably killed by magic.

[Version 2.0: Earlier versions of this FAQ indicated that the monsters you encounter here depend on the date you reach this point. I have found this to not be the case.]

In addition, bounty hunters will also be a constant threat for the rest of the game, as Nobunaga is definitely aware of your threat and has marked you specifically for death. You will start getting attacked at Inns, etc., by some very rough characters, and you'd better not lose! Maybe you shouldn't have Burned his Diary, eh? Although all of these battles will be very short, the wizards are dangerous because of Gale and especially Freeze.

On the plus side, your reputation is now such that you will be able to Meet with daimyos even if Trust is 0. You're important. And as I've said, this is also when daimyos will start accepting your plans to invade other lands or sabotage even Nobunaga's territories. The Trust of some of the eastern daimyos should be fairly high from the jobs you've been performing for them, and you're able to afford Gifts expensive enough to impress them as well, so you should have a fair bit of persuasion working for you.

[Incidentally, a few additional characters will now seek to join you from this point as well.]

All these factors--spending more nights at the Inn so you can survive tougher random encounters and bounty hunters, stepping up your involvement in wars and sabotage missions that you instigate, building Trust in some new allies, and working the spy lines like mad to afford that awesome equipment--combine to contribute to one dire effect:

Game time is going to speed by very fast.

Not that it really matters. In game time, I would bet that it takes no more than five years tops to get to this point; it won't take you fifteen years to reach Azuchi Castle unless you're really careless. This is a very fun part of the game, though. It's easy spend months and even years doing nothing but spying and waging war, shaping Japan as you see fit, or aimlessly puttering about. But don't forget your quest, either.

Assuming that you're continuing with the quest [big assumption], there are nine castles and a few other landmarks on today's itinerary. The idea is that you're supposed to get completely lost, confused, and angry as you rush through and try to find these towns, all the while casting thousands of Burn, Gale, and Heal3 spells as you fight for every square foot of ground. Well, I'm gonna (almost) totally ruin that experience by actually listing how to get to where you're going.

Yamashiro and Settsu Castles: Keep trying to go south from Echizen, around the mountains, and you'll reach Yamashiro Castle. Along the way you'll notice the Azuchi Castle checkpoint, which is of course blocked. Say, if that's Azuchi, then what's the (still closed) checkpoint north of Mino? However, it's much easier to just go north from Kii to reach Settsu Castle; Yamashiro is just north of Settsu. These two towns make Mikawa and Echigo look like country villages--isn't it disheartening to see "Lord Nobunaga" ruling over such prosperous, bustling towns? You'll find a lot of new items and equipment at both of these towns. Settsu has the Pawn Shop. It's the only place you can ditch that key you're still carrying, and it's also a good place to get rid of powerful but currently unnecessary items so you can buy them more cheaply later. Yamashiro has a lot of new stuff for sages and wizards.

Aki Castle: There is a port next to Settsu, but it's NOT the boat to Shikoku. It leads all the way to Aki Castle, the westernmost castle on the mainland. It's a very long and boring ride, but after this Aki is just north of the port. On foot, Aki is due west of Bitchu Castle. Also, right next to Yamashiro is the cave leading to Mt. Hiei, or rather, the closed gate to the cave. Much like the Tengu Forest, wandering around this area is a very easy way to get your party decimated.

Tanba and Harima Castles: Head directly west from the Echizen checkpoint (cross the bridge), and Settsu (this route *should* have a bridge, but doesn't), respectively. They're directly north and south of each other.

Izumo and Bitchu Castles: West of Tanba and Harima, respectively. You'll need to cross a bridge to reach Bitchu.

You'll receive a sub-quest in Bitchu in which a swordsmith offers to make you a powerful sword if you can find pure Iron Ore in the mine just north of town (don't cross the bridge). More info later.

Tosa and Iyo Castles: The southern coast west of Harima is where you'll find the boat to Shikoku island. I get so lost on this island it's not even funny, and there are new enemies here as well. Iyo Castle is directly west of the port. It's close to the mountains, so follow them. To reach Tosa Castle, go south and immediately west from Iyo (it's also directly south of the sign you can see near the port; you'll have to go around the rivers). Mt. Ken is within the big mountain range east of Tosa.

It goes without saying that the smaller castle towns from Tanba to Tosa will have some interesting rumors and new characters. . . most of the equipment isn't as good as Settsu's or Yamashiro's, though. Again, you're not expected to go straight to Mt. Ken, nor should you. I'm sure you've been noticing that you need better armor. Spend a few months in game time doing spy missions, defending provinces from Nobunaga's army, or perhaps instigating a few invasions so you can buy some of the stuff in Settsu and Yamashiro. Or you could spend a few days in real time gambling and sell off the prizes you win.

What's that? You want good weapons, too? Well, the warriors get the Scimitar. Yay, new warrior sword. The wizards get the Stiletto, which has a high critical rate. Putting aside the ludicrous thought of mad cowboy Ryohei charging up to angry demons with a knife and stabbing them in the belly for 75 damage, this can be a really great weapon in some places if you just remember to get the wizard armor first. The sages get the Power Rod, which is like a healer's Fire Staff: limitless minor healing when used in battle. Definitely get one of these. Ninjas? Well, there's a swordsmith in Bitchu who can make you the Karamono sword, which is awesome, but you need the Iron Ore from the mine first. It's less than a day's trek north of the town.

The Iron Ore mine is a type of dungeon that's very stereotyped. It's that dungeon--every old-school RPG has at least one--that's so frustratingly maze-like that you're just running around completely lost until you happen to find the treasure/exit by accident. There are ladders all over the place, and they don't always lead you where you want to go. In keeping with this game's maze/monster challenge ratio, the enemies are very tame. Like Thorngator, which has maybe a 1 in 20 chance of even launching an attack until you seriously injure it, or Blue Hulk, which attacks with. . . a Blowpipe? These guys must moonlight as the cast of some overseas version of Sesame Street or something. Why else would Blue Hulk's better half be called the Pink Hulk!? It's an excellent place to level-up, so don't let my own level ranges stop you. Your preliminary goal is to reach the southeastern part of the dungeon, beyond the walls and chasms that block your way. From there you can get to

the area where the Iron Ore is.

Now, I'm actually going to start with the midpoint of the dungeon, which I will call the Room. It's kinda wide, nothing special, has three ladders, two UP and one DOWN. Oh, actually, one special thing about it is that it doesn't have any chasms blocking you off; it's a full room. The two ladders UP loop with each other waaaaay back from the very first two ladders on the first floor, and you may not realize this for quite a while--you'll invariably take the other loop ladder and wander aimlessly in the wrong direction. So there are two ways to reach this Room. (1):If you take the leftmost ladder from the first floor, then you can reach the Room by always taking the rightmost ladder on each successive floor until you reach that Room with no big gaping holes in sight. (Some of those side paths lead to chests. Eh, a Body Healer, an Energy Pill, and an Elixir; you can live without them.) (2): Now, if you take the second ladder on the first floor, you get a Ninja Cure and it's quicker, but there is a small loop. Try this: from the second floor, go all the way to the right, take the ladder *up*, go all the way south (past this next ladder, which is the loop), and now you're in the southeastern section. Here you'll find a ladder that takes you to the Room.

[Okay, now we're in the Room, and we're taking the ladder DOWN!]

[Hmm, and that's basically the entire dungeon. The rest is so direct it makes me feel like a total idiot for having ever gotten lost in this place.]

Perhaps, but they introduce the Hydraman here, and he's a token opposition. Its Health reaches the 200 range. You may actually need to chant a healing spell as you fight. OH MY GOSH! Otherwise, aside from a few minor dead ends, etc., the way is all clear to the Iron Ore, so pick it up and run back outta here. Take the Iron Ore to the swordsmith in Bitchu and you'll get the Karamono, the most powerful weapon you've seen so far. Take that, Scimitar! On to Mt. Ken!

By the way, you will probably want to give the Karamono to your allied ninja if you have one, particularly if you have Rei, so that you can have two ninja characters with a fair Attack stat. While this may be a plus against the battle-hardened thugs lurking behind every bush, keep in mind that there is only one Karamono sword in the game, and you don't want to lose track of it by dismissing a character who's still holding it. It's really a hero's weapon.

I. Mt. Ken (L28-29)

"Great swordsmanship, not magic, is essential in order to survive here."

This is an understatement. You will hate this training ground. A lot. Basically this dungeon seems designed to assume you took full advantage of all the goodies in Settsu and Yamashiro, but you probably have not. You're either going to have to backtrack to get those items or spend most of your time running. The enemies here are very strong against attack magic, and they're also better fighters than your party members, especially the spectral monsters in the lower levels. You need to give your strongest weapons to your strongest characters to inflict significant damage, some serious healing backup of your own (bring the Power Rod with you!), and then some. Since the enemies do virtually nothing but fight, you should also get in the habit of having your fighters defend frequently when they're being double-teamed. It'll make a big difference.

The statement quoted above is a little misleading. I'd say good magic is now more essential than ever. True, allied ninjas are almost useless in this

dungeon [including Rei :()], plus the warriors have slightly better armor and Health by now. But you could do a lot worse than having your magic people pile on those indirect magics like Sleep, Dizzy, Guard, Vanish or Gust (I'd strongly recommend bringing the Tengu Fan with you!), I think you get the idea. Also, your sages learn the insanely powerful Revive spell at L28. . . maybe the game designers felt you should be forced to use it.

The initial squad of enemies (aside from the Iron Mine repeats) are very resilient, but you should be able to defeat them without too much frustration. If you are having trouble, then you're either not prepared or out of practice. The first floor is vast enough for you to get an early butt-kicking, but it's quite simple and the only areas of interest are the four rooms in the center--they're right next to each other. Well, one has nothing and the other three have stairs. The northernmost stairs leads down, down, doooooowwnnnn to a fifth floor door that's locked tight. Guess that's the exit. The stairway in the irregularly-shaped room leads to some sort of narrow spiral room hallway, while the stairs in the southmost room leads to slightly less claustrophobic area. These two areas are linked, and you'll figure out the maze eventually. The critical point on the second floor is a narrow four-path crossroads: the paths south and immediately north each lead to stairs down. It's the south path you want; the northern stairs eventually lead to a dead end.

Third floor: To start off, avoid the long detour west; you should travel north, then east as much as possible. There's only one set of stairs this time; it's near a small chasm. You don't want to dawdle here, because this is where you start having frequent encounters with Samurai Ghosts and Kageboshis, both horrible enemies. They're immune to attack magic, take single-digit damage against everyone but the hero and warriors with Karamono and Scimitar, usually avoid Sleep and Fog, and pound you to kingdom come. You are going to want to run for your life. Now, the Samurai Ghost is stronger because he's a warrior-type ghost, but the Mendicant-type Kageboshis are worse because they play Heal2 and Heal3 against your 20-damage hits. If you have a Magician, the Stiletto gives you an extra opportunity to land a decisive critical hit, and you can use Dizzy to prevent the Kageboshis from healing (Drain also works quite well because they only have 50 Energy total). Um, but you could be fighting dozens of these guys, so I'd still recommend running and using the Tengu Fan liberally. Keep your Health up throughout the rest of the dungeon, lest you be surprised by a full party of heavy hitters.

If, like most normal people, you have a healer-person with you instead, you can survive the all-out blitz--quite easily, too--but you'll have a very difficult time putting them away. You'll have to run. Swallow your pride and say, "Help me, Old Man Tenkai!" and have him cast Vanish. (Kinda ironic how despite the uselessness of attack magic in this dungeon--in fact because of it--the wizard party still makes you an offensive powerhouse).

4th floor: As you proceed in this maze, doors will close in front of you, blocking your path permanently. The way to succeed is to just persist south as much as you can without taking a step back north: that'll be your downfall. You'll reach one of four stairs. There's only one correct stairs; the others are dead ends. But as long as you reach one of the stairways (it's okay to fall in the pit, too) you can just enter and exit and the doors will open again, letting you get to the others. Along the way, you will encounter the Wicked Sage, one of the single hardest enemies in the game. Essentially a perfected version of the Kageboshi, Wicked Sage can fire off healing spells like mad, and he also performs Revive. You really don't want to see that spell cast. These aren't exactly cuddly pink lizards you're fighting here. Two Wicked Sages + Kageboshi = Nearly impossible fight, especially for a sage party. They can even recover enemies who have been blown away by the Tengu Fan. You can gain a lot of experience if you keep slaying Revived enemies,

but it's much easier to level-up elsewhere. So keep plowing onward until you can reach the rightmost stairs, which leads to the treasure room.

In addition to the Power Book in the gingerbread chest, be sure to check the western side of the room to pick up the only other treasures in the dungeon. One of them, the Lion Tail charm, is a very rare item. Then take the express exit on the eastern side of the room. Climb your way out of here and present the quest item to the elder to learn the mighty Super and Tiger spells. Both of them fittingly preclude magic use once cast, but they make the caster almost invincible. You've probably seen Tiger already, but Super's a real keeper.

There's only one more training ground left! Mt. Aso is on the island of Kyushu, that large western island divided between three single-territory daimyos (Satsuma's daimyo has probably conquered the other two by now). Get directions at Aki Castle if you have not already done so. Travel west, past the Settsu-Aki port. The port to Kyushu right by the village of Yamaguchi. But first. . . !

M. Kusanagi (L29-32+)

If you bothered to stop by any of the towns in the region, you know there's this really important sword called the Kusanagi hidden somewhere around here. The lost blade's proximity has struck the poor villagers with an amnesia of common sense, as they talk about this Kusanagi's disappearance into the ocean and the mysterious watery cove nearby without seeming to make any connection between the two. Meanwhile this hermit guy over thrice the distance away in Aki tells you exactly where it is. Suffice it to say that the Kusanagi is lost, and as one of the imperial treasures and an awesome weapon to boot, it is much-sought after. Its potency is such that only warriors can wield it, but this is a quest you should undertake regardless of your party makeup.

Danoura Cave, the last optional dungeon of the game, is located right by the coast northwest of Yamaguchi. Most strong parties will do reasonably well, although allied ninjas are essentially regulated to Shurikens and magic. Because you have Super, you're obviously not lacking for offense, and attack magic will work in most battles, so it's your Defense that's your most vital stat. Since you're using these battles to level up anyway, go ahead and use as much magic as you need while you map the cave out, making frequent retreats as needed. This place will be no fun at all if you try to explore it all in one shot by conserving Energy. The encounters here are fairly dangerous and this isn't the simplest of mazes. The enemies all provide very good experience, so double-teaming on Burn/Gale or being trigger-happy on Heal3 is worth it when you fight against a full party. Do watch out for the Giant Crabs, though. They have that magic immunity/defeated only by critical hits combo going for them, and their attacks are among the more dangerous. Giant Crabs provide exemplary gold rather than experience, but they fall very quickly to Shurikens and are easily killed by allied ninjas (if you're lucky), so they can be good for experience, too. Super also works, but that's risky because they flee often. I think that's all I really need to say about combat.

Oh, and try not to let Sea Siren bash Mr. Wizard into jellyfish.

The first floor is probably the hardest. It's a network of horribly-rendered blue-glowing [catwalks, maybe? They look more like some sort of marshmallow art than anything resembling a topographical labyrinth] winding through some sort of [an abyss?] in many directions, even diagonally. You'll be navigating more by direction rather than by landmarks. That's fairly easy once you

figure out that the only item of interest is the stairway down. Immediately head south from the cave entrance, then bear toward the southwest to reach the second level. This floor is easier because you now have bridges and the beautiful landscapes rising out of the abyss to orient your bearings around. Bypass the first two bridges for now and follow the path east and north to find a chest with a Lion Tail. From here you should see a stairway down on the other side of the abyss. It'll take a lot of backtracking and then some to reach it. Ignore bridge #2 and take the bridge #1 north. Now, there's a large ring of a path that goes around what appears to be a large mountain. If you start clockwise to the east (don't go all the way around), you'll find the stairway you saw before. If you go straight north, you'll reach a different access to the third floor.

One of these levels leads to the Kusanagi, but you won't realize it until you're right on top of the thing. No more landmarks! The latter stairs takes you to a mess of warped paths leading every which way, and they all lead nowhere (but since we're leveling up...). The ringside stairs brings you to a level where you'll find a loooooong path that twists and turns and you don't know where in heck it leads until the hero suddenly makes a mad dash for the Kusanagi. It's just lying there, but before you can pick it up, a voice out of nowhere halts you in your tracks: you'll have to challenge the sword's guardian first!

***Boss Fight: Hydra

In order to win the Sword of Erdr--uh, um, I mean the Kusanagi, the sword that can slay a dragon, you'll have to fight the Hydra, king of...dragons. Hydra is by far the easiest boss of the game, as all he does is attack for a lot of damage and breathe fire on one of your guys for a lot of damage. As long as you can heal that damage without running out of Energy, you're set. It's a cinch with the Power Rod.

If, for some bizarre reason, you don't have any Energy Ups left should Super fail on you, you will have to fight a very long defensive fight. Most spells will work on the Hydra, and as with Nobunaga's phantom, the main danger is underestimating his attack and critical hit damage. The Fire Staff will inflict moderate but reliable damage, and Fog helps a lot, but you should refrain from Gale to save Energy for healing.

Now that you've defeated a dragon, you should have no trouble killing a warlord, right? You'll need to have a warrior in the party to find out how powerful the Kusanagi is, but any character can use the sword in battle to cast the Burn spell limitlessly (essentially eliminating the major reason to carry an extra ninja in the party anyway). If you haven't reached at least Level 32 yet, you should use the Kusanagi to help your characters level up before leaving the cave.

If you haven't been a big fan of warriors, you might find that most of the various warriors in the game are kinda wimpy by now. I think that's why those new and powerful warriors appeared after Mt. Ken, to give you an incentive. There's the Ronin with a ton of Health, high Power, and excellent compatibility with the hero, and there's the better-than-average Swordsman who of course has an even greater Attack. You'll find them eventually, or they'll find you.

Should you decide not to give the Kusanagi to a warrior to equip, be sure to have the hero hold it so you don't lose it. Give it to Hanzo, and he'll sell

his greatest competition for scrap as soon as you (quite literally) let him out of your sight. And you thought he was trustworthy! Before heading on to Kyushu, stop by Yamaguchi to receive the hero treatment yet again!

Hmm, several people have been e-mailing me about a way to fight the Hydra multiple times if you simply don't take the Kusanagi sword... I am way tardy and lame for not testing it or updating this section until now. When you Search and grab the Kusanagi, it activates fanfare music. So don't. What you do is walk out the chamber and ooooops you start chop-walking toward the Kusanagi again and FIGHT. If your characters get tired but you want to continue fighting, you can teleport out. Thus this is a mega-experience trick. This is in no way an endorsement of mega level-building as I think it's cheap and this Walkthrough tells you how to royally kick every boss's tail (which is arguably even more cheap), but I offer it for the sake of completeness. I'm sorry I can't remember who contributed it first.

N. Island of Kyushu (L32-34+)

Take the boat near Yamaguchi to Kyushu Island and prepare to get lost for the last time. It's not just the training ground you're looking for; you need to visit the towns, too. The shops on this island sell the best items and equipment in the game, but your heart will sink when you look at the prices. Not just the prices, but also the quantity of items you must buy, for you are invited to update the team's entire wardrobe and then some. It's more than you can afford. You know what **that** means.

***Interlude III: Beginning of the Revenge

The horrible prices at Kyushu should give you incentive to take another few months off to go on a spying spree. But while you're busy with that, there is something more important you should do as well.

With your characters having learned almost all of the mighty battlefield spells, it's time to start paying Nobunaga back for sending all those assassins against you. To do this, you'll need to buy Gifts for daimyos who can help you invade Nobunaga's territories. You should have enough money from the last two dungeons to manage that. As always, spend every effort to defend other daimyos against Nobunaga's attacks, as every lopsided defeat weakens his armies for a while. Then try to convince them to attack his minor territories. You'll need Daimyo Trust to be at least 65 (sometimes more) to have a good chance. Even if their armies aren't strong enough to launch an invasion, having enough influence to earn money for Advice-Damage is a nice bonus when you wish to weaken Nobunaga's territories through sabotage.

1. But it gets tougher. Sometimes Nobunaga attacks two territories at once, in which case you can only protect one province. If you spend the month sabotaging the attacker state of the war you can't participate in, you can kill enough soldiers so that Nobunaga cancels the attack, but this takes up time. You also have to contend with enemy warriors who are now just as strong as the generals, plus enemy ninjas and wizards with the same powerful spells that you have.

2. If Nobunaga is not attacking anybody, try to convince friendly daimyos to attack his minor territories, especially territories he has conquered since the start of the game. This isn't easy and you'll have to spend a month sabotaging the target and possibly several more months waiting for your patron to build up his troops. You can continue the pressure by sabotaging your target's surrounding states (e.g., if you're trying to recapture the conquered

province of Izumo, try to weaken the troops in Harima as well).

[3. If a friendly daimyo decides to attack someone *else* instead and you don't like that, you can avert the war by getting yourself hired anyway, but then Flee from the battle as soon as it starts. The army will retreat with no casualties, but of course the daimyo will be rather angry at you.]

4. Taking part in an invasion is much different than helping to defend a territory because most daimyos simply are not going to send their entire army for an invasion even if their state's troops outnumber the enemy's. Thus you'll have fewer soldiers to work with and will usually be outnumbered.

4a. The amount of troops a daimyo sends to battle depends heavily on how many other enemy states are next to him, and how dangerous they are. So, too, does the daimyo's assessment of whether or not his army is "strong enough." Essentially daimyos feel more comfortable about emptying their castles of precious defenders if their *other* potential enemies are weak or few. Whether one's army can actually win the war is only one consideration here.

Suppose you want to attack Etchu (assume no major conquests have occurred yet).

You can petition either Uesugi Kagekatsu in Echigo or Takeda Katsuyori in Kai. These are both strong provinces and both rulers hate Nobunaga. But Kai's daimyo is probably going to send a much smaller army than Echigo's, and may require a larger total of troops before he even considers the invasion. How come? Kai is bordered by five other (nonfriendly) provinces in addition to Etchu, and four of these (Mino, Echigo, Mikawa, and Sagami) are strong provinces with their own large armies. Whether it wins or loses the coming battle, Kai must keep a large enough army to protect itself from these enemies. Now, Echigo is bordered by four other provinces plus Etchu, but Kai is the only neighbor with a large army. Dewa and Rikuzen especially aren't in any position to threaten Echigo.

Even if Kai can give Etchu a real drubbing by sending a massive force, Takeda knows that he can't hold Kai if he leaves behind a defending force of only 100 soldiers. But take a state like Boso, which has friendly states on all borders except Hitachi. Or Izumo, whose only enemy is Harima. If they have even a moderate advantage, they may send almost their entire armies (which aren't large at all) to battle, leaving behind as few as 20 soldiers, because if they win the attacker state no longer has to defend itself.

4b. Since you have a smaller army, your magic use has to be solid, but you have more spells to work with now. Sometimes if the defenders stand still you can rush up to them and Blaze the entire army at once. If they start rushing (which they only do if your side is seriously outnumbered) or they have a ninja on their side, you should probably cast Storm. The spell will be pretty accurate by now and probably won't even hit your side at all, plus it's stronger than Blaze. I never get anything good from Quake; I think there's a bug that makes it attack your own side instead. You might want to cast Geyser on your side's commander if you want to slow him down. This is particularly helpful once you learn Dragon later on, as the dragons seem to be somewhat farsighted (i.e., they know where to go, but they often breathe in the wrong direction; use Tiger to protect yourself from their attacks). I still don't agree with CloakedEntity that they're just as likely to breathe on your units as the enemy's, though. Ogre and Fright allow you to inflict safe, reliable damage from long range, but it's a slow process.

5. Another factor that appears to influence whether a province will even consider launching an invasion is how many Generals it has, which you can find out with Spy-Snoop. Generals are important for two reasons. First, which you already know, they can lead units of troops. Second, they can hold, defend,

and govern provinces (the game tends to call governors "daimyos," and so do I, but this is probably inaccurate). Each province needs at least one capable General to govern them, and it appears that provinces with only a single General (the daimyo) *can't* launch invasions at all, because there won't be anyone to govern and command the home province. As daimyos (um, warlords) expand, they will spread their generals thin and their armies will weaken, as more troops will be ordered into weak infantry units and you will be forced to take on greater responsibility in the wars.

This isn't usually a problem because you don't need to help the daimyos expand in order to complete the game, as Mikawa is right next to Mino, and personally I think it's an advantage for defending daimyos to have fewer generals (leaves the army less vulnerable to magic). But it might hurt you if Nobunaga's armies starts winning.

There is a chance that whenever the winning side in a war has captured an enemy General during the fighting, that General will defect to the victors instead of returning to a safe territory. He always defects if there are no safe territories to return to (e.g., if his nation is totally conquered and his ruler perishes), except that the ruler usually passes away. So far as I know, this is the primary means by which the warlords of Japan gain new Generals in the game, which means there's a strong incentive for expansionists to totally conquer their foes, as they gain a lot of new Generals that way.

6. At this stage, it's easiest to convince Mori Termuto (or whomever) to attack Nobunaga from the west. Help him reconquer any lost territories, sabotage Harima as much as you can, then seek to launch an attack from Izumo. That'll get Nobunaga's attention! You've weakened Nobunaga's armies considerably, taken away a huge training ground for his troops, given MT a very strong border state and earned a lot of cash. On the east, you're regulated to sabotaging Mino every few months. You can shore up either Tokugawa or Takeda by helping one to conquer the other. You could also conquer Etchu, but don't do this at the expense of having a strong province ready to attack Mino.

***Several Months Later...

Now that Nobunaga is on the defensive and you have enough money to update your equipment, let's continue with the quest on Kyushu. There are three castles and two villages to visit:

Bungo Castle: Travel southeast along the coast from where the boat drops you off. Some interesting rumors and equipment here.

Hizen Castle: From the port, go a little west until you reach the sea, then straight south. Mt. Aso is just east of here in the mountain enclave (but you should visit the other towns first). To reach Hizen from Bungo: travel south, then go counterclockwise around the mountains until you see the path leading to the training ground, now head west.

Satsuma Castle: Satsuma is far south of Hizen. Straight south, then bear left when you reach the small mountains. Satsuma sells the best equipment money can buy. You don't have to try to buy everything, just get a couple of items that would really help for the training ground. First on your list should be the awesome Ninja Rod.

Hyuga: Between Hizen and Satsuma, you'll find a path going east. Follow it until it kinda disappears, but keep going. The village is near the coast. (You can also reach Hyuga by going south from Bungo.) Hygua offers a few powerful items sold nowhere else. There's the must-have Multiblade, which

casts Gale limitlessly in battle, and they also sell Dizzy Gas here, cheap (Ah, guess we don't really need wizards anymore, either!). Spellblock is a deceptively powerful multi-use item that performs Jinx with near-100% accuracy.

Nagasaki: The port town of Nagasaki offers some of the best European imports. Actually they sell top-class wizard and sage armor (???), but you can buy the Musket, the most powerful projectile in the game, as well as the Health Kit, which revives a character in battle. Nagasaki is in Hizen's province: if you'll take a look at the Tower Map, it's in the little peninsula jutting out on the west coast of the island. Therefore you need to immediately travel west from Hizen Castle, then south.

It may be hard to believe that someday you'll be able to afford everything in these shops, but you will. Make whatever purchases you need, bring in some strong allies, and trek off to Mt. Aso.

[It's Mt. Aso!]

Apparently even this remote part of Japan is not far enough from the prying eyes of Nobunaga's agents. And of course the people all warn you that, as the final training ground, this dungeon's a little nastier than most. It can't possibly be worse than Mt. Ken, can it? After finding the Dragon Book, the elder promises, it's the beginning of the end for Oda Nobunaga.

This is another horribly-rendered water dungeon like Danuora Cave, although its layout is much different. Most of the initial enemies are the magic-resistant villains from Mt. Ken and Danoura, but you should be stomping them flat. The first floor is a single wide plateau, smaller than it appears. Just go east to the other half of the area to find the stairs. Easy! But the second floor gives you a choice of *three* stairways down. Urrgh! Let's take the northwest stair. Yes, it's the wrong way, as you eventually reach a fourth floor teleport that leads...nowhere. Time to turn back! Keep the Kusanagi and Multiblade handy, because you've got these new fire and dragon-themed monsters prowling around, and their pack attacks are pretty nasty. They take a ton of damage from magic, so waste them before they waste you and don't let up! That way you'll have a chance.

The second floor's northeast stairs quickly leads nowhere, so it's the southeast one we want. From here you'll pass through a confusing series of short passages and stairs, very direct, but a little mazy. Then you reach the fifth floor, a narrow hall with two pairs pits that suddenly open up in front of you, forcing you to sidestep around them. If you trigger both pits of the second set, the stairs will be blocked off. (Avoid this by stepping closer before stepping to the side.) The stairs and the pits lead to totally different areas. Fall down the pit!!!

[Did ya hear? We're falling down the pit!]

Fall down the pit by the western stairs to land near a treasure chest: inside is the *Health Rock.* This is THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM IN THE GAME (personal opinion) DO NOT LOSE IT!!! Health Rock performs Heal3 limitlessly in battle for three times the fun of Power Rod, so it A) makes sages almost obsolete, and B) lets sages safely cast the Shield spell. Tactically you might want to give the Health Rock to your weakest ally, but if anyone except the hero holds it, you run the risk of forgetting about it and losing it forever if you Part with your ally. For now give it to someone holding neither Kusanagi nor Multiblade (and certainly not the guy holding Power Rod), which should be the hero anyway. As you escape from the area Health Rock is found in, you'll find another chest with a Bracelet, a very powerful Charm,

but one which ninjas can't use. Continue upward until you find a teleport, which takes you to the fourth floor dead-end teleport from before. Then return to the fifth floor hall.

Careful to step forward, *then* step sideways around the pits this time, you reach the sixth floor, where you'll fight another new enemy: the Water Dragon. (What a name!) You're close, and the rest is straightforward. Fight your way through the final two floors to find Dragon Book, the last quest item. Magic your way out (you *did* get the Health Rock, right?) congratulate yourself on a job well done, and return to the elder to learn Dragon, your final ninjutsu spell.

O. Mt. Hiei (L34-38)

So now we're ready to take on Nobunaga, right? Well, not quite. Now that you've learned all the ninja magics. . . the elder tells you that the way ahead is very arduous, but he can't exactly school you in the final step. Because Nobunaga has stopped at nothing to end your quest, it's not safe for any of the Elders to know too much. Realizing the danger, the Master Elder fled Mt. Aso just before Nobunaga's men started snooping around. Only he can guide you toward achieving revenge. He locked himself deep inside the Mt. Hiei dungeon. Nobunaga sent his army after the Elder to break through with fire, but the gate held. Now the Mt. Hiei Elder waits in seclusion. Yes, I made almost all of that up.

(If you've been reading this FAQ diligently, you probably know what the Mt. Hiei Elder is going to tell you, but the daimyos shall remain violently afraid of attacking Mino/Ise/Yamashiro/Echizen until the Master Elder instructs you, although you will notice a difference in tone. Try advising it anyway for a good laugh.)

As you're getting ready to leave, you're approached by a man who introduces himself as Momochi: the most legendary Iga Ninja. (Momochi's the Iga leader who sends you away to the Iga Secret Village in the game's introduction.) Now that you've finished your training, he asks to fight at your side, as he is also dedicated to revenge. You should accept his offer, or at least keep him on your short list. Much like Rei, Momochi is the best allied ninja in the game (yep, better than Hanzo), also the strongest, comes with his own Ninja Rod, etc., but unlike Hanzo he doesn't have Flight. If you decide to turn Momochi down, he'll appear in Settsu Castle with a Trust of 60.

Mt. Hiei? It's past the cave near Yamashiro, the one with the big locked gate. The Mt. Aso elder gives you the Gate Key that lets you enter. Round up your allies and make a brief tour of the best shops, because this is the long, horrible one. You'll have no problem navigating the cave, but it has a lot of those odd mazes and little dead ends that waste your steps and force more encounters. After a few battles I think you will agree that the Elder could not possibly find a safer hiding place in Japan. Prepare a couple of instant catastrophes from Tenshima's Freeze, Enchantress's very accurate hypnotic song, and a few other tricks you've already seen before, only worse. Bring a Tengu Wing or some other means of escape in case you get in deep trouble.

Having said that, most of the fights are winnable if you have the Health Rock, and the enemies provide tons of experience, so you will be gaining a lot of levels in this cave (your Health will skyrocket!). Just make sure you always enter combat with all allies in good Health. Sages perform a little better than wizards here (see Freeze and hypnotic song above), and warriors a little better than allied ninjas (at least until they learn Super at Level 38), but they can all save the day if you play "in character." Get out of tough spots

by using Super (Shield, too) to smash the enemies to pieces, a couple of Drains to prevent Tenshimas from using magic again, lots of Fogs to protect your allies from attacks, and the occasional Heal 4 or Ninja Cure as needed. Your Energy will be restored by the level-ups, and some of the monsters will drop Ninja Cures as well.

Bear this all in mind as you unlock the gate and drive off the first wave of monsters while you trek toward the stairs to the north. If you knew the second floor already, you would know that to avoid wasting precious steps you should head east as much as possible at first until the path winds around to the stairs. The third floor is a simple maze with two highlights. (1) The violet room is a trap that forces you to step through some spikes to hit the switch that lets you escape. (2) The stairs down are to the north, and yet it's clear that there's another area of the floor to explore. Well, you'll be left wondering for now. The fourth floor is another simple maze at heart, and is more open than the last. The stairs are to the south; head south from the beginning before going west. Meantime you've been through hell and back in combat.

The fifth floor takes you to a fancy hall containing three rooms, each with its own set of stairs leading down. The one to the east goes onward, the others lead nowhere, except perhaps to harder enemies. The new sixth floor enemies, although simpler, are a full step tougher than the earlier monsters, so don't show them any mercy in your first meeting and pile on the experience. You'll notice that the seventh floor has no encounters. There's a rare Health recovery square as well, and then you're presented with stairs leading up and down. You should go down for now. The eighth floor has a teleport which transports you to a fancy room. Be sure to explore all three teleports here. You'll find a Sceptre, Kirin Bone, Restorer, and a mighty Superblade, all among the most powerful items in the game. With Superblade, your allied ninjas finally have a chance to make a difference in swordplay, and Super seals it.

Now you have to go all the way back UP. After the longest spiral hall in the game (lots of dangerous encounters on the sixth floor UP), the trail becomes very direct. You'll bypass a pair of large six-armed statues along the way, then on the third floor UP you're blocked by another of these eerie statues that comes to life as you approach. Not content to trust in the hellish random encounters to scare away trespassers, the wise Elders set up a demon statue to destroy all who try to pass.

***Boss Fight: Ashura

The guardian of Mt. Hiei has a devastating slice-you-to-ribbons attack that your Health Rock is hard-pressed to overcome. Worse are his critical hits; they can easily leave the hero in dire condition, and he lands them often. So you're putting all those superhuman level-ups to good use. Ashura also has one very nasty trick: he counters Super (and Shield) by releasing a blast of psychic energy that nullifies the effects of all support spells. This means you'll have to fight him with your ordinary Attack and Defense (we've already established that your ordinary Defense is not enough), and that all Super will be good for is a round of free attacks, as it will draw immediate action. Ashura also occasionally (not usually immediately) uses the psychic blast to nullify Guard and Speed, which are much cheaper, but unlike the Dragon Warrior bosses that came up with the trick, Ashura won't use this ability if no support spells are active on the party, as he only has one attack per round.

To survive this fight, it's best to have two allies in the front rank to engage the boss, with the third character using the Health Rock from the

safety of the rear. Always have at least one fighter Defend, sometimes both, and you'll be able to survive with the Health Rock. If Ashura lands a critical hit on someone, pull him back to force the boss to attack a Defending ally, and rotate as needed. Follow this defensive and I trust you won't run out of Ninja Cures. Your offense won't be a huge problem. Most spells will work on Ashura (get Fog on him right away!) and his defense isn't quite so bad. You can even get a few rounds of Super on him if you immobilize him with Dizzy or something similar, though that won't always win the fight for you. Also, Ashura's psychic energy will nullify any Weaken or Fog spells you manage to land on him, so you'll have to cast them again. Follow a secure strategy and, with enough support items/ magic, you will eventually be rewarded with that gratifying message: "Ashura is now defending."

The game acknowledges your heroic feat with a bit of fanfare. Just before you exit, you're given a more tangible reward: two chests with Magic Armor and Kirin Bone, presumably the best armor and Charm in the game.

[After all, that, how in HECK is a bounty hunter waiting on the other side of this cave???)

P. Endgame (To completion!)

The refuge of Mt. Hiei is just steps away from the cave in this mountainlocked zone. Meet the Master Elder! He'll brief you on the current situation.

***Multiple Endgames???

There are at least two different endgame sequences that distinguish themselves from this point. Depending on the situation, the events will unfold somewhat differently, but the essential "you must do this" things remain the same.

[Version 2.0: In contrast to what I wrote in earlier versions of the FAQ and as nearly everyone who wrote me on the subject suggested, I am now 95% certain that the endgame you receive depends on which cut-scene you receive at the beginning of the cave, after the Password dungeon, rather than the date. The cut-scene you get is at least semi-random; I think it might depend on how many enemies you defeat in the dungeon or what items you get.]

1. Endgame 1, which is what I played through for Version 1.0 of this FAQ, occurs if Nobunaga appeared bandaged from burns in the cut-scene after the password dungeon (I still think this must either be a bug or sloppy writing, as intuitively it should be the reverse, but anyway). The Elder will confirm the whispered rumors about Nobunaga's superhuman powers, which he seemed to gain after the rebellion at Honnoji Temple. Before he can continue, one of Nobunaga's ninjas walks up from behind. Identifying himself as Kidomaru, he brings a message for the hero: Nobunaga himself wants to meet you! He invites you to meet Nobunaga at Mino dungeon, and stalks off. The Elder suspects a trap, but this may be your only chance to get your revenge, so you have no choice but to meet him there.

2. Endgame 2 is the one I remember from the first time I played this game, and what I am playing through for Version 2.0 of this FAQ. This actually seems to be less commonly reported than Endgame 1. (I hope there aren't other endgames!) The Elder will remark on the fierce monsters that are plaguing the Kinki region. These have been conjured by the powerful European sorcerer Nicolai, who has joined Nobunaga's forces and strengthened his army (thanks to those who emailed Nicolai's and others' names to me). Nicolai has greater

ambitions however, as he is now planning to usurp his master and take over Japan by unleashing these demons. This is a danger greater even than the threat posed by Nobunaga, so you must defeat him at his lair in Mino dungeon before he can gather his strength.

(If the Kinki monsters do not appear after Mt. Ochi, you will get Endgame 1, instead. It will be very obvious.)

Regardless, your next destination is Mino dungeon, and the Elder directs you to return once your mission is completed (you can use Wings magic to return to Mt. Hiei). Assemble and outfit your favorite party and Wing it to Mino. The checkpoint north of Mino is now open, and the pass leads to the dungeon. There are no encounters in this cave and it only has two floors, but it's a very confusing network of halls and stairs. There is only one set of stairs that leads to the important-looking room in the center of the second floor. It's on the Northwest corner of the first floor. You'll chop-walk into a large room with a magic symbol on the floor and either finally confront Oda Nobunaga, who has lured you into a trap (Endgame 1), or the wicked sorcerer Nicolai, who summons a demon to defeat you (Endgame 2). In either case you're in for a fight.

***Boss Fight: Oda Nobunaga (Endgame 1)

OR

***Boss Fight: Nicolai and Balioc (Endgame 2)

1. Endgame 1: Yep, it really is Nobunaga this time, and he thinks he can defeat you alone. The arrogance! Nobunaga has the same appearance as his phantom in Mt. Osore (maybe his sword's color is a little different), but he's stronger and possess the psychic energy ability. Use the same strategy you used against Ashura or the phantom. He's not quite as strong as Ashura, but he has a strong defense against magic. You should have more than enough healing power to succeed. After you win, he'll boast that he hasn't shown you his true power and teleport to Azuchi.

2. Endgame 2: This fight is pretty tough, although it's much easier with the Health Rock. Nicolai and his demon bash at your characters with staff and claw for significant damage, and while most of your fighting characters can inflict good damage themselves, Nicolai's healing magic gives him the edge, and his ally has that psychic blast again. Tactical use of Defend will help you control the pace of the combat. From there, you either have to outlast his healing or gang up on the wizard and hope he drops his guard.

Well, you've certainly done a noble and heroic feat, no matter which endgame you're in. Now return to Mt. Hiei to get the instruction from the Elder. Azuchi Castle is heavily fortified, and the only way you'll be able to gain access is if you help a friendly daimyo conquer one of its adjacent territories: Mino, Echizen, Yamashiro, or Ise. Finally your friendly daimyos will be willing to cooperate, so let's not delay any longer and fight the battle of Mino!

Or at least, that's the easiest battle to get. You could also cut into Harima and either Tanba or Settsu to attack your choice of Ise, Yamashiro, or Echizen, or conquer Etchu and Echizen, but I think your allies run low on generals or troops by this point, so you'll be forced to do some waiting. I'm reminded of my lessons on World War II: how in the end, Germany simply could not sustain a two-front war. If you managed to silence Mino and capture Harima, I guarantee that most of Nobunaga's center provinces are going to be almost depleted of reinforcements. Mino is the strongest among the four key provinces, but it's still the easiest to get to, so turn back its latest invasion, sabotage it, convince a hopefully strong Mikawa to attack, save the game, and launch Dragons all over the place. Now you can finally bypass the checkpoint of Omi (south of Echizen is the way I always go) and enter Final Dungeon Azuchi.

[Azuchi!]

The way to Nobunaga is fairly direct, and the encounters are both infrequent and fairly easy. On the second floor's deck, you should approach the center steps from the left. You'll find the stairs blocked by one of Nobunaga's ninja henchmen!

***Boss Fight: Kasumimaru and two Oda's Ninjas

As with other three-enemy boss fights, try to concentrate your efforts on one enemy. Use the first rounds of combat to place Fog on the boss; his henchmen are more likely to shrug it off. Then cast a few doses of Dizzy or Guard before relying on the Health Rock. Watch out for Kasumimaru's Shuriken. The longer the fight drags on, the more Ninja Cures you're probably going to have to use, and we don't want that.

Kasumimaru's dying words strongly suggest there are other guardians along the way, so be prepared. Once you defeat these bosses, they don't come back, so you can escape to replenish your supplies if you need.

Only the southwest steps up on the third floor lead forward. Here you'll come across another ninja boss blocking a four-way intersection. This time it's Kidomaru (you've met him already in Endgame 1), and his help is better than those puny Oda's Ninjas.

***Boss Fight: Kidomaru and Mugenbo

Both Kidomaru's and Mugenbo's attacks are very strong, so I would suggest fighting this team with Super ninjas. Even with this protection you're going to have a hard fight, but at least this way you'll dish out as good as you get. When their Health starts getting low, Mugenbo will start using Heal 3. This is a gift. Kidomaru occasionally casts Burn as well. Even better. Once you defeat one of the bosses (actually, Mugenbo uses Revive...), the fight becomes somewhat manageable with the Health Rock.

As to the crossroads Kidomaru was guarding, be sure to raid the "Treasury" to the east to get a Restorer, another Superblade, and your third Kirin Bone.

The fifth floor houses what appears to be some sort of audience chamber, but it's not Nobunaga that's receiving you. After a very odd sequence, the

strange figure introduces himself as Nobunaga's Top Bodyguard and tells you that no one has ever made it this far, but of course he's going to destroy you.

***Boss Fight: Top Bodyguard and Azuchi Guard

The Top Bodyguard fully restores your Health and Energy before the fight to make the battle almost fair. Even so, you might lose this fight in one round. The Top Bodyguard uses a Sleep Bomb which will always put all allies to Sleep, and he can defeat any character in at most three hits. If you can survive the Sleep Bomb, you're in good shape. Top Bodyguard himself is immune to all spells with less than perfect accuracy as well as all attack magic.

Since Azuchi Guard has that Heal 4, get rid of him as soon as you can, then see if you can survive the boss. His Attack is a threat even to Defending characters, and I don't even want to think about his (fortunately rare) critical. He also has the psychic energy ability, so Super isn't going to save you this time. Try to draw his psychic energy power by having your weaker fighter use the Yoshi Blade (finally found a good use for it!), as this will give you a few free rounds. At least his Health isn't as high as Ashura's! Like Kidomaru, sometimes Top Bodyguard uses Burn, if you're lucky.

You mean you WON??? Awesome! Let me tell you, Nobunaga's bodyguards know what they're talking about when they salute you for beating them! After the Top Bodyguard, you're free to confront Oda Nobunaga, so continue on to the final confrontation. There's one last floor of random encounters with a few false directions, then you get to barge in on Nobunaga in his pajamas. Oda Nobunaga's speech is different depending on which endgame you're playing, as is the battle you'll face.

***Final Boss Fight: Oda Nobunaga and Mori Ranmaru (Endgame 1)

OR

***Final Boss Fight: Oda Nobunaga and Abadon (Endgame 2)

1. Endgame 1: Oda Nobunaga fights in blazing heavy armor alongside yet another bodyguard. Both bosses are immune to almost everything, Oda Nobunaga still has the psychic energy ability, and Mori Ranmaru uses Heal 2 for healing support. Oda Nobunaga attacks with a supernaturally powerful fist that (frequently!) inflicts critical hits in excess of 300 damage, and MR's attack is nothing to laugh at either. The big ON also has a lightning attack that affects all allies, though he rarely uses it. You may as well toss away the Health Rock as useless junk because you need something to heal single allies for lots of damage--bring a full backpack to this fight.

I'm both humiliated and proud (mostly humiliated) to report that I won the fight in my first try with just Momochi and Harutomo after losing the hero to Nobunaga in two rounds to an attack and a critical hit. Of course, I had lots of restorative items with me (I just forgot to bring the Health Kit!). Next time I'm putting my high-Health Momochi in the top row. Although neither Nobunaga nor Ranmaru have anywhere close to Ashura's Health, you're going to spend almost the entire battle healing and trying to keep Nobunaga from destroying you (get him to destroy MR instead!), and like as not you'll get absolutely nowhere. When Nobunaga is alone, try to get him with the Dizzy/

Super combo or Dizzy and lots of Shurikens. Whatever party you use, you have to use all of what you have. I'm making no guarantees, but don't give up!

2. Endgame 2: This fight is much different from Endgame 1's, but it isn't any easier. Having learned from his predecessors, most notably Hargon from Dragon Warrior II (who lost badly), Oda Nobunaga summons THE great powerful demon boss *before* you cut him to ribbons, and fights by its side wielding his mighty sorcerer staff (and still dressed in his pajamas, uh, I mean wizard robe). This battle easily ranks among the top three most challenging final boss fights I know of. Both enemies use strong healing magic, making it very difficult to inflict lasting damage. Both enemies have a moderately dangerous attack, unleash lightning that damages all allies (fairly often, too), release psychic energy to counteract your support magic, and of course they're both immune to almost everything. Fortunately, Abaddon does not have the frequent critical hits trait. Aren't you happy?

Since I couldn't put a dent on them any other way, I had three fighting characters (actually, three ninjas) take on this team, using the Health Rock and lots of Ninja Cures for healing (this was before I started using Dizzy in boss fights). Although the demon is slightly more dangerous, you should concentrate on Nobunaga first because he has a lower Health and Defense. Even when you get the upper hand, the warlord wizard casts the almighty Heal 4 when either enemy's Health becomes critical. So unless you get a very timely critical hit or Dizzy at that point, this will be a long endurance fight. The healing is not unlimited, though, so it is possible to outlast them. For some reason I found the Health Rock moderately useful the very first time I played, probably because I frequently drew off the Psychic Energy with Super and the Yoshi Blade. Lots of luck to you!

[By the way you could get a really cheap win by using Spellblock, but do you really want to see the ending that badly? You wouldn't be able to use any other strange magic because the psychic energy blast dispels all magic effects on the enemy side as well, but right now I'm pretty sure the bosses won't use it to heal themselves. There IS precedent: Dragon Warrior III's freeze beam did the same thing.]

Now listen to Nobunaga's dying speech and enjoy the ending sequence. It may be slightly different depending on the situation, but I'd say it's pretty satisfying. So hang up your sword and congratulate yourself on a job well done!

*****WALKTHROUGH FINISH*****

V. LISTS

A. Spells

*: Ninja spells are listed in the order that the hero learns them upon completing training grounds. That's why some of them appear to be out of order. Sage and Wizard spells are listed in the order that each class learns them. Spy Abilities are included because these cost Energy as well. Failure rate is based more or less on when you first learn the spell, and is oftentimes simply my best guess.

Ninja Spells***

Name (Cost) Class (Level) Failure Rate

When Used: Effect

Flame (4) Ninja (L2) Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts 16-22* damage on one enemy.

*: Since a victim's Resist stat can reduce magic damage, these are approximations of spell damage against low-Resist enemies.

Repair (4) Ninja (L4) Fails: Often

Field: Restores 30 Health to one ally (exactly)

Combat: Restores about 30 Health to one ally (amount is slightly random)

Purge (5) Ninja (L13) Fails: Sometimes

Field/Combat: Cures Poison in one ally.

Fog (8) Ninja (L7) Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts Blindness on one enemy. It has a moderate to high success rate, probably depending on the enemy's Resistance.

Wind (12) Ninja (L10) Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts 16-22 damage on all enemies. Individual enemies can sometimes evade this spell.

Torch (8) Ninja (L8) Fails: Never

Combat: Shoots a stream of flame that travels straight in front of the caster, inflicting 27-33 damage on any enemies in the area of effect. It can cut through two enemies at once if their position is just right, although an enemy may escape damage as well.

Geyser (14) Ninja (L12) Fails: Sometimes/Often

War: Impassable geysers sprout up surrounding the target for 10 Turns*, effectively preventing the unit from moving. It can only be cast on the enemy or allied commander unit. It prevents other units from moving next to the target as well, but there is no ill effect for any units already standing next to the target when the spell is cast.

*: Actually the duration for these spells seems to be fairly random, so these are approximations at best.

Blaze (18) Ninja (L15) Fails: Sometimes/Often

War: A wave of fire spreads out from the caster in every direction. Any enemy units up to three spaces away will be damaged; allied units are unaffected by the spell.

Burn (16) Ninja (L18) Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts 35-50 damage on all enemies; enemies sometimes evade.

Storm (28) Ninja (L24) Fails: Often

War: Causes lightning to strike certain units on the battlefield randomly. It can hit up to five units total. Any units struck, enemy or ally, will take damage (the caster's unit is always unaffected).

Quake (24) Ninja (L32) Fails: Often

War: A big fissure cuts through the battlefield from one side to another, usually passing through several units (particularly if they're clustered together). Any units caught in the effect, enemy or ally, will take damage (caster unaffected). This spell is usually riskier to use than Storm because

it's more likely to affect your side only or miss completely.

Tiger (30) Ninja (L26) Fails: Often

War: Transforms the caster's unit into a giant tiger for 9 Turns. The unit gains increased mobility, and will not suffer any damage from anything while in tiger form. However, you will not be able to use magic. Contrary to what the manual states, I usually find that the Tiger's attack strength actually drops, but it's a good spell to use if you have few or no soldiers left.

Super (62) Ninja (L38) Fails: Often

Combat: A shining power enters the caster's body, greatly increasing both Attack and Defense for the rest of combat ("Powerful" status condition). But he will no longer be able to use magic.

Dragon (32) Ninja (L34) Fails: Often

War: Summons a dragon unit onto the battlefield at a random location. The dragon concentrates most of its aggression toward the enemy, but it sometimes breathes fire on allied units as well. It departs after taking a certain amount of damage or after 6 Turns. You can have up to two dragons on the field at the same time, less if you have other summoned units.

[Spy Abilities]

Snoop (18) [Hero only] Special

Castle Towns: Gain information on the castle and its army. The chance of success depends on your experience level and the particular castle.

Damage (24) [Hero only] Special

Castle Towns: Sabotage the castle to reduce the number of troops and/or damage food supplies (determined randomly). The chance of success is usually lower than when performing Snoop. Each attempt takes a day to complete regardless of success or failure.

Sage Spells

Heal 1 (5) Sage (L1) Fails: Never*

Field: Restores 30 Health to one ally

Combat: Restores about 30 Health to one ally. In combat Heal 1 is much better than Repair, since it never fails.

[Almost never. I've seen Prestadors fail at it, so it's safe to assume that this spell may fail for characters with very low Intelligence, too.]

Purge (3) Sage (L4)* Fails: Rarely

Field/Combat: Cures Poison in one ally.

[Level 4 is the lowest level I've ever recruited a character with sage magic, so I cannot be technically sure.]

Guard (7) Sage (L6) Fails: Sometimes

Combat: Increases the Defense of one ally. Can be cast several times for a cumulative effect.

Heal 2 (13) Sage (L8) Fails: Sometimes

Field: Restores 100 Health to one ally

Combat: Restores about 85-100 Health to one ally

Speed (6) Sage (L10) Fails: Rarely

Combat: Increases the Speed of all allies. Can be cast several times for

a cumulative effect.

Sleep (8) Sage (L10) Fails: Never

Combat: Attempts to put all enemies to sleep. It's accuracy is low to moderate.

Vanish (11) Sage (L14) Fails: Often

Combat: Party flees from combat. This spell is effective when you are attacked by other characters, but always fails in boss battles.

Wings (16) Sage (L16) Fails: Often

Field: Transports you to any castle you've previously visited. When used inside a dungeon, you will be instantly returned outside. There are some dungeons where this spell (and similar abilities) will not work.

Gust (7) Sage (L17) Fails: Never

Combat: A great gust will blow away a single enemy instantly, though you will not gain any experience or gold from it (interestingly, you may still get items). Success rate is pretty high, but don't expect it to work in boss battles.

Heal 3 (25) Sage (L20) Fails: Sometimes

Field: Restores 50 Health to all allies

Combat: Restores about 50 Health to all allies

Awaken (13) Sage (L24) Fails: Sometimes

Combat: Removes Dizzy, Sleep, Blindness, Jinx, and Frozen conditions from one ally

Revive (32) Sage (L28) Fails: Often

Combat: Recovers a character who has been defeated in the current combat and restores him to full Health--and Energy. (A character may only be revived twice per combat.)* This spell cannot be used on the field; you must cast it before combat ends if you think a character is going to perish.

*: That's essentially what the manual states, but due to what I'd think is an unfixed bug in the game or something, characters can be revived an infinite number of times. As it stands, this is a very powerful spell.

Shield (48) Sage (L32) Fails: Often

Combat: A powerful force enters the caster's body, dramatically raising both his Attack and Defense for the rest of combat ("Powerful" status condition). But he will no longer be able to use magic.

Heal 4 (73) Sage (L34) Fails: Often?

Field/Combat: Restores all allies to full Health.

Wizard Spells***

Dizzy (8) Wizard [L2 or 3?] Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts Dizziness on one enemy. Most enemies have no defense against this spell.

Move (0) Wizard (L6) Fails: Never(?)

War: Grants increased mobility to the caster's unit for one turn, allowing it to move three spaces over any passable terrain immediately after casting.

Weaken (7) Wizard (L8) Fails: Never

Combat: Lowers one enemy's Defense. The success rate is moderate.

Subsequent castings will have a cumulative effect.

Drain (6) Wizard (L10) Fails: Never

Combat: Lowers the Energy level of one enemy by 11-13 points. Most enemies have no defense against this spell. [The game manual is INCORRECT when it states that it's more effective on adjacent enemies.]

Unfog (7) Wizard (L12) Fails: ?????

Combat: Removes Blindness from all allies

Jinx (10) Wizard (L12) Fails: Never

Combat: Prevents one enemy from using magic. Success rate is actually pretty low.

Fiero (7) Wizard (L14) Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts 33 to 44 damage on one enemy.

Remedy (8) Wizard (L16) Fails: Sometimes

Field: Restores 70 Health to one ally

Combat: Restores about 60-80 Health to one ally

Freeze (16) Wizard (L18) Fails: Never

Combat: Attempts to freeze all enemies in ice. The success rate is low, but any frozen enemies are helpless for the rest of the battle.

Gale: (14) Wizard (L20) Fails: Never

Combat: Inflicts 50-65 damage on all enemies. Individual enemies can sometimes evade.

Ghost (9) Wizard (L24) Fails: Rarely(?)

War: Creates an imaginary infantry unit that will attack the enemy. This unit can both take and inflict some damage (very little) before it is destroyed. Otherwise it will last for 9 Turns. You may place the Ghost unit anywhere on the battlefield.

Ogre (24) Wizard (L28) Fails: Sometimes

War: Summons an ogre unit that will attack the enemy. It will depart after taking a certain amount of damage (a lot more than a Ghost unit) or after 15 Turns. The ogre unit will appear in a random location.

Giant (34) Wizard (L30) Fails: Rarely(?)

War: Transforms the caster's unit into a giant for 8 Turns. It's similar to the Ninja's Tiger spell in that it improves mobility [but in effect it does the opposite, since the Move spell costs no Energy to use] and is supposed to increase attack strength. Unlike Tiger, the unit will continue to receive damage from attacks and magic. Magic cannot be used while in giant form.

Fright (22) Wizard (L32) Fails: Rarely(?)

War: Causes a vision of a huge dragon to appear over one unit, which will suffer damage. (The manual doesn't say whether the frightening image inflicts casualties because of the unit's confusion and panic or if it's because the troops drop dead of shock, but oh well who cares?)

B. Characters

1. Characters Who Appear From the Beginning of the Game

Name	Subclass	Home	Compatibility*
------	----------	------	----------------

[*: See Section II-B for an explanation]

Hanzo	Iga Ninja	Mikawa Castle	Excellent
Ichizo	Iga Ninja	Bitchu Castle	Fair
Otowano	Iga Ninja	Hyuga	Good
Tateoka	Iga Ninja	Rikuchu Castle	Good
Kanemasa	Koga Ninja	Tanba Castle	Poor
Mochizuki	Koga Ninja	Kai Castle	Good
Shiranui	Koga Ninja	Yamashiro Castle	Poor
Wada Seiji	Koga Ninja	Rikuzen Castle	Fair
Fuma Koji	Fuma Ninja	Sagami Castle	Fair
Tofumaru	Fuma Ninja	Hitachi Castle	Fair
Hiryu	Negoro Ninja	Kii Castle	Fair
Kagetoku	Negoro Ninja	Echigo Castle	Poor
Kagero	Female Iga Ninja	Mikawa Castle	Fair
Umeyasha	Female Iga Ninja	Yamashiro Castle	Excellent
Yukiyasha	Female Iga Ninja	Echizen Castle	Excellent
Oniyuri	Female Koga Ninja	Harima Castle	Excellent
Yakihime	Female Koga Ninja	Tanba Castle	Poor
Yugasumi	Female Koga Ninja	Etchu Castle	Poor
Amagi Koji	Hermit	Sagami Castle	Excellent
Hannayo	Hermit	Iyo Castle	Fair
Keigan	Hermit	Mt. Haguro	Excellent
Kusou	Hermit	Shirahama	Excellent
Shurawaka	Hermit	Tosa Castle	Fair
Kenko Hosi	Mendicant	Boso Castle	Excellent
Kyonyo	Mendicant	Echigo Castle	Excellent
Tenkai	Mendicant	Hitachi Castle	Excellent
Gao	Sohei	Kozuke Castle	Excellent
Genso	Sohei	Kii Castle	Fair
Unryu	Sohei	Izumo Castle	Excellent
Bishamon	Sage	Hyuga	Excellent
Indara	Sage	Tosa Castle	Excellent
Suzaku	Sage	Hizen Castle	Excellent
Hyakureiko	Sorcerer	Tanba Castle	Excellent
Kukou	Sorcerer	Mt. Ontake	Poor
Mikazuchi	Sorcerer	Yamashiro Castle	Fair
Rauko	Sorcerer	Totomi Castle	Poor
Sou	Sorcerer	Hiraizumi	Fair
Jo Kosei	Magician	Mino Castle	Poor
Kuron	Magician	Echizen Castle	Poor
Ryohei	Magician	Settsu Castle	Good
Ashiya	Mystic	Aki Castle	Poor
Harutomo	Mystic	Yamashiro Castle	Excellent
Jigyō	Mystic	Tanba Castle	Poor
Kamono	Mystic	Settsu Castle	Excellent

Fuwa Danjo	Samurai	Totomi Castle	Good
Naruse	Samurai	Echigo Castle	Excellent
Takeuchi	Samurai	Rikuchu Castle	Good
Wakishima	Samurai	Mino Castle	Good
Yamanochi	Samurai	Tosa Castle	Excellent
Arashi	Ronin	Bitchu Castle	Poor
Gou Ikuma	Ronin	Satsuma Castle	Good
Saotome	Ronin	Mino Castle	Poor
Toriyama	Ronin	Ise Castle	Fair
Gennojo	Swordsman	Ise Castle	Fair
Ito Itosai	Swordsman	Boso Castle	Good
Mikogami	Swordsman	Kozuke Castle	Good
Sato Denki	Swordsman	Mino Castle	Fair

2. Characters Who Appear When Other Characters Are Killed

[See Section II-B. Joseph S.W. was a big help, and it's complete as far as I know, but it needs testing.]

Mao Kirizo	Iga Ninja	Dewa Castle	[Varies]
Kobungo	Iga Ninja	Kozuke Castle	
Yajiro	Iga Ninja	Iyo Castle	
Ogawara	Koga Ninja	Hiraizumi	
Hyodaru	Koga Ninja	Shinagawa	
Yoshimuri	Koga Ninja	Mikawa Castle	
Senpu	Fuma Ninja	Harima Castle	
Tobizaru	Fuma Ninja	Boso Castle	
Unsui	Fuma Ninja	Echizen Castle	
Nekome	Negoro Ninja	Tanba Castle	
Sugitani	Negoro Ninja	Totomi Castle	
Jinnai	Negoro Ninja	Izumo Castle	
Izumo Soji	Hermit	Mt. Ken	
Shoko	Hermit	Aki Castle	
Kuramayama	Hermit	Mt. Aso	
Dokan Sojo	Mendicant	?????	
Tosabo	Sohei	Bitchu Castle	
Shinku	Sorcerer	Kai Castle	
Rizen	Magician	Echigo Castle	
Hanyu	Samurai	Yamashiro Castle	
Kashima	Ronin	Aki Castle	
Kuroda	Ronin	Harima Castle	
Kenpo	Swordsman	Kozuke Castle	
Hayami	Swordsman	Mutsu Castle	

3. Characters With Special Skills

Name	Skills	Subclass
------	--------	----------

[Thanks to Leif Powers for supplying this information. Thanks to Joseph S.W., I am adding stars (*) to all character who appear when other characters are killed.]

Gono*	Renew/Cure1/Cure2/Flight	Sage
Bishamon	Cure1/Cure2/Flight	Sage
Tenkai	Cure1/Cure2/Flight	Mendicant
Hanzo	Flight	Iga Ninja
Jinen*	Flight	Mendicant
Kuramayama*	Flight	Hermit
Suzaku	Renew/Cure1/Cure2	Sage
Indara	Renew/Cure1/Cure2	Sage
Madara*	Renew/Cure1/Cure2	Sage
Dokan Sojo*	Renew/_____/Cure2	Mendicant
Shoko*	Renew/Cure1	Hermit
Kenko Hosi	Renew	Mendicant
Hannayo	Renew	Hermit
Gashamon*	Cure1/Cure2	Sage
Doan*	Cure1/Cure2	Mendicant
Izumo Soji*	Cure1/Cure2	Hermit
Amagi Koji	Cure1	Hermit
Keigan	Cure1	Hermit
Kusou	Cure1	Hermit

4. Characters Who Appear Later in the Game

[These characters may appear as time passes and/or as you progress in the game. I believe this list is complete. All of these characters appear while you're at high levels and are very powerful for their subclass.]

Kashi Koji	Iga Ninja	Hizen Castle	Fair
Momochi	Iga Ninja	Settsu Castle	Excellent
Rei	Female Iga Ninja	Echizen Castle	Excellent
Toshimasu	Ronin	Etchu Castle	Excellent
Yagyū	Swordsman	Ise Castle	Good

C. Equipment

Sidearms***

Name	Attack	Defense	Resist	Cost	Classes
------	--------	---------	--------	------	---------

[!: Indicates an estimated Cost of a unique or find-only item]

[b: Indicates an estimated Cost of an item obtained only through Bingo]

Oak Staff	Attack	+6	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	55	All
Wood Sword	Attack	+8	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	80	Nj/Wr/Sg
Wise Staff	Attack	+11	Defense	+0	Resist	+2	80	Sage
Sword	Attack	+10	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	100	Nj/Wr
Jo Stick	Attack	+7	Defense	+0	Resist	+3	120	Wizard
Mace	Attack	+13	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	120	All
Gold Staff	Attack	+14	Defense	+1	Resist	+0	180	Sage
Long Sword	Attack	+21	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	180	Warrior
Ninjato	Attack	+16	Defense	+2	Resist	+0	210	Nj/Wr
Kusarigama	Attack	+22	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	380	Nj/Wr
Great Sword	Attack	+29	Defense	+3	Resist	+0	420	Warrior
Steel Blade	Attack	+32	Defense	+2	Resist	+0	940	Nj/Wr
	*: High critical hit rate							
Iron Sword	Attack	+52	Defense	+2	Resist	+0	960	Warrior
	*: Misses often							
Long Spear	Attack	+44	Defense	+1	Resist	+0	970	Warrior
Gold Rod	Attack	+32	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	1300	Sage
Fire Staff	Attack	+23	Defense	+2	Resist	+5	1680	Wizard
	*: Casts Fiero when used in combat (unlimited use)							
Yoshi Blade	Attack	+45	Defense	+0	Resist	+4	2100!	Ninja
	*: Casts Speed when used in combat (unlimited use)							
Glaive	Attack	+45	Defense	+2	Resist	+0	2500	Wr/Sg
Masamune	Attack	+65	Defense	+3	Resist	+0	3800	Nj/Wr
Big Glaive	Attack	+60	Defense	+2	Resist	+0	5400	Wr/Sg
Stiletto	Attack	+32	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	5500	Nj/Wr/Wz
	*: High critical hit rate							
Multiblade	Attack	+45	Defense	+0	Resist	+12	7200	Nj/Wr/Wz
	*: Casts Gale when used in combat (unlimited use)							
Fire Blade	Attack	+85	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	7500	Nj/Wr
Muramasa	Attack	+83	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	7700	Warrior
Power Rod	Attack	+72	Defense	+4	Resist	+5	9200	Sage
	*: Restores up to 50 Health to one ally when used in combat (unlimited use)							
Karamono	Attack	105	Defense	+0	Resist	+0	10000!	Nj/Wr

Scimitar	Attack +97	Defense +0	Resist +0	11000	Warrior
Sceptre	Attack +87	Defense +3	Resist +0	15000!	Sage
Ninja Rod	Attack 123	Defense +0	Resist +0	20000	Ninja
Kusanagi	Attack 121	Defense +10	Resist +5	20500!	Warrior
	*: Casts Burn when used in combat (unlimited use)				
Superblade	Attack 150	Defense +0	Resist +0	30000!	Nj/Wr
Projectiles***					
3 pt. Star	Attack +10			150	Ninja
Shaken	Attack +17			250	Nj/Wr
8 pt. Star	Attack +24			700	Ninja
	*: High critical hit rate				
Blowpipe	Attack +16			1000	Nj/Wz
	*: High critical hit rate				
Short Bow	Attack +38			1750	Nj/Wr
Shuriken	Attack +38			2000	Ninja
	*: High critical hit rate				
Longbow	Attack +48			2500	Nj/Wr
Crossbow	Attack +60			5000	Warrior
	*: Misses often				
Pistol	Attack +70			7000	Nj/Wr/Wz
	*: Misses often				
Arquebus	Attack +90			10000	Nj/Wr
	*: Misses often				
Musket	Attack 130			20000	Nj/Wr
	*: Misses often				
Body Armor***					
Cloak		Defense +4	Resist +1	8	Wizard
Vest		Defense +6	Resist +0	10	Nj/Wr/Sg
Ninja Garb		Defense +7	Resist +0	24	Ninja
Coat		Defense +7	Resist +0	35	All
Sage Robe		Defense +12	Resist +2	160	Sage
Half Coat		Defense +12	Resist +0	280	Nj/Wr
Light Mail		Defense +16	Resist +0	320	All

Surplice	Defense +13	Resist +3	380	Sage
Court Dress	Defense +14	Resist +0	460	Wizard
Chain Mail	Defense +22	Resist +0	960	Nj/Wr
Iron Vest	Defense +26	Resist +0	1600	Warrior
Yoshi Suit	Defense +28	Resist +3	1800!	Nj/Wr
Full Armor	Defense +33	Resist +0	3300	Warrior
Gold Suit	Defense +38	Resist +0	4500	Nj/Wr/Sg
Fur Robe	Defense +33	Resist +0	4800	Wizard
Heavy Cloak	Defense +20	Resist +0	7000b	All
Cuirass	Defense +60	Resist +0	8000	Nj/Wr
Fancy Robe	Defense +50	Resist +0	9000	Sg/Wz
Mage Cloak	Defense +52	Resist +10	9800	Wizard
Gem Armor	Defense +55	Resist +0	12000b	Wr/Sg
Sage Mail	Defense +75	Resist +0	15000	Sage
*: Restores about 30 Health to one ally when used in combat (unlimited use)				
Mage Robe	Defense +76	Resist +10	15500	Wizard
War Armor	Defense +78	Resist +2	18000	Warrior
Iron Mesh	Defense +80	Resist +0	19000	Nj/Wr
Hauberk	Defense 100	Resist +2	25000	Warrior
Magic Armor	Defense 100	Resist +5	25000!	Nj/Wr
Gold Mail	Defense +70	Resist +0	30000b	Warrior
Headgear***				
Helmet	Defense +4	Resist +1	90	Sage
Hard Hat	Defense +5	Resist +0	95	All
Wizard Hat	Defense +5	Resist +1	120	Wizard
Steel Helm	Defense +10	Resist +0	390	Nj/Wr
Metal Hat	Defense +16	Resist +0	800	All
Iron Helm	Defense +20	Resist +0	1000	Warrior
Dragon Hat	Defense +26	Resist +2	1700	Nj/Wr
Iron Hat	Defense +35	Resist +0	2500	Nj/Wr/Sg

Face Mask	Defense +40	Resist +5	3800	Sage
Great Helm	Defense +40	Resist +0	4000	Warrior
Face Guard	Defense +35	Resist +0	7000b	Warrior
Kabuto	Defense +42	Resist +0	7000b	Warrior
Crown	Defense +45	Resist +0	8000	Sage
Iron Mask	Defense +50	Resist +0	10000	Nj/Wr
Headdress	Defense +50	Resist +6	10000	Wizard
Deer Helm	Defense +60	Resist +0	15000	Warrior

Charms***

Amulet	Defense +2	Resist +2	120	All
Talisman	Defense +4	Resist +2	300	All
Scarab	Defense +6	Resist +4	1000	All
Mandala	Defense +8	Resist +5	2500	Nj/Sg
Idol	Defense +4	Resist +4	3000	Nj/Wr/Wz

*: Restores one's own Health when used, in or out of combat (many-use).
It restores more Health outside of combat

Wizard Gem	Defense +6	Resist +10	3500	Wizard
------------	------------	------------	------	--------

Energy Sap	Attack +3	Defense +13	Resist +6	5000	All
------------	-----------	-------------	-----------	------	-----

*: Reduces the Energy of one enemy when used in combat (many-use)

Lion Tail	Defense +18	Resist +5	7500!	All
-----------	-------------	-----------	-------	-----

Bracelet	Attack +7	Defense +24	Resist +7	8000!	Sg/Wz
----------	-----------	-------------	-----------	-------	-------

Kirin Bone	Defense +32	Resist +10	14000!	All
------------	-------------	------------	--------	-----

D. Items

One-Use Items***

Name	Location	Effect
Medicine	Shop/Medic	Restores Health
	Field:	Restores about 35 Health
	Combat:	Restores about 30 Health
Elixir	Shop/Medic	Removes Injury (field only)
Antidote	Shop/Medic	Removes Poison
Health Food	Shop/Bingo	Restores Health
	Field:	Restores 31-35 Health; cannot be used in combat

Body Healer	Shop/Medic	Restores Health
	Field/Combat:	Restores about 105 Health
Energy Pill	Shop/Bingo	Restores Energy
	Field:	Restores 11-15 Energy; cannot be used in combat
Energy Up	Shop/Medic	Restores Energy
	Field/Combat:	Restores 45-50 Energy
Antifreeze	Shop	Removes Frozen from one ally
Ninja Cure	Shop	Restores Health to the maximum
Restorer	Shop	Restores Health and Energy to the maximum
Health Kit	Shop	Same effect as Revive (combat only)
Tengu Wing	Shop	Fly to any castle or escape from dungeons
Smoke Bomb	Shop	Instantly escape from combat
Explosive	Shop	Same effect as Flame
Fire Bomb	Shop	Same effect as Torch
Bomb	Shop/Bingo	Inflicts damage on all enemies
	Combat:	Inflicts about 35-50 damage on all enemies (it's only slightly weaker than Burn); enemies sometimes evade.
Sleep Bomb	Shop	Same effect as Sleep

Many-Use Items***

Idol	Shop/Bingo	Restores Health (self only)
	Field:	Restores Health to the maximum
	Combat:	Restores about 100 Health
Dizzy Gas	Shop	Same effect as Dizzy
Energy Sap	Shop	Reduces Energy
	Combat:	Lowers the Energy level of one enemy by 9-11 Points
Spellblock	Shop	Same effect as Jinx
Bubble Gum	Shop/Bingo (High Class)	Tastes great!--Offer as a Gift to Daimyos
	Value:	5000 Gold
Eel Extract	Bingo (High Class)	Offer as a Gift to Daimyos
	Field:	Makes you disoriented. Fun to watch, but not recommended for dungeon consumption.
	Value:	7000 Gold

Infinite-Use Items***

Yoshi Blade	Yoshi's Cave	Same effect as Speed
Fire Staff	Shop	Same effect as Fiero

Tengu Fan	Tengu Forest	Same effect as Gust
Power Rod	Shop	Restores Health (combat only)
	Combat:	Restores about 50 Health to one ally. It's essentially the same effect as Heal3, but on only one character.
Multiblade	Shop	Same effect as Gale
Sage Mail	Shop	Restores Health (combat only)
	Combat:	Restores about 30 Health to one ally.
Kusanagi	Danoura Cave	Same effect as Burn
Health Rock	Mt. Aso	Same effect as Heal3 (combat only)
Timepiece	Bingo (High Class)	It's some kind of European invention...
	Value:	15000 Gold
[Other High Class Bingo Items]		
Tea Bowl		Value: 11000 Gold; does nothing
Porcelain		Value: 15000 Gold; also does nothing
Gem Armor		Value: 12000 Gold; Def+55, Wr/Sg
Gold Mail		Value: 30000 Gold; Def+70, Warrior only

E. Monsters

[Version 2.50: I've replaced most of my Health estimates with Joseph S.W.'s values, which he obtained from something called a binary code (uh...), anyway please note that for most monsters Health varies randomly +/- about 2% or so. Monster spells, special abilities, and item drops have been updated based on his info... any mistakes do let me know.

Underground (Dungeon) Monsters

Giant Rat	Health 12, Energy 0, Exp 5, Gold 2
Giant Centipede	Health 14, Energy 0, Exp 7, Gold 6
	Drops Wood Sword
Giant Serpent	Health 18, Energy 0, Exp 7, Gold 8
	Drops Medicine
Blue Flame	Health 25, Energy 0, Exp 11, Gold 13
	Drops Medicine
Fire Rat	Health 30, Energy 0, Exp 13, Gold 16
	Breathes fire for 8 damage; Drops Fire Bomb
Fire Croc	Health 40, Energy 0, Exp 17, Gold 25
	Breathes fire for 11 damage; Drops Talisman

Toxic Worm Health 9, Energy 0, Exp 12, Gold 10
High Defense; Spits poison; Drops Antidote

Venomora Health 35, Energy 0, Exp 17, Gold 18
Spits poison; performs Energy Drain (only when all allies are poisoned);
Drops Antidote

Matokage Health 50, Energy 0, Exp 12, Gold 10
Calls for help (Matokage)

Doki Health 50, Energy 32, Exp 20, Gold 20
Spells: Remedy; Drops Gold Staff

Giant Spider Health 50, Energy 0, Exp 22, Gold 25
Uses Spider Web (reduces everyone's Speed)

Giant Slug Health 60, Energy 0, Exp 25, Gold 27

Roc Health 45, Energy 0, Exp 27, Gold 36

Manticore Health 60, Energy 0, Exp 25, Gold 35
Performs sleeping spell, blows cold wind (only when everyone is asleep);
Drops Elixir

Windmidge Health 80, Energy 28, Exp 30, Gold 51
Unleashes cold wind; Uses Medicine; Spells: Fiero, Dizzy;
Drops Light Mail

Karasu Tengu Health 85, Energy 38, Exp 32, Gold 61
Spells: Heal1, Speed, Guard; Drops Steel Helm

Purple Flame Health 50, Energy 0, Exp 25, Gold 41
Calls for help (Purple Flame); Drops Fire Bomb

Cranius Health 60, Energy 0, Exp 35, Gold 58
Unleashes cold wind; Drops Gold Rod

Grim Reaper Health 70, Energy 30, Exp 50, Gold 94
Uses Body Healer; Spells: Heal 1, Guard; Drops Body Healer

Clador Health 75, Energy 0, Exp 50, Gold 160
Drops Iron Sword

Zombie Health 62, Energy 20, Exp 60, Gold 33
Calls for help (Ghoul, Zombie); Spells: Dizzy, Drain

Ghoul Health 70, Energy 0, Exp 67, Gold 37
Calls for help (Ghoul, Zombie)

Sertron Health 87, Energy 0, Exp 79, Gold 92
Flashes blinding light; Drops Scarab

Satori Health 75, Energy 31, Exp 96, Gold 104
Performs sleeping spell; Spells: Heal1, Heal2; Drops Gold Rod

Ogre Health 120, Energy 0, Exp 124, Gold 146
Drops Long Spear

Fire Fox Health 21, Energy 0, Exp 350, Gold 200
Immune to attack magic, very high Defense, flees often; breathes

fire for 26-29 damage; Drops Mandala

Venus Flytrap Health 85, Energy 0, Exp 120, Gold 110
Drops Health Food

Zenki Health 104, Energy 30, Exp 145, Gold 135
Spells: Fiero

Kouki Health 90, Energy 24, Exp 145, Gold 132
Uses Body Healer; Spells: Remedy; Drops Body Healer

Fire Ghoul Health 115, Energy 0, Exp 143, Gold 136
Uses Fire Bomb

Hot Head Health 74, Energy 0, Exp 196, Gold 184
Drops Fire Bomb

Mad Dog Health 94, Energy 0, Exp 83, Gold 74
Calls for help (Mad Dog)

Forest Kenshi Health 119, Energy 0, Exp 154, Gold 110
Drops Body Healer

Forest Shaman Health 96, Energy 64, Exp 155, Gold 103
Spells: Fiero, Weaken, Remedy; Drops Wizard Gem

Small Tengu Health 130, Energy 60, Exp 215, Gold 160
Spells: Heall, Awaken; Drops Fire Staff

Red Wolf Health 146, Energy 0, Exp 140, Gold 132
Calls for help (Red Wolf)

Magic Fox Health 124, Energy 35, Exp 151, Gold 148
Spells: Drain, Dizzy

Flute Fairy Health 130, Energy 30, Exp 173, Gold 162
Plays hypnotic melody; Unleashes cold wind

Dream Ghost Health 180, Energy 30, Exp 174, Gold 169
Performs sleeping spell; Spells: Jinx

Psycho Slug Health 140, Energy 0, Exp 184, Gold 157
Drops Elixir

Sado Viper Health 160, Energy 0, Exp 206, Gold 194
Spits Poison; performs Energy Drain; Drops Energy Pill

Heliocranus Health 150, Energy 0, Exp 211, Gold 196
Spits Poison; Uses Body Healer; Drops Energy Sap

Ironpede Health 40, Energy 0, Exp 432, Gold 167
Strong defense, very strong defense against attack magic, flees often

Frost Beast Health 200, Energy 0, Exp 230, Gold 201
Unleashes cold wind; Drops Body Healer

Giant Owl Health 160, Energy 0, Exp 280, Gold 204

Wind Weasel Health 130, Energy 60, Exp 300, Gold 215
Spells: Wind; Drops Kusarigama

Albino Ape Health 170, Energy 0, Exp 370, Gold 230
 Uses Dizzy Gas

Birdman Health 200, Energy 0, Exp 460, Gold 234

Blue Cloud Health 200, Energy 0, Exp 260, Gold 100
 Flashes blinding light

Cloudmaster Health 250, Energy 0, Exp 550, Gold 300
 Calls for help (Blue Cloud); Flashes blinding light; Drops Fur Robe

Thorn Gator Health 120, Energy 0, Exp 406, Gold 279

Blue Hulk Health 140, Energy 0, Exp 420, Gold 269
 Uses Blowpipe; Drops Blowpipe

Pink Hulk Health 150, Energy 0, Exp 496, Gold 359
 Drops Health Food

Piggo Health 190, Energy 0, Exp 354, Gold 167
 Calls for help (Piggo); Uses Bomb; Drops Elixir

Hydraman Health 210, Energy 0, Exp 530, Gold 356
 Uses Longbow; Drops Longbow

Medusa Health 160, Energy 40, Exp 500, Gold 483
 Performs sleeping spell; Spells: Burn

Kimen Health 180, Energy 0, Exp 560, Gold 530
 Drops Energy Up; (High critical hit rate?)

Samurai Ghost Health 220, Energy 0, Exp 650, Gold 630
 Immune to attack magic; Uses Shaken

Kageboshi Health 180, Energy 50, Exp 670, Gold 623
 Immune to attack magic; Spells: Heal2, Heal3; Drops Energy Up

Wicked Sage Health 220, Energy 200, Exp 700, Gold 789
 Immune to attack magic; Spells: Heal3, Revive; Drops Lion Tail

Giant Crab Health 50, Energy 0, Exp 700, Gold 1140
 Immune to attack magic, very high defense, flees often; performs Energy
 Drain; Drops Body Healer

Kubi Warrior Health 200, Energy 0, Exp 810, Gold 623
 Drops Great Helm

Sea Siren Health 200, Energy 0, Exp 850, Gold 689
 Plays hypnotic melody; uses Body Healer; Drops Dizzy Gas

Boat Grime Health 230, Energy 0, Exp 910, Gold 860
 Uses Crossbow; drops Crossbow

Gokyu Warrior Health 250, Energy 0, Exp 1000, Gold 736
 Uses Crossbow; Drops Crossbow

Orange Flame Health 200, Energy 0, Exp 821, Gold 720
 Calls for help (Orange Flame); Uses Fire Bomb; Drops Energy Up

Hanzaki Health 250, Energy 0, Exp 1300, Gold 1000
Uses Bomb; Drops Bomb

Twin Firecat Health 220, Energy 140, Exp 1500, Gold 1130
Breathes fire for about 55 damage; drops Elixir

Water Dragon Health 300, Energy 120, Exp 1700, Gold 1350
Breathes fire for about 45 damage; Uses Body Healer; Drops Sleep Bomb

Megahand Health 300, Energy 100, Exp 1500, Gold 950
Uses Bomb; Spells: Jinx, Unfog; Drops Bomb

Tenshima Health 200, Energy 46, Exp 1600, Gold 1030
Spells: Freeze, Gale, Unfog; Drops Ninja Cure

Enchantress Health 260, Energy 150, Exp 1800, Gold 1010
Plays hypnotic melody; Spells: Jinx; Drops Antifreeze

Minotaur Health 290, Energy 0, Exp 1700, Gold 860

Horsehead Health 260, Energy 120, Exp 1700, Gold 1110
Spells: Remedy; Drops Ninja Cure

Phoenix Health 350, Energy 180, Exp 2000, Gold 1400
Very strong against attack magic; breathes fire for about 70 damage

Ninja Dog Health 230, Energy 35, Exp 800, Gold 350
Spells: Weaken

Azuchi Guard Health 250, Energy 73, Exp 900, Gold 500
Spells: Heal 4; Drops Mandala

Oda's Ninja Health 300, Energy 32, Exp 1200, Gold 670
Very strong defense against magic; Spells: Fog; Drops Ninja Cure

Japan Field Map Monsters

Bushwhacker Health 20, Energy 0, Exp 5, Gold 2
Drops Wood Sword

Fuma Ninja Health 25, Energy 12, Exp 8, Gold 6
Also appears w/ the characters Fuma Koji and Tofumaru in challenges
Spells: Flame

Soshu Rapa Health 30, Energy 0, Exp 7, Gold 12
Uses 3 pt. Star; Drops 3 pt. Star

Robber Health 35, Energy 0, Exp 7, Gold 3

Prestador Health 40, Energy 15, Exp 8, Gold 7
Spells: Heal 1; Drops Medicine

Voodoo Man Health 45, Energy 24, Exp 9, Gold 12
Spells: Dizzy

Voodoo Doll Health 50, Energy 0, Exp 10, Gold 14
Also appears w/ Sorcerer Sou

Kracklin Health 78, Energy 19, Exp 12, Gold 17

Spells: Guard; Drops Elixir

Armed Bandit Health 65, Energy 0, Exp 10, Gold 6

Bandit Health 70, Energy 0, Exp 11, Gold 15
Drops Great Sword

Oda's Thug Health 130, Energy 0, Exp 40, Gold 38
Drops Medicine

Ninja Trainee Health 120, Energy 0, Exp 55, Gold 30
Also appears in some character challenges
Drops Elixir

Assassin Health 125, Energy 36, Exp 50, Gold 45
Spells: Flame, Wind

Koshu Supa Health 135, Energy 40, Exp 60, Gold 40
Spells: Repair, Fog

Bounty Hunter Health 130, Energy 0, Exp 160, Gold 100

Oda's Officer Health 140, Energy 0, Exp 160, Gold 150

Mercenary Health 190, Energy 0, Exp 180, Gold 120

Koga Ninja Health 180, Energy 80, Exp 200, Gold 160
Spells: Fog, Burn; Uses Shuriken

Imp Health 140, Energy 0, Exp 120, Gold 80
Unleashes cold wind; Drops Body Healer

Wraith Health 130, Energy 0, Exp 160, Gold 160
Performs sleeping spell

Fire Hound Health 170, Energy 120, Exp 160, Gold 110
Calls for help (Fire Hound)

Aerial Health 180, Energy 0, Exp 200, Gold 150

Salamander Health 200, Energy 200, Exp 170, Gold 130
Breathes fire for ?? damage

Foxmaster Health 120, Energy 40, Exp 100, Gold 80
Spells: Remedy; Drops Energy Pill

Manip Fox Health 110, Energy 0, Exp 110, Gold 100

Oda's Hoodlum Health 130, Energy 40, Exp 130, Gold 85
Also appears in some character challenges
Spells: Fiero; Drops Energy Up

Negoro Ninja Health 140, Energy 48, Exp 150, Gold 120
Spells: Burn

Evil Sohei Health 130, Energy 30, Exp 180, Gold 120
Spells: Heall, Sleep; Drops Energy Up

Evil Samurai Health 145, Energy 0, Exp 180, Gold 160
Drops Body Healer

Crazy Hermit Health 150, Energy 100, Exp 200, Gold 180
Flashes blinding light; breathes fire for about 40 damage; Uses Bomb;
Drops Bomb

Appear w/ Character Challenges

Wild Fox Health 60, Energy 0, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Sorcerers Rauko, Kukou, Mikazuchi

Wild Spirit Health 55, Energy 0, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Mystics Harutomo and Kamono

Wood Doll Health 70, Energy 0, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Mystic Ashiya

Kung Fu Master Health 75, Energy 0, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Magicians Ryohei and Kuron

Ronin Health 60, Energy 0, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Swordsman Mikogami, Sato Denki

Koga Genin Health 60, Energy 16, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Koga Ninja Kanemasa
Spells: Flame

Negoro Genin Health 63, Energy 24, Exp 0, Gold 0
Appears w/ Negoro Ninja Kagetoku
Spells: Fog

Bosses

Kaison* Health 120, Energy 50, Exp 600, Gold 1200
Spells: Heal2
*: Exp and gold values are for Kaison alone and do not include Kaison's
Grim Reaper allies.

Sagamibo* Health 210, Energy 200, Exp 1500, Gold 1500
Spells: Heal3, Revive, Awaken, Sleep
*: If Sagamibo uses Revive to restore a defeated ally, you'll earn extra
experience and gold for defeating that monster more than once.

Avenging Spirit Health 300, Energy 150, Exp 2400, Gold 1700
Spells: Gale

Oda Nobunaga (1) Health 400, Energy 0, Exp 2700, Gold 2000
Immune to attack magic

Hydra Health 1200, Energy 0, Exp 8000, Gold 6000
Breathes fire for about 65 damage

Ashura Health 1950, Energy 0, Exp 15000, Gold 5000
Releases psychic energy (dispels the party's support magic); high
critical hit rate

Oda Nobunaga (2)* Health 1670, Energy 0, Exp 25000, Gold 15000
Releases Psychic energy; very strong defense against attack magic
*: Appears in Endgame 1 only

Nicolai* Health ???, Energy ???, Exp ???, Gold ???

Spells: Heal 2, ?????; Special: ?????

*: Appears in Endgame 2 only

Balioc* Health ???, Energy ???, Exp ???, Gold ???

Releases psychic energy; Spells: ?????

*: Appears in Endgame 2 only

Kasumimaru Health 450, Energy 200, Exp 5000, Gold 3000

Uses Shuriken; Spells: Burn, Fog

Kidomaru Health 630, Energy 290, Exp 4000, Gold 3000

Spells: Burn, Fog; Very strong defense against magic

Mugenbo Health 560, Energy 300, Exp 4000, Gold 2000

Spells: Guard, Sleep, Awaken, Heal 3, Revive; Very strong defense against magic

Top Bodyguard Health 775, Energy 400, Exp 10900, Gold 8500

Immune to attack magic; Releases psychic energy; Uses Sleep Bomb;

Spells: Burn [Fog?]

Oda Nobunaga (3)* Health 800, Energy 0, Exp --, Gold --

Immune to attack magic, high critical hit rate; Releases psychic energy, summons lightning

*: Appears in Endgame 1 only

Mori Ranmaru* Health 600, Energy 400, Exp --, Gold --

Immune to attack magic; Spells: Heal 2, Revive

*: Appears in Endgame 1 only

Oda Nobunaga (4)* Health 700, Energy 80, Exp --, Gold --

Immune to attack magic; Releases psychic energy, summons lightning;

Spells: Heal 4

*: Appears in Endgame 2 only

Abadon* Health 600, Energy 400, Exp --, Gold --

Immune to attack magic; Releases psychic energy, summons lightning;

Spells: Heal 2

*: Appears in Endgame 2 only

CONTACT INFO

Email me at FrGrnDrgns@aol.com if you wish to give feedback about this guide or this game. Please include "Inindo" or "Inindo FAQ" in the Subject because I'm very suspicious about unsolicited email. Also be advised that I check my email very rarely. . . sorry. Please don't email me about subjects unrelated to this guide or game.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

This guide copyright 2003-2004 by Jorge Sierra. This guide may be reproduced only for personal private use. The reproduction of this guide for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. This includes (but is not limited to)

reposting this guide on any other web site, reproducing this guide in published works for profit, and reproducing sections of this guide. If you're going to write or comment about this guide (though I cannot imagine why anyone would want to do this), be sure to credit the author and this guide properly to avoid plagiarism.

As of 07/06/06, the following sites have permission to use this FAQ:

www.gamefaqs.com (always has my latest update)
www.gamenotover.com
www.rpgclassics.com
www.neoseeker.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/THANKS

Much thanks to KOEI for making an informative manual and one of the best RPGs I've ever played.

To Leif Powers for the list of characters with special skills, feedback on the character list and the Endgame, and interesting commentary/ideas (e.g., that I should write something on getting locked out on Sado). Thanks to a few other people who wrote about Sado, too.

To CloakedEntity for informing me of Sage Mail's healing effect, corroboration on updating other equipment properties, and feedback on subclass properties.

Several people, including Lief Powers, pure_statistics, and Joe, who gave me the names of the Endgame 2 bosses I was missing.

Much thanks to everyone who told me about the Hydra trick.

I am greatly indebted to Joseph S.W. for giving me accurate information on monsters and characters through something called hexadecimal code. He's the reason I finally bothered to complete Version 2.50.

Also much thanks to CJayC for his comprehensive on-site guide on how to write and submit a FAQ to GameFAQs.

Thanks for reading this FAQ!

FIN